

## An Taisce Report – IBAL Anti-Litter League, Round 1, 2021

**Athlone: 15<sup>th</sup> out of 40 towns / cities surveyed. Clean to European Norms.**

A very good result for Athlone with over the half of the sites surveyed getting the top litter grade and just one seriously littered site. The town centre sites were the ones which tended to get the top litter grade e.g., Athlone Castle, Car Park at Golden Island Shopping Centre, Sean Costello Street / Dublin Gate Street / Church Street and the Riverwalk from Athlone Castle to the White Bridge. In many instances the overall environment was enhanced by seating, planting and good visitor information notices. By far the most heavily littered site surveyed was Athlone Municipal Recycle Facility – it wasn't just casually littered but there were heavy accumulations of a wide variety of litter at the base of the shrubbery around the perimeter.

**Athlone Castle and Environs: Grade A.** All aspects of this historic area were in excellent order and there was a complete absence of litter throughout. It has been meticulously presented and maintained.

**Riverwalk: Grade A.** (from Athlone Castle to white bridge). A well presented and maintained riverside environment. Tidy Towns signage / visitor information notices, seating, signage, ring buoys were in very good order. Care needs to be taken at the construction area that litter doesn't build up behind the barrier.

**Sean Costello Street / Dublin Gate Street / Church Street: Grade A.** This series of inter-connecting shopping streets presented well with attractive paving, seating, signage, bicycle parking close to the hotel. Clearly a careful eye is on the closed down / vacant premises as they didn't impact in any negative way on the litter situation. Street bins were in good condition and colourful hanging baskets looked very well. It was very good with regard to litter.

**Car Park at Golden Island Shopping Centre: Grade A.** An extensive street-level car park which was had a virtual absence of litter throughout. The only item of note was a series of single use masks. The pedestrian pathways were tree lined, breaking up the large expanse of car parking.

**N52 Birr / Ferbane Approach: Grade B+.** Much of this somewhat rural route presented well with very minimal litter items. However, it was impossible to ignore the litter at the entrance to a field, adjacent to an ivy clad derelict building, on the right as one approached Athlone. Road surface, signage and markings were excellent.

**R446 Moate Approach: Grade B.** The main stretch of road was clear, but it was downgraded due to notable litter at a recessed area on the right-hand side and two other isolated locations. As well as food and alcohol related items there was some industrial plastic wrap.

**Athlone Business Park: Grade A.** The main thoroughfare was very freshly presented with road surface / markings in excellent condition, with no visible litter issues throughout. Clearly a careful eye is kept on the empty / undeveloped areas as they could easily become a magnet for litter.

**Burgess Park: Grade A.** This is a beautifully presented park environment, on the banks of the River Shannon. Attractive paving lined much of the pedestrian pathways, the wooden seating was in very good condition and Tidy Towns visitor information notices presented well. Playground equipment was in good order. The overall impression with regard to litter was a very good one. The issue of cigarette butts at the base of seating could easily be addressed by the installation of cigarette butt units at the seating.

**Athlone Municipal Recycle Facility: Grade C.** This 'managed' facility was by far the most heavily littered of the sites surveyed in Athlone. The main surface area of the car park was fine with regard to litter but the perimeter shrubbery was a very different story - the base of the shrubbery at the end and to the right had significant accumulations of a wide variety of food related items.

**Approach from Kilmartin N6 Centre to M6: Grade B+.** This would have been a top-ranking site if it wasn't for the food related items strewn about.