

## Litter League shows towns dirtier than ever at weekends

IBAL says "good are getting better, bad are getting worse"

The third survey in the Irish Business Against Litter All-Ireland Anti-Litter League has been completed and results show an increase in litter levels across the country. Of 29 towns surveyed, 16 are now considered to be "heavily" or "very heavily" littered. Inspections took place over weekends in July to establish if the same attention is paid to the litter problem at weekends as on weekdays. IBAL contends that weekend cleaning is essential, as this is when towns and villages are most enjoyed by both locals and tourists alike.

**Latest standings in the All Ireland Anti-Litter League are as follows.**

Position	County	Town	Litter Rating(previous)	GRADE
1.	Carlow	Carlow	83(69)	A "Litter-Free"
2.	Fermanagh	Enniskillen	81(80)	A "Litter-Free"
3.	Cork	Fermoy	80(84)	A "Litter-Free"
4.	Armagh	Armagh	79(81)	B "Moderately Littered"
5.	Wexford	Wexford	76(81)	B "Moderately Littered"
6.	Cavan	Cavan	74(67)	B "Moderately Littered"
7.	Leitrim	Carrick on Shannon	72(66)	B "Moderately Littered"
8.	Limerick	Newcastlewest	71(70)	B "Moderately Littered"
9.	Meath	Navan	70(77)	B "Moderately Littered"
10.	Kilkenny	Kilkenny	68(65)	B "Moderately Littered"
11.	Clare	Ennis	67(67)	B "Moderately Littered"
12.	Waterford	Tramore	67(65)	B "Moderately Littered"
13.	Westmeath	Mullingar	65(82)	B "Moderately Littered"
14.	Tyrone	Omagh	64(68)	C "Heavily Littered"
15.	Wicklow	Bray	63(59)	C "Heavily Littered"
16.	Mayo	Ballina	63(54)	C "Heavily Littered"
17.	Donegal	Letterkenny	62(57)	C "Heavily Littered"
18.	Galway	Tuam	61(56)	C "Heavily Littered"
19.	Laois	Portlaoise	60(61)	C "Heavily Littered"
20.	Monaghan	Monaghan	59(63)	C "Heavily Littered"
21.	Kildare	Newbridge	58(62)	C "Heavily Littered"
22.	Offaly	Tullamore	58(60)	C "Heavily Littered"
23.	Kerry	Tralee	57(52)	C "Heavily Littered"
24.	Tipperary	Clonmel	56(62)	C "Heavily Littered"
25.	Roscommon	Roscommon	55(58)	C "Heavily Littered"
26.	Louth	Drogheda	54(55)	D "Very Heavily Littered"
27.	Longford	Longford	52(47)	D "Very Heavily Littered"
28.	Sligo	Sligo	49(49)	D "Very Heavily Littered"
29.	Dublin	Liberties-Coombe	24(38)	D "Very Heavily Littered"

Once again the towns in the South have been out-performed by those in Northern Ireland. The average score for the three Northern towns is 75, down from 76 in the last survey, while the average for the South remains at 62.

Commenting on the results, Dr. Tom Cavanagh, Chairman, Irish Business Against Litter said “A telling finding of this round of the league was the poor performance of the dirtier towns. In essence, the gap in litter levels between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ towns was accentuated in the weekend survey: the good are getting better, the bad are getting worse.” Towns in the bottom third of the league deteriorated by 20% since the last survey.

“It is important for local authorities to remember that, particularly during the summer months, there is a higher volume of activity on the streets of our towns at weekends, both during the day and at night. People are out and about with their children, shopping or simply relaxing in the atmosphere about town. Weekend nights are busy in pubs, clubs and fast-food outlets. The unfortunate truth revealed by these findings is that the remnants of Friday’s and Saturday’s activities are strewn along streets until Monday morning.”

The latest set of results has shown an increase in litter levels in 15 of the 29 towns surveyed, while only 9 have improved. Mullingar has proven particularly disappointing, dropping from 2nd to 13th place. This will upset many people in the area. However, other towns have made great efforts in a short space of time. Carlow town has climbed seven places to reach the top spot in the league table. Similarly, Cavan has climbed from tenth to sixth position. These towns are proving that litter need not be an inevitable feature of a streetscape. If other local authorities were more systematic in their distribution of labour and resources, they could rapidly improve on their current status.

IBAL claims Local Authority structures may explain the varying performances of towns in the weekend survey. “County councils tend to be less flexible in their approach to working hours and waste management than urban councils,” comments Dr Cavanagh. “Mullingar is an example. Managed by a county council, it did very well on the weekday survey but fell at the weekend. Carlow, on the other hand, managed by an urban council, improved significantly at the weekend.”

“Litter is more than a social and economic problem. On an individual basis, it is a quality of life issue. Litter is unhygienic and unsightly; intrusive and potentially dangerous. Irish Business Against Litter wants to eliminate litter from the Irish landscape permanently. Cleaning up the landscape will contribute to Ireland’s status as a holiday destination and as a prime location for foreign direct investment. To do this the government must act now to enforce anti-litter laws.”

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#### Editor’s note

Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) is an alliance of companies sharing a belief that continued economic prosperity – notably in the areas of tourism, food and direct foreign investment - is contingent on a clean, litter-free environment. Enforcement of litter laws, as opposed to public awareness campaigns, is the most effective means of ensuring this in our towns and cities.

The All-Ireland Anti-Litter League involves 26 towns representing every county in Ireland, plus 3 from Northern Ireland, being assessed for litter by An Taisce and ranked in a league table according to their performance. This is the 3rd of 4 readings that will take place over the course of 2002. The final results will be announced in December.