

Athlone: 22nd out of 40 towns / cities surveyed. Clean to European Norms

A strong performance by Athlone, with no seriously littered sites. It is great to see the big improvements at Athlone Recycle Centre – a poor site in some previous IBAL surveys. There were several sites, notably the Main Street, which just missed the top litter grade and with a little extra effort this could be achieved. Others included Athlone Castle Environs and the N55 Glasson Approach Road.

N55 Glasson Approach: Grade B+ Much of this route presented well but it was let down by the presence of plastic bags, fast-food wrappers and sweet papers. The outer stretch of the road was well tended and maintained, the inner stretch, less well so.

R914 / R915 Approach: Grade B. Roundabout with planting in the middle presented well and the overall presentation was attractive with good paving and planting, particularly the 'Welcome To Athlone' carved out of the shrubbery! There was a variety of food related items, face-masks, some paper bags and clothing – this all spoiled an otherwise well-presented environment.

Athlone GAA Club grounds: Grade A. There was a virtual absence of litter at this extensive site. Area has been enhanced by colourful wall murals. Overall, very much deserving of the top litter grade.

Main Street: Grade B+. This short shopping street just missed the top litter grade – coffee cups and sweet wrappers, along with cigarette butts in the empty planter boxes took away from an otherwise well-presented environment. Attractive paving underfoot presented well.

Sr. Bernard Quay: Grade B. Heavy levels of cigarette butts with lower levels of dog fouling and sweet papers took away from the very pleasant riverside walk. There didn't appear to be any visible litter bins / cigarette disposal units – the base of the tree planters were being used for the latter.

Apartment Block, by Sr Bernard Quay: Grade A. There was a virtual absence of litter at this extensive residential development. Planted areas were in good order.

Athlone Castle – Approach / Exterior: Grade B+. The built environment surrounding this historic landmark was in good order e.g., paving, bollards, street lamps, seating, attractive signage etc. There were just too many small pieces of litter around the Castle entrance for its typical Grade A status.

Athlone Recycle Centre, Ceannt Road: Grade B+. A hugely improved site compared to a few years ago when this was heavily littered over the duration of a number of IBAL surveys. The main litter issues were still in the perimeter shrubbery – according to one of the attendants, they were waiting permission to trim / tidy this area.

Athlone Iarnród Éireann Train Station: Grade A. The Train Station in Athlone presented very well with all elements in very good order e.g., lovely 'olde' style signage, paving, litter bins, covered bicycle parking area etc. – it was excellent with regard to litter. Empty planter boxes awaiting some plants.

R916 Approach: Grade B. There was a definite litter presence along this route, not just food related, but also some plastic wrap and cardboard and other miscellaneous items. Some of these items were 'long-lie' e.g., squashed cardboard box / plastic wrap trapped in tree, indicating a lack of thorough cleaning for quite some time.