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Kells,
Co Kilkenny

21 February 2020

A Chara,
Kells Tidy towns group have been cleaning up litter on the streets of our village for over 20 years. A huge part of what we collect are plastic drink bottles and cans. We believe that if a deposit were paid on each bottle they would not end up on the side of the road. Schemes like this work well in other EU countries and result in a cleaner quality of material collected. In some states of the USA they have machines that you can put your empty bottle in and collect your refund on the spot. Some of us are old enough to remember scouring the beach for glass bottles to claim the refund from the shop. My children's school offered a small gimmicky reward per bag of drink cans and the local roads and parks were cleared within a week. The empty plastic bottles and cans become items of value when there is a refund on them.

The Consultation Document concluded that this scheme would not be practical or economic. We do not understand how they came to this conclusion. The litter situation is not improving. The amount of litter on the side of the road is not decreasing. A totally new approach is needed to break the casual attitude of so many of the public. Posters, Green Schools, Tidy Towns initiatives have all tried really hard but not made as dramatic a difference as we would have hoped. It is time for something quite new.

Every year Kells Tidy Towns join The National Spring Clean organised by An Taisce and the County Councils. Picking up litter on the side of busy roads is a hazardous activity. For this reason we do not encourage children to join us doing it anymore.

Kells Tidy Towns call on the government to play catch up on the other EU member states and introduce a national deposit and return scheme for plastic bottles and aluminium drink cans to increase recycling, promote a circular economy and to reduce litter across the country.

Mise le meas
Siobhán Tulloch
Rúnaí Kells Tidy Towns Group,