



**For immediate release**

## **Picnickers Beware – You Are Being Watched!**

**In their latest efforts to tackle food-on-the-go litter, Keep Scotland Beautiful's oversized litter costumes will be spending Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July entertaining picnickers and visitors to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, reminding them to put their packaging and leftovers in the bin when finished or to take them home with them.**

The litter costumes will also be used to launch Keep Scotland Beautiful's first food-on-the-go litter campaign to focus people's attention on the ongoing problem of litter created by food and drink on the go, as the Glasgow Fair Fortnight starts and the English school holidays begin.

The launch is being organised by Keep Scotland Beautiful, the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park and Argyll and Bute Council at Luss which is a popular destination for day trippers and holiday makers.

Through posters distributed Scotland-wide, the campaign will target everyone who eats outside – the 'al fresco' audience - and highlight that dropping such litter is a crime which can result in the perpetrator being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for £50.

With 34% of all city and town-centre sites surveyed in Scotland in 2008-09 being blighted by fast food, drinks and confectionary litter, it seems that although food-on-the-go may be the quickest way to satisfy those hunger and thirst pangs, the effects of tossing away leftovers and wrappers are often slow to disappear. And when the average plastic film container takes 20-30 years to break down it is no wonder that so many of our open spaces provide a stark reminder of people's throw away attitude.

Programme Manager for Keep Scotland Beautiful, Donna Niven, said, “We are urging people not to drop their left over food or drink litter on the ground as part of this Keep Scotland Tidy campaign for a number of reasons. Not only can the visual impact of food-on-the-go litter be bad for business and tourism, it can present risks to animals and children, and Scottish local authorities are spending over £100 million a year removing litter from our roads and open spaces – money that in the current economic climate, could be saved if we all just put our litter in the bin.

“The truth is that dropping food-on-the-go litter - whether during the day time following lunch time picnicking or after an evening ‘al-fresco’ barbeque - is a crime for which you could be fined £50. And with more and more fixed penalty notices being issued for dropping litter – over 7,500 between April 2008 & 2009 - there is more chance of you being caught.”

Iona McDonald, Sustainable Development Advisor at Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park said, “Luss is a beautiful village in the National Park and many people enjoy coming here and having picnics. To keep Luss free of food and drink litter, everyone has to dispose of their rubbish responsibly. We’ll be in Luss on the 24<sup>th</sup> July, encouraging people to do their bit to keep Luss tidy. Those people who recycle in Luss car park that day will be in with the chance of winning prizes. There will be a few surprises and games on the day and winning posters by Luss Primary School will be on show. We want everyone to enjoy their time in Luss and those who spoil this by dropping litter will risk being fined.”

Councillor Robert Macintyre, Environment spokesperson for Argyll and Bute Council said, “Argyll and Bute is blessed by stunning scenery and an environment rich in the most diverse flora and fauna in the UK.

“Leaving behind food and drink litter is not only unsightly, spoiling the experience for other people, but is potentially very dangerous to wildlife. I hope that this anti-litter event goes well and that everyone attending enjoys their day, but equally, I hope that

they take home with them the important message that everyone is responsible for the environment.”

- Ends –

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The on-line media centre is available at: <http://news.keepsScotlandBeautiful.org/foodonthego.asp>

#### **Notes for Editors**

- Keep Scotland Beautiful is one of Scotland's leading environmental charities, administering anti-litter campaigns under the Keep Scotland Tidy slogan along with the People and Places, Blue Flag and Eco-Schools environment programmes, Waste Aware Scotland, Sustainable Scotland Network, Climate Challenge Fund and Going Carbon Neutral Stirling campaign.
- This is Keep Scotland Beautiful's first food-on-the-go litter campaign.
- The campaign focuses on the ongoing problem of litter created by food and drink on the go, and will be launched in Luss on the 24<sup>th</sup> July by Keep Scotland Beautiful, the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park and Argyll and Bute Council.
- The term 'food-on-the-go litter' refers not only to food debris, but to all items relating to food-on-the-go - including the containers in which take-away food is packaged; chip wrappers, burger or pizza boxes; packaging of other food-on-the-go, such as sandwich boxes and bakery bags, sweetie wrappers and crisp packets; drinks bottles; and also disposable barbeques.
- Food-on-the-go litter can be bad for business and tourism, dangerous to children and animals, attract rodents and encourage further anti-social behaviour.
- Every year approximately 40% of Scotland surveyed shows a presence of litter relating specifically to food-on-the-go.
- Food-on-the-go litter was found on 43% of Scottish streets in 2005/2006
- Food-on-the-go litter was found on 42% of Scottish streets in 2006/2007
- Food-on-the-go litter was found on 37% of Scottish streets in 2007/2008
- 34% of all city, town centres and high schools in 30 out of the 32 Local Authorities surveyed in Scotland in 2008-09, were blighted by food-on-the-go litter.
- Fixed Penalty Notices of £50 can be issued by trained local authority officers and police constables across the country and in 2008/09 over 7,500 were issued.
- Keep Scotland Beautiful carries out annual Local Environmental Audit & Management System (LEAMS) validation surveys of 2% of all local authority areas providing external, independent evaluation of cleanliness standards across Scotland.