# Pressure mounts to tackle litter crisis in UK’s protected natural beauty spots



The degradation of natural beauty spots in the UK has become a pressing issue, as exemplified by a recent outpouring of frustration from Nigel Dixon, chairman of the Borrowdale Institute. Following a bank holiday weekend, litter was left strewn across the picturesque Black Moss Pot in the Langstrath Valley, prompting Mr Dixon to take to social media to express his dismay. He emphasised the necessity of educating visitors on the importance of preserving the area's beauty, urging them to adhere to the countryside code. “People need to learn respect, common sense and to obey the countryside code,” he commented, highlighting a sentiment shared by many locals who witness the aftermath of careless behaviour day in and day out.

The responses to Mr Dixon’s online post were notably passionate, illuminating a broader concern among locals regarding visitor conduct in cherished locations. One commenter, Holly Dearden Milburn, reported not just the litter itself but the troubling behaviour of some visitors who seem oblivious to the impact of their actions. “They happily carry up full barbecues, crates of beer, cool boxes full of food and then dump it,” she lamented, advocating for penalties against such disregard for the environment. Such feelings are echoed throughout various nature spots in the UK, where wildlife and natural habitats suffer due to the massive surge in litter left by increasingly casual users of these spaces.

Beyond mere aesthetics, littering poses significant environmental risks. According to the New Forest National Park Authority, litter removal costs the region over £250,000 annually, underscoring the financial burden that this behaviour places on local authorities. The Royal Parks charity echoes these concerns, noting that it costs at least £1.3 million annually to manage litter across protected parks. The consequences of littering extend far beyond financial implications; wildlife can become entangled in discarded plastics or ingest harmful substances, leading to detrimental effects on biodiversity.

The National Parks of the UK have faced intensified challenges regarding litter, particularly following the boom in staycations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Campaign for National Parks highlighted the financial strain on the Peak District National Park Authority, which allocated £37,000 to litter removal in 2019, funds that could have been otherwise utilised for conservation efforts. Surveys commissioned by organisations such as Friends of the Lake District reveal that over 25% of visitors admit to leaving litter, with many expecting to encounter waste bins even in remote locations. This expectation demonstrates a troubling disconnect between visitor convenience and environmental responsibility.

Efforts are being made to address these issues through campaigns aimed at enhancing public awareness and promoting responsible habits among visitors. Initiatives such as humourous 'Last bin until' messages and community-led litter picks have shown promise in fostering collective responsibility. Groups like ‘Motorhomes and Campervans Against Litter’ advocate for green camping practices, encouraging campers to take proactive steps in preserving the natural splendour of the parks they enjoy.

While not all visitors contribute to the litter issue, as noted by Mark Hedley in his supportive comments towards conscientious tourists, the combined voice of concerned locals advocates for a broader cultural shift regarding how both tourists and day-trippers engage with these beautiful landscapes. Returning to the sentiment expressed by Mr Dixon, it remains imperative that education, respect, and adherence to established guidelines are instilled within the hearts of all who come to treasure these natural treasures.

As we face ongoing challenges from littering and its consequences, communities and organisations must continue collaborating to foster a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for protecting the environment—ensuring that both locals and visitors can enjoy the area's beauty for generations to come.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://keswickreminder.co.uk/2025/05/10/disgust-at-litter-dumped-at-borrowdale-beauty-spot/)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://keswickreminder.co.uk/2025/05/10/disgust-at-litter-dumped-at-borrowdale-beauty-spot/), [[4]](https://www.cnp.org.uk/blog/why-are-our-national-parks-full-of-rubbish/)
3. Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/visiting/help-care-for-the-forest/littering/), [[3]](https://www.royalparks.org.uk/get-in-touch/media-centre/royal-parks-urges-visitors-take-litter-home-protect-wildlife)
4. Paragraph 4: [[4]](https://www.cnp.org.uk/blog/why-are-our-national-parks-full-of-rubbish/), [[5]](https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/news/litter-research)
5. Paragraph 5: [[6]](https://www.itv.com/news/2020-08-13/unauthorised-camping-and-littering-in-britains-beauty-spots-increase-as-holidaymakers-seek-staycations)
6. Paragraph 6: [[7]](https://www.cnp.org.uk/blog/motorhomes-and-campervans-against-litter-volunteers-help-keep-national-parks-tidy/)
7. Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://keswickreminder.co.uk/2025/05/10/disgust-at-litter-dumped-at-borrowdale-beauty-spot/), [[2]](https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/visiting/help-care-for-the-forest/littering/), [[5]](https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/news/litter-research)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://keswickreminder.co.uk/2025/05/10/disgust-at-litter-dumped-at-borrowdale-beauty-spot/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/visiting/help-care-for-the-forest/littering/> - The New Forest National Park Authority addresses the issue of littering, highlighting the impact on the park's natural beauty and wildlife. They emphasize the importance of visitors taking their litter home and provide information on the costs associated with litter removal, which exceed £250,000 annually. The authority collaborates with local organizations to promote responsible behavior and organizes campaigns to educate the public about the consequences of littering.
3. <https://www.royalparks.org.uk/get-in-touch/media-centre/royal-parks-urges-visitors-take-litter-home-protect-wildlife> - The Royal Parks charity urges visitors to take their litter home to protect wildlife. They highlight the dangers of littering, such as animals becoming entangled in plastic bags or ingesting harmful materials. The charity reports that it costs at least £1.3 million annually to collect and dispose of litter across the parks. They also mention the impact of discarded barbecues and other waste on the environment and wildlife.
4. <https://www.cnp.org.uk/blog/why-are-our-national-parks-full-of-rubbish/> - The Campaign for National Parks discusses the increasing problem of litter in UK national parks, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. They mention that the Peak District National Park Authority spent £37,000 in 2019 on litter removal, funds that could have been used for other conservation efforts. The article emphasizes the need for education, engagement, and collaboration to address the issue and suggests initiatives like local codes of conduct and community litter picks.
5. <https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/news/litter-research> - Friends of the Lake District commissioned a survey revealing that over a quarter of visitors admit to leaving litter behind in the Lake District. The survey also found that 52% of visitors expect to find litter bins even in remote areas. The organization suggests measures such as 'Last bin until' message boards and humorous messaging to encourage responsible behavior and reduce littering.
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/2020-08-13/unauthorised-camping-and-littering-in-britains-beauty-spots-increase-as-holidaymakers-seek-staycations> - ITV News reports on the increase of unauthorized camping and littering in UK national parks as more people opt for 'staycations.' The National Trust and National Parks Authority warn of the environmental impact, with incidents of discarded equipment and litter becoming more common. The report highlights the need for measures to address these issues and protect the natural environment.
7. <https://www.cnp.org.uk/blog/motorhomes-and-campervans-against-litter-volunteers-help-keep-national-parks-tidy/> - The Campaign for National Parks highlights the efforts of the 'Motorhomes and Campervans Against Litter' group, which encourages campers to take responsibility for keeping national parks clean. The group has grown significantly, with members organizing litter picks and promoting responsible camping practices to protect the environment and wildlife.