



England's most polluted place: a Dorset village

By Emma Gatten

A PICTURESQUE village in Dorset has been named as England's most polluted hotspot, ahead of a taxi rank in Sheffield.

Residents of Chideock say they are blighted by pollution caused by traffic from lorries and holidaymakers on the A35, which runs through the village.

But it was only when they moved their air quality monitoring site to the village's main hill, where drivers are forced to accelerate, that they captured the extent of the problem.

The village now ranks at the top of the list of English locations where nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels breach the annual Air Quality Objective, according to analysis by Friends of the Earth.

The west Dorset village is one of 1,360 sites across England to breach limits of 40 micrograms of NO₂ per cubic metre of air (mcg/m³), which local authorities are obligated to achieve.

Chideock Hill recorded annual average levels of 97.7 in 2018, 144 per cent higher than the limit.

The main cause of NO₂ pollution is traffic emissions, and the majority of the other locations in the top 10 are in large towns and cities.

The number of locations breaching limits dropped 231 on the previous year, but Friends of the Earth said it was still "shocking".

"Failing to fix air pollution costs lives," said Simon Bowens, clean air campaigner at Friends of the Earth.





Dorset, left, and in 1922, far left, before coastal traffic polluted the air

Toxic top 10 Pollution hotspots

1. Chideock Hill, West Dorset, 97.7
 2. Station Taxi Rank, Sheffield, 91.7
 3. North Street Clock Tower, Brighton, 90.8
 4. Neville Street tunnel, Leeds, 88
 5. The Strand, City of Westminster, 88
 6. Wallbrook Wharf, City of London, 87
 7. Fir Tree Close, Doncaster, 86
 8. Marylebone Road, City of Westminster, 85
 9. Euston Road, London Borough of Camden, 82.3
 10. Hickleton, John O'Gaunts, Doncaster, 82
- England locations ranked by annual average level of NO₂ (in mcg/m³).*

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