

PRESS RELEASE
2024

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Gum Litter Taskforce Roadshow takes to Wexford to tackle gum disposal

The Gum Litter Taskforce (GLT) took to the streets of Wexford today as a part of its Summer Roadshow. The interactive Roadshow works with local authorities and communities across the country to carry out fun and engaging education and awareness initiatives that demonstrate the proper means of gum disposal and raise awareness of the environmental and fiscal impacts of gum litter. Now in its seventeenth year, the campaign is a collaboration between Food Drink Ireland, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, the chewing gum industry, and local authorities.

Welcoming the Roadshow to Wexford, Councillor George Lawlor, Mayor of Wexford said: *"We are delighted to welcome the Gum Litter Taskforce back to Wexford. The Roadshow is a fantastic initiative to raise awareness of the negative impacts of gum litter and encourages all to dispose of gum litter responsibly and to continue to protect our local environment. The reduction of gum litter in recent years demonstrates the success of the campaign and I hope this year's campaign will continue to further encourage positive changes in people's behaviour towards gum litter."*

One in seven people continue to drop their gum on the ground, according to new findings from the Gum Litter Taskforce (GLT), the national awareness campaign which aims to make gum litter an issue of the past. This accounts for 19% of men and 9% of women, showing a higher tendency in men to not properly dispose of their gum.

Attitudes towards gum litter continue to change, as children are educated on the negative environmental and fiscal impacts of gum litter. The GLT 2023 campaign had a positive impact on both attitudes and behaviour regarding gum disposal, with a 5% increase in those reporting 'always' or 'usually' putting their chewed gum in the bin, bringing the figure to a record high of 92%. The latest results of the National Litter Pollution Monitoring report (2022) also reflect this behavioural change, showing a continuous decline of percentage of gum as a proportion of litter at 8.6%.

The GLT research also found that the biggest deterrent of gum litter is peer pressure, however 1 in 4 of state they have changed their behaviour as a result of the educational messaging from the Bin-it campaign.

The findings highlight the continued impact of the GLT, a joint initiative of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Food Drink Ireland, and

the chewing gum industry, which has played a key role in promoting proper gum litter disposal, since its launch in 2007.



From left: Mummy Mokgalo (Wexford Tidy Towns) Councillor George Lawlor Mayor of Borough District of Wexford and Siliudile Zulu (Wexford Tidy Towns)

Now in its seventeenth year, the GLT campaign travels across the country, working with local authorities to host its Summer Roadshow, which promotes responsible gum disposal by highlighting the environmental impacts of gum and general litter. This is supplemented by the 'Bin It!' school roadshow and a social media campaign to target 16–24-year-olds.

A further positive impact of the campaign is evident from the 16% of young people who reported having stopped the habit of 'dropping or spitting' gum recently post campaign.

Gum Litter Campaign Manager, **Avril Donlon of Food Drink Ireland** said: “We are delighted to launch the 2024 Gum Litter Taskforce campaign, with the support of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, today in Dublin. The results of the campaign are evident, and we are thrilled that 1 in 4 people state the GLT campaign as the reason for deterring them from littering gum. Last year we delivered significant results, with a record number of schools participating in the Bin It! Education programme, and we really look forward to what the 2024 campaign has in store.”

Katrine Grytter, Corporate Affairs Director, Mars Wrigley Northern Europe and Ireland said: We are very proud of the continued success of Gum Litter Taskforce campaign at Mars Wrigley and delighted with the continued support from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and Food Drink Ireland. The campaign helps to teach younger generations about the negative impacts of gum and other litter, and promotes an eco-conscious mindset. We look forward to the continued success of GLT campaign and its supporting bodies in 2024.”



Back row from Left:Olaf O’ Moore, Caroline Sinnott (Environment Section, Wexford County Council), Anthony Bailey, District Manager, Wexford Borough District, Cliona Connolly (Environment Section, Wexford County Council) and Patrick Cassells

Front row from left:Mummy Mokgalo (Wexford Tidy Towns) Councillor George Lawlor Mayor of Borough District of Wexford and Siliudile Zulu (Wexford Tidy Towns)

This year's campaign will see representatives from the Gum Litter Taskforce working with local authorities and communities to carry out education and awareness initiatives that demonstrate the proper means of gum disposal and raise awareness of the environmental and fiscal impacts of improper disposal.

Then, in September, the Gum Litter Taskforce's *Bin It!* education programme will travel across the country and deliver 60 performances a year to primary and secondary schools nationwide, with the ambition to visit 180 schools by 2025. This is in addition to useful lesson plan material that has been made available to almost 730 schools across Ireland.

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Notes to the Editor:

Initiated in 2007, the Gum Litter Taskforce is a collaboration between Food Drink Ireland, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, the chewing gum industry, and local authorities to achieve a long-term sustainable solution to the irresponsible disposal of chewing gum litter, through education and awareness campaigns that encourage behavioural change.

The national Gum Litter Taskforce Roadshow will commence on the week of June 10th, travelling to local authorities across all four provinces over the course of the Summer months. To date the campaign has engaged with over 30 local authorities across the country to promote community-led action on gum litter by hosting awareness initiatives and localised launch events and providing engagement and educational materials.

In September, the Gum Litter Taskforce's *Bin It!* education programme will travel across the country and deliver 60 performances a year to primary and secondary schools nationwide, with the ambition to visit 180 schools by 2025. This is in addition to useful lesson plan material that has been made available to almost 730 schools across Ireland.

Mars Ireland will continue to support environmental education programmes Neat Streets, Green Schools and the National Spring Clean. The National Spring Clean experienced a bumper year with the most participants on record and this sponsorship will support the delivery of the programme and the 5,600 spring cleans annually going forward. The sponsorship of Green Schools will support the delivery of the programme to more than 3,700 schools across the country.

