



Press Release
Monday 23rd August 2010

Businesses asked to clean up their act as survey shows fall-off in 'litter free' towns

IBAL launches 'Litter Twitter' campaign to highlight local blackspots

The most recent study by business group Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) has shown a fall in the number of towns deemed 'litter free'. Of 53 towns surveyed, just over half received the accolade – down from two-thirds on a similar study last year. IBAL is calling on businesses to clean up outside their premises twice a day to improve our streetscapes.

Meanwhile, citizens are invited to submit photos by mobile phone of litter blackspots in their neighbourhood as part of a "litter twitter" campaign to alert local authorities to litter-ridden areas locally. "This is the perfect technology through which people can highlight areas that urgently need cleaning up," explained Dr Tom Cavanagh, Chairman of IBAL. Photos can be emailed to **litter-spotter.2010@twitpic.com** and IBAL can be followed at **twitter.com/litterspotter***

Wexford was judged Ireland's cleanest town in the survey, which was conducted by An Taisce, who praised the town's "consistently high standards of maintenance of the environment." Sligo, Killarney and Letterkenny were the cleanest towns in their respective provinces, while Waterford emerged as the country's cleanest city.

Tallaght, described as "showing signs of overall neglect, a big challenge that must be surmounted", dropped to last place in the league, a 'litter blackspot' alongside Portlaoise. Naas and Midleton, both judged to be 'seriously littered', joined them at the foot of the table.

"While the drop in the number of litter-free towns is a disappointment, the overall result here is positive," says Dr Cavanagh "The average score of all the towns surveyed is now closer than ever to the European average."

According to IBAL, the loss of litter-free status was caused in most cases by the neglect by county councils of approach roads, among them key entry points to airports and seaports. Unlike roads in urban areas, these are not subject to a cleaning schedule.

"Primary routes at the entrances to our main cities and ring roads are often heavily littered, and cleaning is infrequent and inconsistent," says Dr Cavanagh. "Minister Gormley has allocated some money for cleaning up these areas, but what we really need are cleaning schedules for these routes, like those in Northern Ireland. We also need a portion of the funding which the National Roads Authority (NRA) gives to county councils for general maintenance and cleaning to be set aside strictly for the purpose of cleaning up litter. Tourists visiting the country would quickly notice the change this would bring about."

The survey revealed a strong improvement in Dublin City Centre, which, along with Galway and Cork City, was labelled 'moderately littered'. Limerick was again the most littered city, but improved its rating from 'litter blackspot' at the end of 2009 to 'littered'.

"To keep on the right side of the law, as well as to show corporate citizenship and community spirit, businesses should look to clean up outside their premises, including their car parks, twice daily. This would have an enormous impact on our streetscapes in one fell swoop and reduce local authority cleaning costs."

According to the Litter Act, businesses are responsible for keeping the visible areas outside their premises free of litter at all times, regardless of the source of the litter.

As the survey showed gum litter levels to be ever-increasing, IBAL restated its contention that only degradable gum should be sold in Ireland, as opposed to conventional gum, which remains stuck to pavements for up to 25 years. "Minister Gormley should set a target date for a degradable gum only policy. It's a simple, obvious way to improve the appearance of our streetscapes. Granting such gum a 0% VAT rate would be a good starting point."

-ENDS-

For further information contact Cullen Communications:

Dawn Burke Tel: 01 668 9099 / 087 215 694, email: dburke@cullencommunications.ie

Conor Horgan Tel: 01 668 9099 / 086 8217211, email: chorgan@cullencommunications.ie

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.

* Uploading an image on twitter.com/litterspotter:

Images can be uploaded onto twitter.com/litterspotter page by emailing from your mobile phone or email account to litterspotter.2010@twitpic.com. When emailing an image simply use the Subject field to include a caption – date, location and brief description. This will give IBAL and all viewers more detail on the image and help the local authority in identifying the site.

IBAL Anti Litter League - 1st Round Results 2010

| Ranking | Towns/Cities | Status |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Wexford | Clean to European Norms |
| 2 | Longford | Clean to European Norms |
| 3 | Blanchardstown | Clean to European Norms |
| 4 | Drogheda | Clean to European Norms |
| 5 | Carlow | Clean to European Norms |
| 6 | Trim | Clean to European Norms |
| 7 | Killarney | Clean to European Norms |
| 8 | Clonmel | Clean to European Norms |
| 9 | Ballincollig | Clean to European Norms |
| 10 | Lucan | Clean to European Norms |
| 11 | Sligo | Clean to European Norms |
| 12 | Ennis | Clean to European Norms |
| 13 | Fermoy | Clean to European Norms |
| 14 | Dungarvan | Clean to European Norms |
| 15 | Letterkenny | Clean to European Norms |
| 16 | Kildare | Clean to European Norms |
| 17 | Waterford City | Clean to European Norms |
| 18 | Cavan | Clean to European Norms |
| 19 | Dun Laoghaire | Clean to European Norms |
| 20 | Dundalk | Clean to European Norms |
| 21 | Bray | Clean to European Norms |
| 22 | Kilkenny | Clean to European Norms |
| 23 | Tullamore | Clean to European Norms |
| 24 | Tralee | Clean to European Norms |
| 25 | Ballinasloe | Clean to European Norms |
| 26 | Arklow | Clean to European Norms |
| 27 | Mallow | Clean to European Norms |

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|----|---------------|---------------------|
| 28 | Galway City | Moderately Littered |
| 29 | Dublin City | Moderately Littered |
| 30 | Newcastlewest | Moderately Littered |
| 31 | Enniscorthy | Moderately Littered |
| 32 | Swords | Moderately Littered |
| 33 | Tramore | Moderately Littered |
| 34 | Roscommon | Moderately Littered |
| 35 | Mullingar | Moderately Littered |
| 36 | Cork City | Moderately Littered |
| 37 | Youghal | Moderately Littered |
| 38 | Cobh | Moderately Littered |
| 39 | Navan | Moderately Littered |
| 40 | Tuam | Moderately Littered |
| 41 | Wicklow | Moderately Littered |
| 42 | Ballina | Moderately Littered |
| 43 | Nenagh | Moderately Littered |
| 44 | Newbridge | Littered |
| 45 | Castlebar | Littered |
| 46 | New Ross | Littered |
| 47 | Monaghan | Littered |
| 48 | Athlone | Littered |
| 49 | Limerick City | Littered |
| 50 | Midleton | Seriously Littered |
| 51 | Naas | Seriously Littered |
| 52 | Portlaoise | Litter Blackspot |
| 53 | Tallaght | Litter Blackspot |