



Press release  
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## Anti-Litter League reveals sharp increase in heavily littered areas

First indications that smoking ban is contributing to litter levels

There has been a 50% increase in the number of towns in Ireland deemed to be 'litter blackspots' or 'seriously littered', according to Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL). The first round of results of the IBAL Anti Litter League shows 11 towns out of 30 to have a serious litter problem, compared to just 7 at the end of last year. The League, based on surveys by An Taisce, showed Fermoy to be the cleanest town, with Tullamore the dirtiest. A special study conducted of Swords appears to bear out IBAL's earlier warnings that the cigarette ban could lead to an increase in butts on our streets.

The average litter rating is 68 points, a 23% improvement on the initial survey result of 55 in Spring 2002, but well short of the target of 80, which equates to European cleanliness standards. The number of litter-free towns remained constant, but there was a sharp increase in the number of poorly performing areas. 6 towns were deemed 'litter blackspots', including Galway City.

"It's a case of the good getting better and the bad getting worse," explains Dr Tom Cavanagh, Chairman of IBAL. "Those local authorities, who are intent on improving their towns, are succeeding. On the other hand, where the local authorities choose not to act, their litter rating falls quite rapidly. Our citizens deserve better from their local government."

Of the city areas surveyed, Dun Laoghaire again emerged as 'litter-free'. Dublin City Centre improved to a moderately littered rating, its highest since entering the league early last year. However, the results showed no improvement in cities overall, which are still 'lamentably short' of the cleanliness standards that prevail on the Continent.

According to An Taisce, the level of cigarette butts on the streets in Swords has risen by around 20% since the introduction of the smoking ban.\* "It's too early to properly gauge the impact of the smoking ban," says Dr Cavanagh. "From first indications, it appears that where butt disposal bins are present, they are being used. Where not, as is the case with many pubs, cafes and takeaways, lots of litter is the norm. Local authorities need to step up enforcement to prevent these areas becoming magnets for litter. For a start, butt bins should be mandatory outside these establishments."

Announcing the results, Dr Cavanagh welcomed the Government's stated intention to proceed with a tax on chewing gum, but insisted it must be of a meaningful level: cont./

"Logically, the levy should be such that it can finance the costly removal of gum from our streets. This will mean a lot more than 10 or 15 cents per packet."

The Anti Litter League was established by IBAL in 2002, with the aim of encouraging local authorities to take action against litter. The programme involves towns and cities being assessed by An Taisce according to international monitoring procedures. Three assessments will take place in 2004, culminating in an awards ceremony towards the end of the year. The League is supported by the Department of the Environment.

Results of the 1st round of the 2004 Anti Litter League are as follows:

|    |                    |                         |
|----|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | Fermoy             | Clean to European norms |
| 2  | Cavan              | Clean to European norms |
| 3  | Monaghan           | Clean to European norms |
| 4  | Dun Laoghaire      | Clean to European norms |
| 5  | Letterkenny        | Clean to European norms |
| 6  | Wexford            | Clean to European norms |
| 7  | Athlone            | Clean to European norms |
| 8  | Kilkenny           | Clean to European norms |
| 9  | Carlow             | Moderately littered     |
| 10 | Clonmel            | Moderately littered     |
| 11 | Bray               | Moderately littered     |
| 12 | Maynooth           | Moderately littered     |
| 13 | Tralee             | Moderately littered     |
| 14 | Cork City          | Moderately littered     |
| 15 | Limerick City      | Moderately littered     |
| 16 | Navan              | Moderately littered     |
| 17 | Newbridge          | Moderately littered     |
| 18 | Portlaoise         | Moderately littered     |
| 19 | Waterford City     | Moderately littered     |
| 20 | Longford           | Serious litter problem  |
| 21 | Dublin City Centre | Serious litter problem  |
| 22 | Drogheda           | Serious litter problem  |
| 23 | Roscommon          | Serious litter problem  |
| 24 | Swords             | Serious litter problem  |
| 25 | Dundalk            | Litter blackspot        |
| 26 | Galway             | Litter blackspot        |
| 27 | Tallaght           | Litter blackspot        |
| 28 | Castlebar          | Litter blackspot        |
| 29 | Sligo              | Litter blackspot        |
| 30 | Tullamore          | Litter blackspot        |

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\*Most towns were assessed prior to the introduction of the ban.

Editors note:

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.