



Press Release

Monday, 18th August 2014

Latest IBAL litter survey reveals growing urban – rural divide

- *Towns cleaner than ever but urban areas falter*
- *Connecting routes between towns in need of more attention*

The latest survey by business group Irish Business Against Litter has revealed that while Ireland's towns continue to get cleaner, our main cities remain littered. Areas of Dublin, Cork and Limerick occupy the 6 lowest positions in the table of 40 areas surveyed, with North Inner City Dublin and Farranree in Cork both exposed as litter blackspots. In all, 75% of towns and cities were found to be as clean as or cleaner than their European counterparts.

Kilkenny and Cavan were once again Ireland's cleanest towns, followed by Killarney, Tramore and Longford, and were among 18 towns to be deemed cleaner than the European average. By contrast, Cork City, Limerick City, Dublin City, Tallaght, Dublin North Inner City and Farranree were rooted at the foot of the table, with most having deteriorated since last year. "There has always been a disparity between cities and towns, but this survey shows the gap in cleanliness to as wide as ever," comments Conor Horgan of IBAL. "We're just not seeing the progress in cities that we need. While tourist areas generally have fared very well, how can we project Ireland as a clean country to visit if large parts of three main cities are littered?"

Noting the 'disappointing slip in performance in Dublin City', the report by An Taisce cited Talbot St, Amiens St, Kilmainham and areas near the Guinness Storehouse as littered. On a positive note, the survey found a dramatic improvement in the condition of roads to and from Dublin Airport.

As to the causes of the urban-rural split, IBAL contends that residents associations, tidy towns groups and other volunteers are compensating for the scarcity of resources in local authorities in many towns, whereas these groups are often absent in city areas. "A single tidy towns committee can make an enormous difference to the cleanliness of any given town," says Horgan. "In cities, communities tend to be less cohesive and relying on

volunteers to clean up a large urban area is not feasible. However, establishing such groups has to be part of any urban authority's plan in the current cost environment. It's not just the physical work these groups carry out, it's the sense of responsibility they create, which rubs off on the whole community. If people see their neighbours picking up litter, they are less likely to litter themselves."

Alongside the need for councils to set up such local groups, IBAL is calling on Government to show similar initiative by involving businesses through a nationally coordinated Adopt A Road scheme.

For the first time, IBAL inspected the cleanliness of connecting routes between towns, which were found to be typically more littered than the towns themselves. "Sweet papers, plastic bottles, plastic bags, fast food wrappers and cans very much in evidence" along the Maynooth to Kilcock road, while the Letterkenny to Lifford road was "spoiled by a steady trickle of cans and plastic bottles in the hedges and roadsides". The motorway Northbound from Drogheda suffered from "a variety of food related litter and cigarette packets".

"The positive impression that our clean towns create for visitors is all too quickly undone if they encounter litter when departing them. It is a natural evolution of IBAL's survey that these routes be monitored," say Conor Horgan.

The survey found that sweet papers were by far the most common form of litter, followed by cigarette butts, fast food wrappers and chewing gum. Most recycling areas were littered, with car parks and residential areas also more likely to be littered than other sites.

2014 IBAL ANTI-LITTER LEAGUE - ROUND 1

1	Kilkenny	Cleaner than European Norms
2	Cavan	Cleaner than European Norms
3	Killarney	Cleaner than European Norms
4	Longford	Cleaner than European Norms
=	Tramore	Cleaner than European Norms
6	Tullamore	Cleaner than European Norms
7	Wexford	Cleaner than European Norms
8	Monaghan	Cleaner than European Norms
=	Navan	Cleaner than European Norms
10	Waterford	Cleaner than European Norms
11	Arklow	Cleaner than European Norms
12	Athlone	Cleaner than European Norms
13	Clonmel	Cleaner than European Norms
14	Cobh	Cleaner than European Norms
15	Dun Laoghaire	Cleaner than European Norms
16	Roscommon	Cleaner than European Norms
17	Swords	Cleaner than European Norms

18	Tralee	Cleaner than European Norms
19	Dublin Airport Environs	Clean to European Norms
20	Dundalk	Clean to European Norms
21	Galway	Clean to European Norms
22	Newbridge	Clean to European Norms
23	Ennis	Clean to European Norms
24	Fermoy	Clean to European Norms
25	Leixlip	Clean to European Norms
26	Sligo	Clean to European Norms
27	Ballina	Clean to European Norms
28	Portlaoise	Clean to European Norms
29	Letterkenny	Clean to European Norms
=	Mullingar	Clean to European Norms
31	Maynooth	Moderately littered
=	Tipperary	Moderately littered
33	Carlow	Moderately littered
34	Drogheda	Moderately littered
35	Cork City	Moderately littered
36	Limerick City	Moderately littered
37	Dublin City	Moderately littered
38	Tallaght	Littered
39	North Inner City Dublin	Litter Blackspot
40	Farranree (Cork)	Litter Blackspot