

# Discussion session:

## Is illegal waste crime in England becoming an epidemic?

**"The new narcotics": how waste crime is causing environmental disaster across the UK**

**Two illegal waste sites holding 75,000 tonnes identified in Burnley**

24TH JANUARY CRIME ENVIRONMENT



Two illegal sites were identified in Burnley (Image: PA)

**20,000 Tonnes of waste discovered in field beside A34, Kindlington, Oxfordshire!**



Q Your Commissioner ▾ Police & Crime Plan ▾

NEWS

Latest News

**30 Wembley Stadiums full of waste: How criminals are making a fortune from rubbish**

5th June 2025

**Fly tippers are dumping waste around the clock. Nobody stops it**

Enough illegal rubbish is thrown away every year to fill Wembley 35 times. Officials in one blighted area are threatened by organised crime gangs

Samuel Lovett

The sound of the lorry starts with a rumble and builds to a roar as it races past

window. He has complained to the council, collected photo evidence and joined forces with his equally unhappy neighbours. But it has all been in vain.

Over the past two years, Kay says, nothing has been done by the authorities to stop the near-daily flow of lorries and tractors through his estate as they drive to dump illegal waste at a nearby farm.

"It usually starts at 7am and can go until midnight. It's just constant," he said. "In the last week we've had 30 to 40 truckloads going past every day."

Lower Micklehurst Farm, on the edge

ment Agency (EA). The agency believes it contains at least 30,000 tonnes of illegally deposited material, which would make it bigger than the "mountain" of rubbish recently uncovered in Oxfordshire. The farm is run by a 34-year-old called Josh Riley.

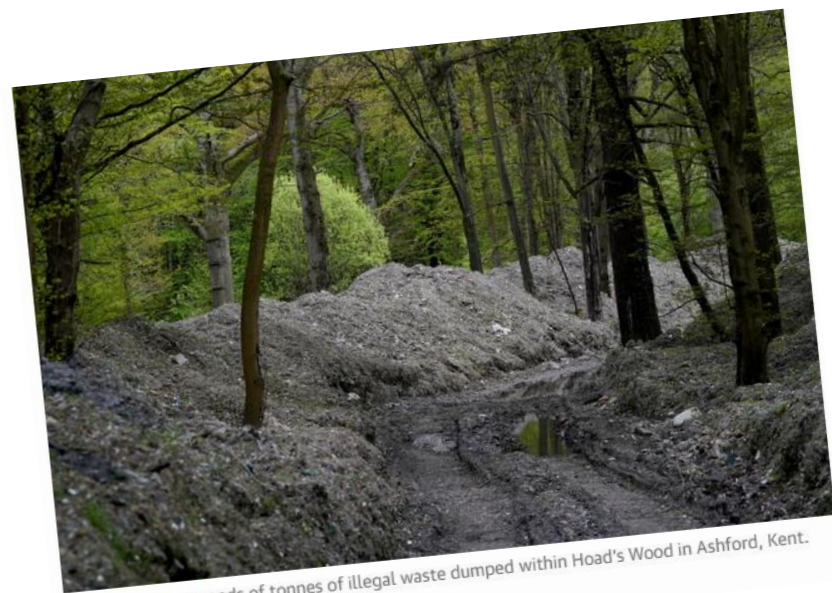
The EA claims the Burnley site is "inactive and closed", yet The Sunday Times saw lorries and tractors driven through Kay's estate to dump their loads onto the farm. No efforts were made to stop them.

It is a common story. The authorities are grappling with a wave of waste crime: more than 33 million tonnes

aged, costing £1 billion. The vast heaps of illegal waste are a criminal enterprise in every corner of the country. Many of the sites in England are in the south and south-east, and some are in the north.







A view of thousands of tonnes of illegal waste dumped within Hoad's Wood in Ashford, Kent.  
Photograph: Gareth Fuller/PA



20,000 Tonnes of waste discovered in field  
beside A34, Kindlington, Oxfordshire!

*"take more action"*

*"exposed widespread illegal dumping  
across the country"*

**Baroness Sheehan**  
Chair, House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee

**BBC NEWS**

■ Queen Elizabeth II statue will be standing and not on horseback

18:12

Press release

## New survey shows just 27% of all waste crime incidents reported

Environment Agency publishes results of National Waste Crime Survey 2025, showing almost three quarters of all waste crimes go unreported

From: [Environment Agency](#), [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#) and [Mary Creagh CBE MP](#)

Published 23 July 2025



Landowners and farmers are being urged to help the Environment Agency stop waste crime as new research shows only 12% reported the most recent incidents which affected them.

The findings were revealed today (Wednesday 23 July) in the results of the Environment Agency's [National Waste Crime Survey 2025](#), which also show more than half (57%) of landowners and farmers are estimated to have been affected by waste crime.



## National waste crime survey: 2025 results and findings

Chief Scientist's Group report

July 2025



## Key Trends and Data (2025-2026):

- Scale of Crime:** Roughly 20% of waste industry organisations in England are suspected of involvement in waste crime.
- Fly-tipping:** Large-scale fly-tipping incidents increased by about 11%, with construction waste dumping rising 8%.
- Environmental Damage:** Major incidents like the Hoad's Wood dump involved 30,000 tonnes of illegal waste, devastating local ecosystems.
- Economic Impact:** The cost to the economy has risen by 55% from 2015 estimates to £1 billion per year.
- Enforcement:** Despite closing 743 sites in 2024/25, 517 active illegal dumps remain. The House of Lords has criticized the EA for slow responses and insufficient convictions.

