

4th May

Fly tipping has gone up in Oxford during the lockdown

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FLY tipping has increased under the lockdown in [Oxford](#), as tips have been closed to prevent non-essential journeys.

When the [coronavirus](#) lockdown began on March 23, all waste and recycling centres across the UK were closed to the public, as dumping bulky rubbish was not considered an essential journey.

In some areas, including parts of Oxfordshire, councils also stopped running special bulky waste collections because members of staff were off sick with the coronavirus.

In Oxford in particular, binmen have now noticed an uptick in the number of fly tipping incidents.

And an Oxford City Councillor has warned that illegal dumping diverts staff 'away from other important' work, like delivering meals to people stuck indoors due to the lockdown.

Outside the city, the number of fly tipping incidents remain steady, though there have been reports of people illegally dumping waste in country lanes and leaving piles of clothes to the sides of overflowing donation banks.

In Oxford, there is currently no collated data to prove that fly tipping has increased in the last six weeks.

But council staff, and staff working at the company Oxford Direct Services, which collects bins in the city, have been reporting more fly tipping incidents.

They have also noticed more members of the public phoning the council with reports of fly tipping.

These have included furniture or kitchen goods being left out on kerbsides, and cupboards dumped onto lawns.

Nigel Chapman, the city council's cabinet member for customer focused services, said: "We realise that it is an inconvenience not having the usual disposal services available, particularly with so many stuck at home keen to tidy up and de-clutter."

He added: "Fly tipping means that we have to divert staff from other more important work to clear the mess up. This is also putting our staff and local residents health at risk unnecessarily."

The city council has suspended bulky waste collections, and is today (Monday, May 4) reintroducing garden waste collections, after they were suspended several weeks ago.

The cut in services was due to many members of staff at ODS taking sick leave or having to self-isolate with family members.

Some council workers have also been redeployed, to work delivering food parcels to the vulnerable during the lockdown.

Outside of the city, Tim Bearder, [county](#) councillor for Wheatley, said he had noticed an ‘anecdotal’ increase in fly tipping in his area.

Mr Bearder said: “I go for an evening run most days. I cannot run very far from my house, but when I go I invariably see some fly tipping.”

The Lib Dem councillor said he had seen garden waste dumped on a country lane during his run.

He added that he thought the closure of tips had exacerbated fly tipping.

[Vale](#) of White Horse District Council also recently made an appeal for people to stop leaving clothes on the kerb alongside a clothes donation bank in Faringdon, because this is also considered fly tipping.

Despite the anecdotal evidence, Oxfordshire’s districts outside the city have not recorded an increased level of fly tipping since the lockdown, according to their own data.

In South Oxfordshire, there were 90 incidents of fly tipping in April according to provisional data, down from 92 in March, while in February there were 68.

In the Vale of White Horse district, there were 33 incidents in February, 32 in March and 39 in April.

In Cherwell, provisional data showed 60 recorded fly tipping incidents in April, 47 in March, and 60 in February.

But this number was actually a decrease on previous years records, with 73 fly tipping incidents in April 2019 and 71 in April 2018.

West Oxfordshire, which records fly tipping on a weekly basis also showed a general decrease in the number of incidents between 2019 and 2020.

The government’s local government minister Robert Jenrick said he expected tips to reopen within weeks last Tuesday.

An Oxfordshire County Council spokesman said a ‘possible decision’ to reopen Oxfordshire’s Household Waste Recycling Centres is currently under review.

They added: “Oxfordshire County Council will not be opening the sites again until conditions allow their safe operation for both public and contract staff. This includes any government changes to current rules on essential travel.

“We will notify the public of any update Oxfordshire County Council will make on the HWRCs and changes to their operating conditions.”

Fly tipping is a criminal offence and those caught doing it can be fined and prosecuted.



Picture: Oxford City Council



Fly tipping on the road between Worminghall and Stanton St John. Picture: Tim Bearder



Fly tipping at the donation banks in Faringdon