

Cavan is cleanest as 2003 Litter League concludes

Survey reveals heavily littered areas concentrated in Leinster 'blackbelt'

At a ceremony in Dublin today, Cavan was awarded first place in the 2003 Anti-Litter League. Organised by Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL), the League is an assessment of 30 towns across the country according to litter levels. While a record 8 towns achieved 'litter free' status, 7 areas were deemed 'litter blackspots' or 'heavily littered', 6 of which are in the East of the country. Longford was deemed 'Most Improved Town', having improved its rating from 'very heavily littered' to 'clean to European standards.'

The aim of the League is to bring cleanliness levels up to European norms, or 80 points according to an internationally standard applied by An Taisce. When the first IBAL measuring took place in early 2002, the average cleanliness rating among towns was 58. This has now risen to 70, a 22% improvement. Initially, two thirds of towns were found to be heavily or very heavily littered. This has now fallen to one quarter.

"I think this result speaks volumes for the impact of the League," comments Dr Tom Cavanagh, Chairman, Irish Business Against Litter. "The payoff will be not just a nicer environment to live in. It will be more tourism, more job creation and more job retention."

With the support of the Department of the Environment, 2003 saw the inclusion of cities in the League for the first time. Although litter levels have improved by 13% since the first monitoring of these areas in Spring, only two such areas are in the top half of the League.

While Dun Laoghaire attained a litter-free rating, neighbouring Bray finished at the foot of the table, with Navan, Dublin City Centre and Drogheda also deemed 'litter blackspots'. Sligo, Swords and Newbridge were also considered 'heavily littered'.

"Almost half of our total population live in our cities," continued Dr Cavanagh. "It is encouraging that 6 of the 8 areas have improved since the first reading in Spring, but litter remains a problem in our cities."

A study of educational establishments found Trinity College, UCD and the Cork Institute of Technology to be 'litter free', while the Limerick Institute of Technology and DIT Kevin Street were both heavily littered. The Institute of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering of University College Galway was deemed a 'litter blackspot' by the An Taisce surveyors.

Dublin's Connolly station and Busaras were found to be among most litter-ridden stations in the country, in contrast to stations in Kilkenny, Waterford and Portlaoise, which were declared 'clean to European norms.'

Final standings in the Anti-Litter League 2003 are as follows:

Ranking	Town / City	Rating
1	Cavan	Clean to European Norms
2	Dun Laoghaire	Clean to European Norms
3	Longford	Clean to European Norms
4	Tralee	Clean to European Norms
5	Wexford	Clean to European Norms
6	Mullingar	Clean to European Norms
7	Carrick on Shannon	Clean to European Norms
8	Kilrush	Clean to European Norms
9	Fermoy	Moderately littered
10	Letterkenny	Moderately littered
11	Monaghan	Moderately littered
12	Kilkenny	Moderately littered
13	Limerick	Moderately littered
14	Ballina	Moderately littered
15	Roscommon	Moderately littered
16	Carlow	Moderately littered
17	Clonmel	Moderately littered
18	Portlaoise	Moderately littered
19	Tullamore	Moderately littered
20	Cork city	Moderately littered
21	Tallaght	Moderately littered
22	Galway	Moderately littered
23	Waterford	Moderately littered
24	Newbridge	Serious Litter Problem
25	Swords	Serious Litter Problem
26	Sligo	Serious Litter Problem
27	Drogheda	Litter 'Black Spot'
28	Dublin City Centre	Litter 'Black Spot'
29	Navan	Litter 'Black Spot'
30	Bray	Litter 'Black Spot'

Set up in 1996, Irish Business Against Litter is an alliance encompassing more than 30 member companies, employing in excess of 70,000 staff. Members share 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.

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