

Sharp rise in fly-tipping is uncovered by FoI request

NEW figures obtained by *The Herald* under the Freedom of Information Act reveal reports of fly-tipping in Haslemere have increased by more than two-thirds over the past two years.

Between December 2014 and November 2015, Waverley Borough Council was notified of 30 cases of illegally dumped waste in the GU27 postcode.

But over the following 12 months, this number rose to 51 – a 70 per cent increase. That compares to a 35 per cent increase (from 379 cases to 513) borough-wide during the same period, a 29 per cent rise (77 to 99 cases) in the rural GU8 postcode area north east of Haslemere, and a 100 per cent rise (albeit across a small sample size, from five to 10 cases) in GU26 covering Hindhead.

The figures also reveal a 40 per cent rise in fly-tipping across Waverley between last September – when Surrey County Council introduced charges at many of its Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) – and November, compared to the same three-month period 12 months earlier.

But despite this revelation, the county council this week stood by its previous assertion that fly-tipping has actually decreased since the introduction of the controversial charges for ‘non-household’ waste.

A council spokesman said: “The volume of fly-tipping we have dealt with in Waverley has decreased by more than 600 tonnes in 2016 compared to 2015 (from 913 to 306 tonnes) while we have also seen a huge reduction across Surrey. We do, however, recognise there are local issues that need addressing which is why we are stepping up co-ordinated action against the problem with the county’s district and borough councils through our fly-tipping strategy.”

A Waverley spokesman added: “We can’t confirm a definite causal relationship between the Surrey County Council increase in tip charges and the amount of fly-tipping that’s occurring in Waverley. However, we recognise there

are more reports of fly-tips in the borough... and a new joint enforcement team will be out and about patrolling in the community from spring 2017, to investigate offences such as fly tipping and to try and catch the culprits.

“They will have powers to issue enforcement penalties and prosecute in the worst cases. The council has already installed CCTV cameras at problem hotspots in a bid to catch fly-tippers in the act.”

● **Enforcement action was promised by Waverley last September to crack down on the mounting problem of fly tipping at its recycling banks in Haslemere’s Wey Hill Fairground car park.**

The borough council used emergency funding to pay for a permanent CCTV camera, costing £7,500, to identify and prosecute offenders and also act as a deterrent.

Illegal dumping at the site became a major problem following Surrey County Council’s decision to axe the weekly dustcart service it provided for non-recyclable waste – in order to save £60,000 a year.

Waverley also agreed to pay £7,500 for a second CCTV camera to be used elsewhere in the borough.

■ Plans to bring in reduced opening times at waste recycling centres in Hampshire have been put back by 10 months. The county council is seeking an answer from Government over new “DIY construction waste” fees.

The council fears a legal challenge over charges brought in on October 1.

Reduced opening times, which had been due to start in January, will now start in October with centres closing every Thursday and opening two hours later at 11am each day.