



Department
for Transport

Mike Penning MP
Hamilton House
111 Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
HP1 1BB

RECEIVED

1 MAY 2013

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Stephen Hammond MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 020 7944 3084
Fax: 020 7944 4521
E-Mail: stephen.hammond@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: MC/73019
Your Ref: Nicholls-Roadside Litter 1104.docx

26 APR 2013

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 11 April to Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP enclosing correspondence from your constituent, Chris Nicholls of 23 Corner Wood, Markyate, AL3 8RF about roadside litter. I am replying as Minister responsible for this issue.

You will recall that the Secretary of State for Transport has a responsibility under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to collect roadside litter on motorways and a small number of trunk roads and that this duty is carried out on the behalf of the Secretary of State by the Highways Agency. All other routes are the responsibility of the relevant local authority. In clearing litter, the Highways Agency's contractors are required to work to the standards set out in the 'Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006', published by the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Litter clearance, sweeping and the collection of debris is therefore carried out on a regular basis, particularly at motorway islands and junctions where litter is deposited more frequently, to ensure that the standards are met. The Agency continues to encourage their contractors to conduct 'holistic' maintenance activities such as litter picking whilst managing grass land, shrub and trees when they are undertaking routine maintenance work.

Although the Agency is operating with lower budgets following the 2010 Spending Review, they continue to focus on delivering their litter picking duties. During your time at the DfT, you oversaw a major review of the Agency's maintenance contracts. This review was designed to deliver a similar level of service for road users (including litter picking) but at much reduced cost. You will also recall publicising the problem of motorway litter in the national media and I have continued to ensure the issue of litter is kept at the forefront of the Agency's media campaigns.

In relation to Mr Nicholls reference to Mr Peter Silverman, the Highways Agency responded to the report ('*Our Littered Motorways – Why the legislation is not working*') the month after it was sent to you. Since then, Mr Silverman has served numerous Litter Abatement Notices on the Secretary of State, primarily concerning litter issues on various sections of the M40. The Courts ruled that the Highways Agency were meeting their obligations under the Environmental Protection Act.

The Agency shares your constituent's frustration with regard to the amount of litter deposited on our roads. Roadside litter is not only unsightly, but can be a threat to the environment and litter picking diverts resources away from other essential road maintenance activities. To help tackle this issue the Agency continues to promote its national litter campaign through a variety of communication channels. The campaign messages, initially trialled in August 2011 during your time as Roads Minister, urge all road users to take responsibility and a carry a bag for litter in their vehicle, and to dispose of this responsibly when they take a break or reach their destination. Current indications are that since 2011 the amount of motorway litter picked has reduced from 240,000 bags per annum to around 180,000 bags.

The Agency also works in liaison with DEFRA, Keep Britain Tidy and the Campaign to Protect Rural England to raise public awareness of the dangers, and costs associated with litter and co-ordinates its activity under the national 'Love Where You Live' campaign. They also work with local authorities to minimise litter and fly tipping and have had a number of successful prosecutions for fly tipping offences.

I do not accept that any of the routes where the Highways Agency is responsible for litter picking have been abandoned. I hope I can reassure Mr Nicholls that the Agency takes the problem of litter seriously and that it is continuing to meet its legal obligations.

More information on this subject can be found on the Agency's website at: www.highways.gov.uk/our-road-network/environment/bag-it-bin-it/responsibility-for-clearing-litter-from-motorways-and-roads/.

Litter hotspots on motorways can be reported to the Highways Agency Information Line: www.highways.gov.uk/about-us/contact-us/.

Trunk & local road litter can be reported via: www.gov.uk/report-litter.

Yours ever



STEPHEN HAMMOND