

**Athlone: 16<sup>th</sup> out of 40 towns / cities surveyed. Clean to European Norms.**

**Athlone recorded fewer grade A sites than last time round in what was nonetheless a strong performance. Top-ranking sites included Arcadia Retail Park (an exceptionally clean and well-presented environment) and Athlone Civic Centre / Library (attractively presented with lovely paving, visitor information signage, bicycle parking, 1916 memorial etc.) and a couple of the approach routes. By far the most heavily littered site was Shannon Bank Nature Trail - (between Talbot Avenue and College Park): some parts were fine with regard to litter but there was evidence of burnt items and dumping. The Golden Island / Civic Amenity Recycle Centre was certainly better than in previous IBAL surveys.**

**Golden Island, (Athlone) Civic Amenity Centre: Grade B.** This site has seen a big improvement since 2021 survey when it was a Grade D - the large levels of dumping around the perimeter have been cleared away - this time around it was mostly loose items. The road leading directly to the facility was also littered and well on its way to Grade C status if not addressed. – e.g. trolley and black sack.

**Arcadia Retail Park: Grade A.** (B&Q / JYSK etc) An exceptionally clean and well-maintained retail shopping environment. The area directly outside B&Q was very well served by litter bins. Clearly a very careful eye is kept on the closed down premises to the rear - there was no litter directly associated with it. This retail park was very much deserving of the top litter grade.

**Plunkett Road Approach: Grade A. (from Exit 11 on M6)** There was a virtual absence of litter along this short stretch of road. There was no visible dumping on a site with 'No Dumping' signage.

**Burgess Park: Grade B.** This lovely open, riverside, park was brought down by both food and alcohol related litter - the latter was particularly pronounced. This takes away from an attractively laid-out environment with paving, seating, signage, playground etc. all in very good order. Also, old black sack and paper bags.

**Former 'Athlone Tile Centre' site: Grade B+.** This boarded up 'For Sale' site was beginning to show the signs of neglect with debris from the building on the ground and loose food related litter along the area to the side of the building. This could quickly deteriorate, if not addressed.

**Shannon Bank Nature Trail: Grade C+.** (Between Talbot Avenue and College Park) The stretch of water closer to Talbot Avenue was moderately littered, primarily alcohol and food related items. The pathway was generally clear along this stretch. However, it was the remnants of burnt items and dumped items closer to the College Park area which really brought down the litter grade.

**Dublin Gate Street / Church Street: Grade A.** Despite some closed down properties, this shopping area was very much deserving of the top litter grade. Seating, signage, street bins were in good order.

**Dublin Road approach: Grade A.** There was a virtual absence of litter along this route. Individual commercial premises appear to be well presented and maintained.

**Approach between M6 and Kilmartin N6 Centre: Grade B+.** This route just missed getting the top litter grade - some light, loose, food related items took away from an otherwise well-presented route.

**Athlone Civic Centre / Library etc.: Grade A.** A lovely town centre environment which was attractively laid out and very well maintained. Apart from some graffiti at the base of the John McCormack statue, all aspects of the area surveyed were in excellent order e.g., paving, planted, visitor information signage, 1916 Memorial, bicycle parking etc. – it was spotless throughout.