

Bad news for Rebel County as Cobh and Cork City fall foul of litter

- Record number of Irish towns and cities are now "litter free"**
- Call for tax as chewing gum problem sticks**

Cork has fared badly in the latest litter survey from Irish Business Against Litter, with Cork ranked the most littered city in Ireland and Cobh the most littered town. This is a particularly disappointing result as the survey of 55 towns and cities around Ireland, carried out by An Taisce, revealed spectacular improvements in litter levels throughout the country, with Cavan the cleanest town. Cobh, at the foot of the league, was branded "seriously littered", along with Bray and Tullamore.

"It is very disturbing to see Cobh at the bottom of the league, a harbour town that welcomes on average 70,000 tourists off luxury cruise liners every Summer" commented Dr Tom Cavanagh, Chairman, IBAL. "Greeting tourists with litter and weeds creates a very poor first impression of Ireland. It is all the more disappointing as Cobh, with its beautiful setting, has enormous potential." According to the survey, only 20% of sites in Cobh were clean to European norms, compared to 90% in several inland towns.

Cork City, the most littered city in the survey, was described as 'a tale of two cities'. The centre has improved considerably, but the City was let down by approach roads which were the most littered in Ireland. It was ranked 46th and classed as "littered". "Cork is typical of cities, where approach roads, the responsibility of the county council, are not managed with the same rigour as the city centre, which is under a different authority," explains Dr Cavanagh. "Weeds on many of these approach roads often spoil the visual impact of the beautiful shrubberies"

In contrast, Galway's result was spectacular, it was almost top of the league in 2nd place, the highest position a city has achieved to date. Limerick and Waterford were also rated 'litter-free'. Dublin was only slightly behind, and classified as 'moderately littered'. "One third of Ireland's population lives in these cities and this is easily their best performance," comments Dr Cavanagh. "Only Cork is lagging behind in 46th position."

The IBAL survey revealed a positive overall change for Ireland's litter problem with 60% of towns now clean to European norms – the highest percentage ever. 33 of the towns surveyed are now as clean as their European neighbours, with some moving from "littered" towns in the previous survey up the table.

"IBAL's experience is that once a town achieves litter-free status for 2-3 years, it tends to stay clean, continues Dr Cavanagh. "The citizens drop less litter in a clean town, cleaning costs tend to reduce rather than increase, therefore, this is not a cost issue. So why then are towns such as Bray, Cobh and Tullamore lagging so far behind the rest of the country? Clearly, people do not wish to live in dirty towns. Only recently over 300 volunteers in Tallaght showed their practical concern by embarking on a major clean up."

Chewing gum was once again a major source of litter. Dr Cavanagh said "Chewing gum is the largest blight on our streets with over 50 tonnes dropped on the streets annually, it stays there as it cannot be swept up. IBAL would like to see the implementation of a tax on chewing gum, forcing manufacturers to produce biodegradable chewing gum and the polluter to pay, an idea that is fundamental to all European environmental legislation"

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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 2nd Round Results Table 2008

Ranking	Town/City	Status
1	Cavan	'Clean to European Norms'
2	Galway	'Clean to European Norms'
3	Ennis	'Clean to European Norms'
4	Howth	'Clean to European Norms'
5	Dungarvan	'Clean to European Norms'
6	Fermoy	'Clean to European Norms'
7	Sligo	'Clean to European Norms'
8	Castlebar	'Clean to European Norms'
9	Ballinasloe	'Clean to European Norms'
10	Ranelagh	'Clean to European Norms'
11	Nenagh	'Clean to European Norms'
12	Dundalk	'Clean to European Norms'
13	Thurles	'Clean to European Norms'
14	Arklow	'Clean to European Norms'
15	Navan	'Clean to European Norms'
16	Letterkenny	'Clean to European Norms'
17	Portlaoise	'Clean to European Norms'
18	Trim	'Clean to European Norms'
19	Dun Laoighre	'Clean to European Norms'
20	Killarney	'Clean to European Norms'
21	Naas	'Clean to European Norms'
22	Maynooth	'Clean to European Norms'
23	Leixlip	'Clean to European Norms'
24	Swords	'Clean to European Norms'
25	Mallow	'Clean to European Norms'
26	Waterford City	'Clean to European Norms'
27	Limerick City	'Clean to European Norms'
28	Greystones	'Clean to European Norms'
29	Wicklow	'Clean to European Norms'
30	Youghal	'Clean to European Norms'
31	Clonmel	'Clean to European Norms'
32	Newbridge	'Clean to European Norms'
33	Balbriggan	'Clean to European Norms'
34	Mullingar	Moderately Littered
35	Dublin	Moderately Littered
36	Longford	Moderately Littered
37	Ballina	Moderately Littered
38	Kilkenny	Moderately Littered

39	Tralee	Moderately Littered
40	Midleton	Moderately Littered
41	Athlone	Moderately Littered
42	Monaghan	Moderately Littered
43	Enniscorthy	Moderately Littered
44	Drogheda	Moderately Littered
45	Gorey	Moderately Littered
46	Cork City	Littered
47	Carlow	Littered
48	Athy	Littered
49	Drumcondra	Littered
50	Tallaght	Littered
51	Wexford	Littered
52	Roscommon	Littered
53	Tullamore	Seriously Littered
54	Bray	Seriously Littered
55	Cobh	Seriously Littered