

**Denis Dunne**

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**From:** Jimmy Walsh <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 05 February 2020 14:02  
**To:** wastecomments  
**Subject:** Fwd: Submission on public consultation document on Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy,

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To whom it concerns,

The Tullahought Tidy Towns Group would like to thank you for this opportunity to comment on the public consultation document on Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy. We have a number of issues relevant to our activities which we would like to bring to your attention.

### **Capturing plastic bottles and drink cans via a National Deposit and Refund Scheme**

It is acknowledged within the consultation document that radical action will be required to increase recycling rates up to 65% by 2035. However previous attempts to establish a national deposit and return scheme has been unsuccessful. It is our understanding that the study deemed the scheme financially unviable however it would be interesting to see these findings published to determine if the original study scope was adequate.

This scheme works successfully throughout mainland Europe and as a member state we are lagging behind considerably. Not only would it capture a better quality of material, it has the capacity to change the public's perception of their waste, a scheme like this would enable them to start appreciating waste as a resource. Being financially rewarded we believe is the incentive required for the public to participate in a deposit and return scheme for plastic bottles and drink cans.

It would be interesting to determine if the scope of the previous study included litter clean up costs or was this issue omitted simply because most of the clean up is done on a voluntary basis by groups such as burs.. In County Kilkenny, from litter analysis conducted by Kilkenny County Council, 5 km stretches of roadway yielded on average 639 plastic bottles, 575 drink cans and 329 disposable cups. From litter picking, our group realises that when these materials are litter picked, they are usually not in a suitable condition to be placed into the recycling stream as they are filthy and often degraded due to weather exposure.

Roadside litter is difficult to pick due to the dangers working alongside moving vehicles and the lack of suitable road margins in rural areas, the National Spring Clean and other clean up initiatives ask volunteers to take to roadsides to clean up after others, however we believe the volume of roadside litter would reduce dramatically if a deposit and return scheme was put in place for plastic drink bottles and aluminium cans. If a value is placed on these items and the scheme operated in local shops, service stations and supermarkets, recycling rates would soar and the incidences of litter would reduce dramatically therefore reducing the associated costs linked with clean ups.

The Tullahought Tidy Towns Group would 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.

## **Election Posters.**

In recent years the Tullahought committee like many other Tidy Towns groups around the country have asked election candidates not to erect election posters in the area. In our case all candidates have complied with our request and no candidate has ever reported to us that they failed to be elected because their poster was not on every pole in the area.

We believe that the use of election posters should be completely banned in Ireland, these are one use plastic products and like all one use plastics they should be eliminated. The majority of these posters are removed following elections but many of the one use plastic cable ties used to erect them are left on the poles for others such as tidy towns groups to remove.

In many cases posters featuring political party leaders who are not even running for election in the constituency occupy the majority of prime locations. The vast majority of the images featured on these posters have been photo-shopped so much the candidate would certainly not be able to use the image for a passport application.

In an age of digital media these posters are outdated, not needed, damage our environment, and are a blight on our country. We would call on you to ensure that one use plastic posters are banned for all future elections.

Similarly in a constituency with ten candidates running in the general election we are besieged with the "Litir um Thoghchán" arriving through the letter box all of which are delivered individually by the postman at considerable cost to the taxpayer. Surely one of these leaflets to each household would be adequate instead of sending one to each resident of a household on the voting register. And please put the leaflets for the 10 candidates in one envelope to save the taxpayer the cost of postage.

Be it the political parties, the individual candidates or the taxpayer who covers the costs of these leaflets and the one use plastic posters and cable ties surely the money could be put to a better use.

Thanking You,

Richard Walsh. Secretary Tullahought Tidy Towns.