

Portlaoise: 23rd out of 40 towns / cities surveyed. Clean to European Norms

With eight out of ten sites getting the top litter grade, Portlaoise has scored well, if not as well as a few years ago. The presence of a couple of heavily littered sites brings down the overall ranking. Top-ranking sites included the Main Street, Market Square and Maryborough Fort Gardens – they were not just good with regard to litter but well-presented and maintained. The two very heavily littered sites were not just casually littered but subject to dumping: a derelict site on Harpur's Lane and Mountain View Estate.

Abbeyleix Approach Road: Grade A. A freshly presented road and pavement to one side, with mown verge and cycle lane. There were no visible litter issues throughout the area surveyed.

Market Square: Grade A. There were some lovely features at Market Square e.g., bicycle parking, outdoor seating, large planter boxes and wonderful array of tulips where a bicycle is being used as a flower pot. Overall, it was very good with regard to litter.

Former 'Adams Pharmacy' site: Grade A. Apart from one covid face-mask, there was no other litter associated with this closed down premises.

Main Street: Grade A. There were minimal litter issues along this busy shopping street – some minor cigarette butts and other items but not significant enough to bring down the litter grade. Much of the streetscape was in good order.

Portlaoise Train Station – Exterior: Grade A. This site got the top litter grade, but only just. The area around the base of the green commercial bins had some items, as well as the car park. Dog fouling was also present. This could quickly slide to a Grade B.

Portlaoise Train Station – Interior: Grade A. The Waiting Room area was freshly presented, and all appeared in good order. There was a virtual absence of litter throughout the remainder of the area. Signage was peeling off some of the litter bins and seating areas on the platform – could be potential litter.

Maryborough Fort Gardens: Grade A. The former 'open space for performances' has been reconfigured to an open grass / planted area. It is now characterised by colourful planting throughout, and it was excellent with regards to litter.

Pepper's Lane: Grade A. There was a virtual absence of litter along this pedestrianised town centre laneway. Signage was in good order. Some litter items were 'trapped' behind a grille.

Harpur's Lane, Derelict Site: Grade C. There had been some dumping of larger items at this site, some of which were spilling out through the railings. Such a site is likely to encourage further dumping. Where does responsibility for this site lie? The approach was characterised by a drift of litter.

Mountain View Estate: Grade D. This fenced off site wasn't just casually littered but subject to significant dumping, seemingly over a prolonged period of time. As well as loose litter there were larger items e.g., car tyres, pieces of wood, paint containers, cardboard and other miscellaneous household items.