

Athlone: 18th out of 40 towns / cities surveyed. Clean to European Norms

Well over half of the sites surveyed in Athlone got the top litter grade – examples of these included Golden Island Shopping Centre, the main shopping street, Athlone Training Centre and Athlone Castle – the exterior of the latter was exceptionally well presented and maintained. At the opposite end of the spectrum was the Golden Island (Athlone) Civic Amenity Site – this ‘managed’ facility wasn’t just casually littered but significant dumping had taken place. It didn’t get into this stage over night and there was no change since it was surveyed earlier in 2021.

Dublin Road Approach: Grade B+. A busy stretch of road, the overall impression quite good but food litter was noticeable, especially close to a line of shops on the left side. If this area was addressed, it could be a top-ranking site.

Athlone Castle: Grade A. Not only was the exterior of the Castle spotless, the whole environment was exceptionally well presented. Historical Trail information, bicycle parking, colourful flowers, box planting with ‘ATHLONE’ etc. were in excellent order.

Main Shopping Street: Grade A. The many closed down / vacant outlets didn’t impact in any negative way on the litter situation along Church Street / Dublin Gate Street. Attractive paving and large tree planter boxes looked very well. Bicycle parking and wooden seating at the recessed path area were freshly presented. There were plenty of street bins throughout. This was an excellent site with regard to litter.

Golden Island (Athlone) Civic Amenity Site: Grade D. The entire perimeter was lined with heavy levels of all manner of a wide variety of litter, with significant dumping to the rear of the clothing recycle units. It was in a terrible state. This is a ‘managed’ facility. What kind of a cleaning regime is in place here? It didn’t get into this stage overnight and there was no change since it was surveyed earlier in 2021.

Athlone Training Centre: Grade A. The grounds and car park of Athlone Training Centre were spotless. Planted areas were nicely presented, litter bins were well positioned and very fresh in appearance. The whole environment was a credit to the users and those responsible for the maintenance.

Athlone IT / TUS: Grade A. There was a virtual absence of litter throughout this campus, except for some disposable face masks. Grounds were well presented and maintained.

R916 Approach from Athlone Training Centre: Grade A. A clean and tidy impression was created along this route with bicycle path in good order. Road surface, markings and signage were well presented. There were no visible litter issues throughout.

Burgess Park: Grade B+. A lovely park environment with attractive paving and planting. Playground equipment was in good order and area dedicated to ‘Managed for Wildlife’. Seating, visitor information, items of historical interest were all well maintained and presented. Scatterings of alcohol and food related litter took away from an otherwise top-ranking site.

Golden Island Shopping Centre: Grade A. The interior of the shopping centre was spotless, with a virtual absence in the car park area. An extensive site, which is clearly well managed.

N62 from M7 to Kilmartin N6 Centre: Grade B. Food related litter was very much in evidence along this stretch of road between the main motorway and the N6 Kilmartin Centre. Examples included plastic bottles, coffee cups, fast-food litter and mineral cans.