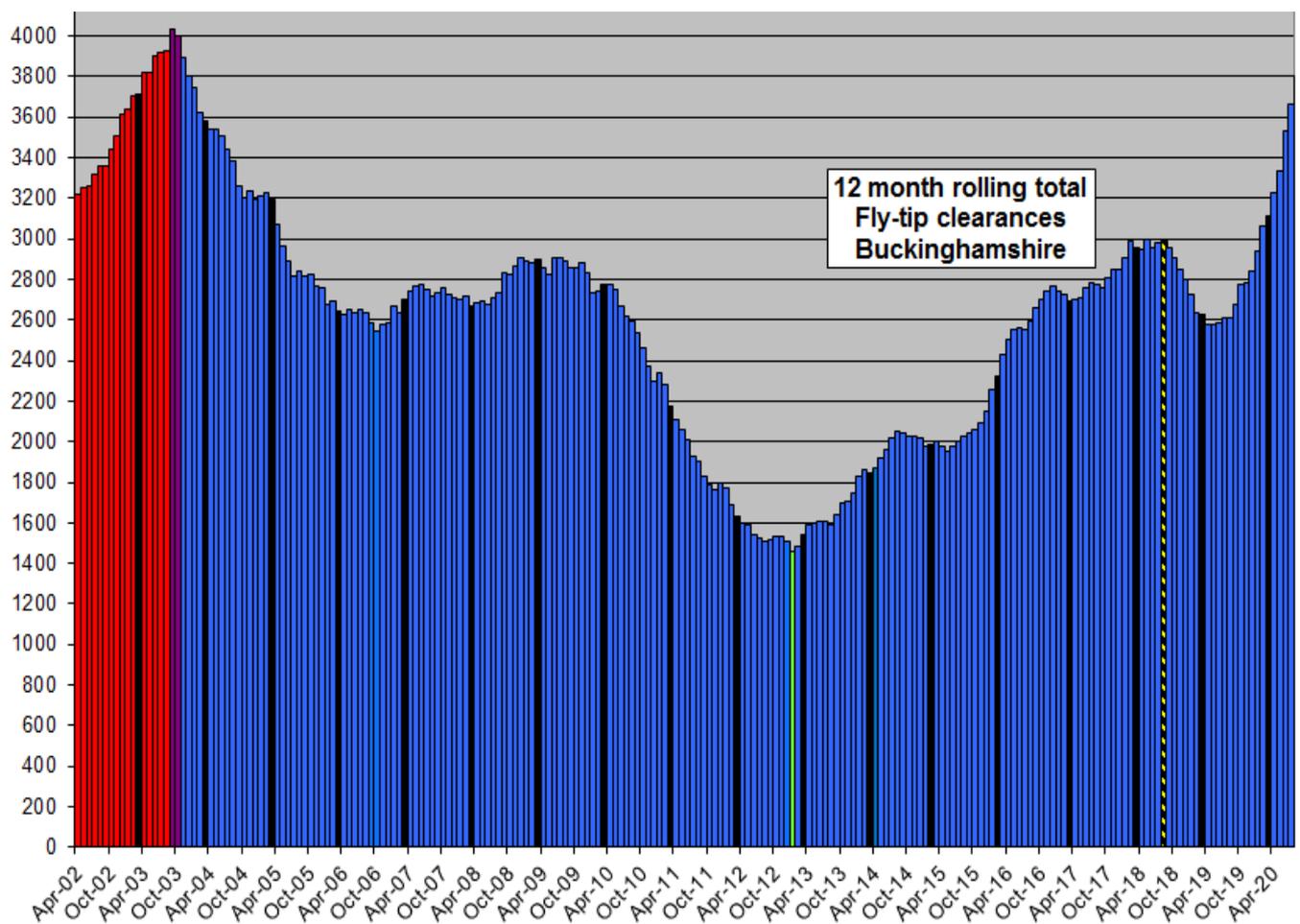


Fly-tipping - Clearances from public land (non-highway) – Buckinghamshire

Author: David Rounding (With input from Gary Slee & Andrew Jenkins)
7 September 2020

