

Ash boxes can rid the streets of the fag ends

▶ With new generation of personal ashtrays, smokers can rid H&F of piles of stubbed ciggies
▶ Persistent litter louts to be pursued in a two-pronged clean-up drive

JON WEISGARD

MOST of the litter dumped on the streets of Hammersmith & Fulham is cigarette butts.

Now, to beat the butts, H&F Council bosses have teamed up with Keep Britain Tidy and local retailers to offer smokers a personal ButtsOut ashtray.

The funky ButtsOut ashtray is a quirkily designed box for cigarette ends that fits perfectly in the hand and snugly in the pocket. Now that most smokers puff outdoors,

it is the perfect solution when an ashtray is not close at hand.

H&F Council is the first local authority in London to actively promote the ashtrays and it is expected that other will follow suit as the capital seeks the cleanest streets possible in the run up to the 2012 Olympic Games.

The council is also working with local retailers and businesses to ensure widespread availability of personal ashtrays from stores, so that smokers can take responsibility for their own cigarette litter and make the streets cleaner.

If nothing else, smokers can avoid a nasty fine by using their ButtsOut ashtray.

In 2008-2009, around 850

people were fined locally for cigarette litter offences.

H&F cabinet member Greg Smith said: "Cigarette litter is a growing issue locally and ButtsOut is an innovative way to tackle the problem.

"While our street sweepers clean literally millions of butts from our roads and pavements, you can do your bit by buying one of these trendy boxes. It really is a small price to pay to keep our streets clean."

While the council urges smokers to buy a ButtsOut personal ashtray, it is continuing to proactively seek out persistent butt-droppers and litter louts.

Beat officers are inspecting every street in the borough – at least once every 10 working days – and key routes are checked daily, meaning there is an increased chance that litter bugs who do not get the message will be penalised.

Officers from the council and the Met Police's Safer Neighbourhood Teams regularly challenge persistent litter-dropping offenders, and have the power to issue fixed penalty notices of £75. If litter bugs refuse to pay the fine they can end up with a criminal record.

● ButtsOut ashtrays are available from local shops for 99p. If you want to quit smoking, call 020 8741 8314.



NO BUTS ABOUT IT:

The new ButtsOut personal ashtray is designed to keep cigarette ends off the street. The boxes are available in local shops for 99p