

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

**With only one heavily littered site, Athlone would be further up the IBAL table if minor improvements were made to its many moderately littered sites. The residential area of Beechpark, Arcadia Retail Park and L1483 Plunkett Road approach were all in very good order. Athlone Train Station, The Golden Island Recycle Centre (a much-improved site compared to just a few years ago) and the River Walk just missed out. By far the most heavily littered site was Athlone Bus Station – much of the litter appeared ‘long-lie’, indicating a lack of thorough cleaning for quite some time.**

**R914 Approach: Grade B.** (from ‘Welcome to Athlone’ sign to roundabout at Ganly’s.) There was a definite litter presence along this route, not at any one particular location, just a general presence. Items were mainly food related e.g. sweet papers, fast-food wrappers and plastic bottles with lower levels of vaping devices, alcohol cans and cigarette butts.

**L1483 Plunkett Street: Grade A.** (from traffic lights under road flyover to junction at MacDonagh Road) There were road works / construction works taking place along this route but they didn’t impact in any negative way on the litter situation. The overall impression created along this road was of a virtually litter free route.

**Arcadia Retail Park: Grade A.** A freshly presented and well attended retail environment with paving, bicycle parking and attractive planting in good order. Some of the ‘Arcadia Retail Park’ bins were beginning to look a little grubby while the individual store bins were freshly presented. There was a virtual absence of litter throughout the extensive retail park area.

**Retail Park Car Park: Grade A.** A clean and freshly presented environment with all elements in good order. Minimal visible litter items, site was very much deserving of the top litter grade.

**Athlone Train Station: Grade B+.** A very attractive presented ‘olde’ style station with lovely flower boxes at the large sash windows and larger plant beds in front of some of them. Litter bin on station platform had sticker indicating that it was for ‘recycled waste only. Litter bins were very fresh. There were too many cigarette butts at the front entrance and loose tissue paper for the top litter grade – this is a very easy fix to get the top litter grade.

**Bus Eireann Depot: Grade C.** This was by far the most heavily littered site surveyed in Athlone. While the front / façade were freshly presented with minimal litter, it was the bus parking area, the base of the seating area and the back wall which were responsible for the downgrading. The majority of the litter was food related, along with some vaping devices and alcohol cans and a significant cigarette butt presence. Much of the litter appeared ‘long-lie’, indicating a lack of thorough cleaning for quite some time. This all took away from an otherwise freshly presented environment.

**Beechpark: Grade A.** Stickers on the signage at the entrance to this residential development made it difficult to read. Apart from this, the remainder of the area was well presented with only once piece of litter visible throughout the entire area. The large open space of grass and mature trees / shrubs were well maintained.

**Athlone Recycle Centre: Grade B+.** A much-improved site compared to a few years ago when this was a heavily littered environment. The main area was litter free, just some items around the perimeter shrubbery. This is where the cleaning regime needs to keep an eye to prevent any further build-up.

**Golden Island Park / River walk: Grade B+.** A lovely expanse of park / riverside environment with most of the features in very good condition e.g. seating, obelisk, litter bins, etc. The ‘No Shooting’ signage attached to a tree was broken and there was some graffiti on the litter bins. Large dog fouling signage encourages users to ‘Promote Responsible Pet Ownership, Please Pick-up After Your Dog’ with an illustration of same. Coffee cups, plastic bottles, pizza wrappers and sweet papers were all present.

**R915 Approach: Grade B.** (from traffic lights at the Crescent and Grade Park Road out to lights at Sarsfield Square). The majority of this route presented well and was generally quite clean. Paving and road surface were in good order. There was one isolated location, area to the side of one building, McGorisk’s Pharmacy, beside the inner traffic lights which wasn’t just significantly overgrown but had been subject to neglect and abuse, evidence of dumping. If not addressed, this is likely to encourage further similar behaviour.