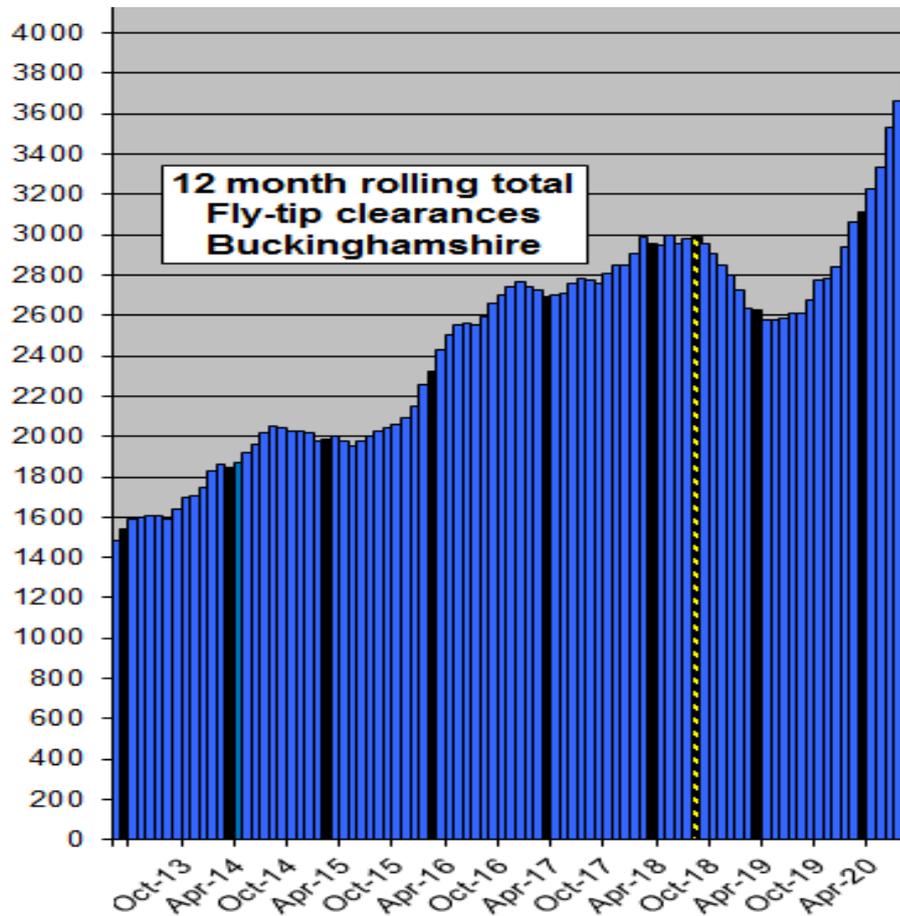
Background

1. The best available data in Buckinghamshire to illustrate fly-tipping trends is the set of clearances from public land (non-highway). This data has been consistently gathered since 2003 (March of every year is coloured **black** for reference purposes and the monthly data coloured **red** represents the time before the launch of the *Illegal Dumping Costs* campaign in Buckinghamshire, prior to which there was no local authority enforcement action taken) :-



2. This data shows a steady rise in fly-tipping across Buckinghamshire from 2013 onwards. This reflects the national trend in fly-tipping data for England which we believe reflects the economic pick-up following the 2008 Banking Crisis.
3. In August 2018 the Waste Partnership for Buckinghamshire (partnership between the five old councils prior to Buckinghamshire Council) launched the SCRAP Fly-tipping campaign in Bucks

