Alarming facts about butt litter

• Around 80% of England’s streets are swamped with cigarette ends, boxes, matches, cellophane and lighters – making cigarette debris our biggest litter problem. (Source: ENCAMS).

• The most frequently cited reason for butts littering is no convenient point of disposal – no bins or not enough bins.

• 200 million cigarette butts are thrown away each day in the UK. (Source: ENCAMS).

• An annual survey of England (LEQSE) monitored 12,000 sites and found over 79% of them strewn with cigarette butts and packets.

• In the UK, cigarettes account for over 40% of street litter. (Source: ENCAMS).

• 122 tons of cigarette butts and cigarette related litter is dropped every day in the UK. (Source: ENCAMS).

• Street cleaning in the UK costs £413m – this is paid for by council taxes.

• Cigarette butts are made of cellulose acetate, which takes up to 12 years to biodegrade.

• Cigarette butts leak toxins that contaminate water and harm marine life and the environment.

• Cigarette filters have been found in the stomachs of fish, birds, whales and other marine creatures, who mistake them for food.

• As the anti-smoking lobby’s campaign gains momentum, employers are banning smoking from not only indoor areas but outdoor areas too – employees are forced out on to public spaces where the facilities are limited to non-existent.

• A full smoking ban in pubs and clubs is likely to substantially increase the cigarette litter burden.

• In Ireland, 61% of people believe litter from smoking has risen since the Republic introduced a similar ban back in March 2004.

• Cigarette butt litter is a global problem – worldwide, smokers toss at least 4.5 trillion cigarette butts each year.

“Without proper facilities, smokers will turn our streets into a giant ashtray,” said Alan Woods, Chief Executive of Keep Britain Tidy.

“Cigarette butts, boxes and matches are already our biggest litter problem, blighting 90% of our high streets – so we need to act now and ensure smokers have what they need to dispose of their rubbish correctly.”

For more information: www.buttcatchers.co.uk