



## **Press Release Monday 16 June 2008**

### **Capital cleans up to greet inflow of summer tourists -Enforcement of Litter Act, improved cleaning and more litter wardens sees spectacular advances in Dublin City -'Neglected' Tallaght comes in for criticism as nationwide improvement continues**

Ireland appears well prepared to greet the hundreds of thousands of visitors expected over the coming weeks, according to the latest IBAL litter survey. Almost 60% of our towns are deemed 'clean to European norms,' compared to 7%, 6 years ago. Among them is Dublin City, which has enjoyed a significant improvement in its litter levels. However, it was a tale of two cities in the Capital, as neighbouring Tallaght sank to the foot of the table, and was one of three towns branded a 'litter blackspot'.

Having languished for many years as a blackspot, Dublin City is now ranked in 16th place of the 55 areas surveyed nationwide. In all, a record 32 towns have achieved litter-free status, with Ennis climbing strongly to claim the title of Ireland's cleanest town for the first time.

The average litter rating rose to a record 79 points up 3% on the previous survey. 62% of heritage and amenity sites surveyed were found to be free of litter. The number of blackspots fell to just three: Tallaght, Roscommon and Tullamore.

"In the midst of the prevailing doom and gloom, it is refreshing to have a positive economic news story," claims IBAL Chairman Tom Cavanagh. "This is one. Tourists to the Capital are less likely to be met by cleanliness standards below what they experience at home. A positive first impression is critical to our tourism product. We speak constantly about how to protect our economic prosperity. Here is hard evidence of real strides to safeguard a valuable breadwinner. It is now up to the citizens to the play their part and keep their streets clean"

Tourism is worth approximately €6billion to the national economy each year. 70% of the 8million annual tourists enter the country through Dublin, one-third of them during the summer months.

Since the IBAL league commenced in 2002, Dublin City had failed to keep pace with the 35% nationwide improvement in litter levels. An Taisce, which conducts the surveys on behalf of IBAL, attributed the recent improvement in the capital to the rigorous enforcement of the litter act and improved cleaning "Dublin is a vibrant city and functions on a 24/7 basis. As a result, Dublin City Council has implemented numerous initiatives to ensure that we all play our role in keeping our city clean. These initiatives include, among others, the adoption of a new Litter Management Plan by the City Councillors, the introduction of a new roster to ensure that we have adequate cleaning staff on the streets throughout the day and night from Monday to Sunday and the deployment of extra litter wardens throughout the city on a shift basis" Commented Pat Cronin Head of Waste Management, Dublin City Council.

"While Killarney and Ennis can also claim excellent performances, the good news does not extend to all tourist centres" added Dr Tom Cavanagh. "The cities of Limerick, Kilkenny and especially Cork have slipped backwards, as has Galway to a lesser extent." While 2/3 of sites in Dublin were "Clean to European Norms", this was the case in only 1/3 of sites surveyed in Cork City.

Tallaght came in for much criticism from An Taisce. Achieving one of the lowest ratings since the league began 6 years ago, it was slammed as 'suffering from long-term neglect' with several areas 'in a terrible state'.

An Taisce found that almost half of all approach roads to towns were littered. "Just as Dublin is a gateway for visitors to Ireland, approach roads are the gateways to individual towns, creating an important first impression," commented Dr Cavanagh. In most cases it is County Councils, as opposed to Town Councils, who are responsible for litter on these roads.

The inspectors also found supermarket car parks to be a particular source of litter, with Lidl, Dunnes and Tesco all cited as magnets for litter in different areas. IBAL emphasises that litter laws require supermarkets and all businesses to keep the areas around their premises free of litter, but that enforcement here is weak.

IBAL is suggesting that summertime presents both a challenge and a unique opportunity for towns to deliver a positive impression. "At this time of year, more than ever, keeping towns litter-free is a 24-7 operation," explains Dr Cavanagh. "There is a higher footfall when festivals and local events are taking place particularly at weekends. It is then that litter surveillance needs to be maximised. These are one-off occasions to 'sell' the area to tourists and even investors. It is too often the case that when visitor numbers peak at seaside resorts and tourist attractions that cleaning levels are at their lowest due to staff holidays"

**-ENDS-**

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Editors note:

Set up in 1996, Irish Business Against Litter 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.

As part of the IBAL Anti-Litter League, An Taisce monitors all towns of population 6,000 and over, independently in accordance with international grading standards.

IBAL Anti Litter League 1st Round Results Table 2008

Ranking	Town/City	Status
1	Ennis	'Clean to European Norms'
2	Greystones	'Clean to European Norms'
3	Fermoy	'Clean to European Norms'
4	Portlaoise	'Clean to European Norms'
5	Howth	'Clean to European Norms'
6	Dungarvan	'Clean to European Norms'
7	Dundalk	'Clean to European Norms'
8	Letterkenny	'Clean to European Norms'
9	Thurles	'Clean to European Norms'
10	Clonmel	'Clean to European Norms'
11	Cavan	'Clean to European Norms'
12	Arklow	'Clean to European Norms'
13	Leixlip	'Clean to European Norms'
14	Newbridge	'Clean to European Norms'
15	Sligo	'Clean to European Norms'
16	Dublin City	'Clean to European Norms'
17	Drogheda	'Clean to European Norms'
18	Trim	'Clean to European Norms'
19	Killarney	'Clean to European Norms'
20	Wexford	'Clean to European Norms'
21	Gorey	'Clean to European Norms'
22	Balbriggan	'Clean to European Norms'
23	Mullingar	'Clean to European Norms'
24	Dun Laoghaire	'Clean to European Norms'
25	Nenagh	'Clean to European Norms'
26	Waterford City	'Clean to European Norms'
27	Monaghan	'Clean to European Norms'

28	Midleton	'Clean to European Norms'
29	Naas	'Clean to European Norms'
30	Swords	'Clean to European Norms'
31	Ballinasloe	'Clean to European Norms'
32	Maynooth	'Clean to European Norms'
33	Youghal	Moderately Littered
34	Galway City	Moderately Littered
35	Tralee	Moderately Littered
36	Castlebar	Moderately Littered
37	Drumcondra	Moderately Littered
38	Wicklow	Moderately Littered
39	Athlone	Moderately Littered
40	Navan	Moderately Littered
41	Carlow	Moderately Littered
42	Athy	Littered
43	Kilkenny	Littered
44	Limerick City	Littered
45	Cork City	Littered
46	Ranelagh	Littered
47	Mallow	Littered
48	Bray	Seriously Littered
49	Ballina	Seriously Littered
50	Cobh	Seriously Littered
51	Enniscorthy	Seriously Littered
52	Longford	Seriously Littered
53	Tullamore	Litter Blackspot
54	Roscommon	Litter Blackspot
55	Tallaght	Litter Blackspot