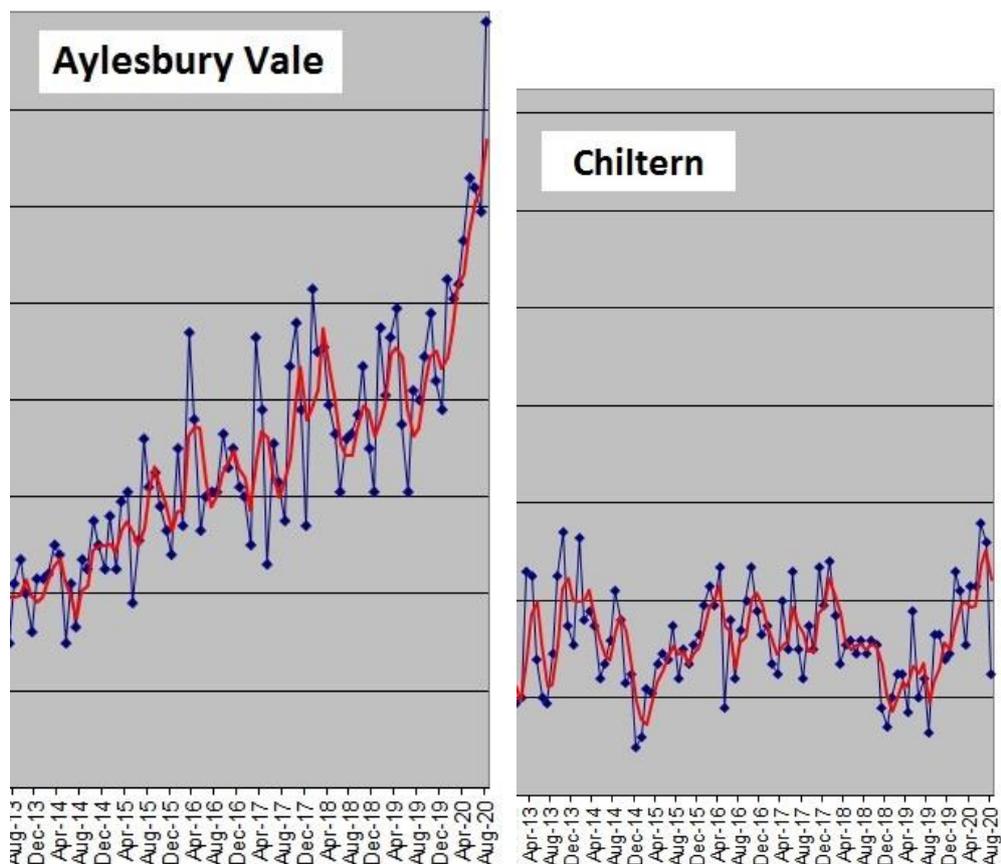
(with kind permission of Herts Waste Partnership). **August 2018** is coloured black and yellow of this graph to highlight it :-

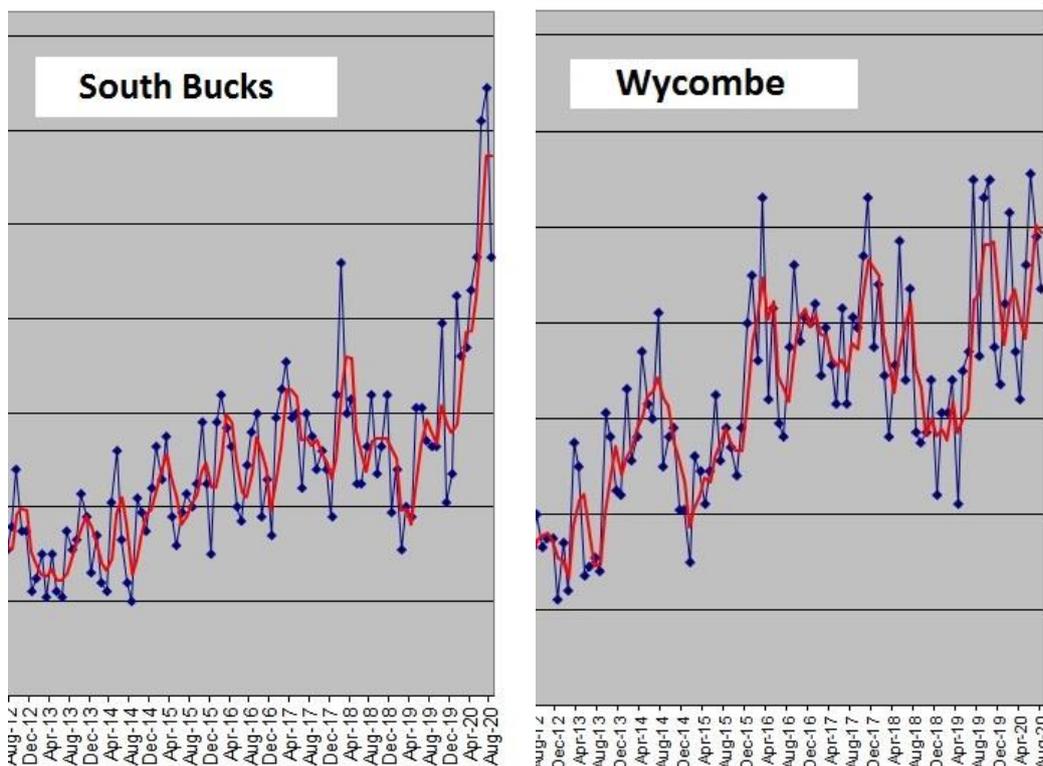


4. The SCRAP Fly-tipping campaign led to a significant fall in fly-tipping across Bucks over the following 12 months. This bucked the national trend for English authorities over the same period.
5. From September 2019 we recorded a renewed rise in fly-tipping in Bucks. We believe that to be a re-balancing towards the national trend.
6. It is important to note that our enforcement cases show that more than half of waste fly-tipped in Buckinghamshire has been brought into the county from elsewhere. They also show that more than 60% has been dumped by commercial waste carriers, often called 'trade waste'. It is therefore no surprise that Bucks data tends to revert towards the national trend.

COVID timeframe

7. Nationally the press have reported significant fly-tipping and littering since the COVID crisis hit. They suggest a significant rise in dumping and littering but national data for the period is not expected to be available until October 2021. In Bucks we have recorded significant increases in fly-tipping clearances as shown on the graph above.
8. During the COVID crisis the clean-up teams have recorded higher dumping rates than we have experienced in Bucks since 2002-3 which is still the peak 12 month dumping level (although likely to be overtaken unless there is a dramatic fall in dumping levels in the near future)
9. Anecdotally, officers have observed an increase in smaller dumps where householders have dumped their own waste, so that the recent percentage of incidents has skewed away from trade waste cases.
10. These graphs show fly-tipping clearances in the four former Bucks District areas :-





11. Buckinghamshire Council re-opened 5 of its principal Household Recycling Centres (**HRC**) on 6 May 2020. The remainder were re-opened on 29 May 2020 and the uptake of the sites has been very strong from the start at all sites.
12. Since the sites reopened, we have seen 80% of the usual visitor numbers for that time of year, despite only having half the parking spaces open due to social distancing.
13. We have, however, seen the amount of waste brought to sites increase by over 10%.
14. Despite smaller than usual numbers of residents using the sites more waste has been recycled which does not suggest any gap which would contribute to fly-tipping rises.
15. We have not recorded any reduction in fly-tipping since the sites were re-opened and indeed the gathered data shows a continued increase even when legitimate sites were available.
16. Surveillance cameras targeting fly-tipping were operating throughout Lockdown and over 40 offences were detected including traceable vehicle details during Lockdown itself. Of those vehicles only 5 belonged to Buckinghamshire residents. The majority (over 50%) were vehicles registered to Slough residents and we have worked with Slough Borough Council to circulate appropriate messages both in Buckinghamshire and Slough to address this.

17. While deterrent investigation messages were circulated during lockdown, the courts were not operating and no offenders were convicted for fly-tipping offences in Buckinghamshire from 19 March until 5 August 2020. On average prior to that Buckinghamshire had convicted better than one a week for 10 years.
18. Since 1 August 2020 Buckinghamshire Council has convicted 10 offenders who have incurred fines and costs totalling £17,500.
19. Buckinghamshire Council adopted powers to serve £400 Fixed Penalty Notices (**FPN**) on both fly-tipping offenders, and waste producers who fail in their duty of care regarding what happens to their waste. This has now been fully implemented and since 1 August **9 FPNs have been issued**.
20. We believe that we have seen something of an 'anarchic' response in both the dropping of litter and fly-tipping where more people than usual are willing to flout the law. We stress that this is still a very small number of people within the wider population as by far the majority of people are law-abiding and will not be tempted to dump waste illegally.
21. We hope that resumption of visible enforcement will help bring behaviour patterns closer to the usual ones as soon as possible and that we can continue to implement wider fly-tipping reduction strategies. This does seem to be shown in the geographic data from Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe. Aylesbury Vale data does not show a positive response since the courts became available again and we are analysing data to see if there are patterns we can target to reduce Aylesbury Vale dumping.