

Arklow: 16th out of 40 towns / cities surveyed. Clean to European Norms.

A very good result for Arklow on its return to the IBAL League with over half of the survey sites getting the top litter grade and just one seriously littered site. Clearly a careful eye is kept on the various closed down / vacant properties along Main Street / Upper Main Street as there was no litter directly associated with them. Coral Leisure Centre and immediate environment have excellent eco and community credentials – solar panels on the roof, Xeriscope garden and Dementia Friendly Garden. Abbey Rose Garden and Graveyard was lovingly tended. By far the most heavily littered site was the Clothing Bank at Coral Leisure – items had been dumped beside the unit.

Approach from M11 – Dublin Direction: Grade B+. There were some lovely ‘welcoming’ marine features at the outskirts of the town, along with colourful planting. It’s great to see ‘water fountains’ being made more widely available throughout the country – one was spotted along this route. Closer to the town, there was a definite food related presence, mostly coffee cups, plastic wrapping etc. With a little extra care and attention, this could easily be a top-ranking site.

Abbey Rose Garden & Graveyard: Grade A. A small, town centre green space with well laid out historical information about the Graveyard and colourful illustrations relating to the Rose Garden. Nice wooden seating throughout. The large bin at the entrance was in good condition, however the design of such was that there was no visible cigarette disposal unit, resulting in some cigarette butts at the base of the wooden benches.

Main Street / Upper Main Street: Grade A. Clearly a careful eye is kept on the numerous vacant properties along this main shopping thoroughfare – there was no litter directly associated with same. Significant work has been done to ‘minimise the bare look of some of these premises. Arklow Tidy Towns signage indicates that Arklow was a Gold Medal Winner in 2023, up 10 points. The communal area in front of the Tourist Office / Court House was attractively landscaped with lovely paving, bicycle parking, planting etc. There was a remarkable absence of litter throughout.

Coastguard Road Approach: Grade A. This route creates a positive first impression of Arklow with attractive ‘Welcome to Arklow’ features and wooden seating at scenic area closer to the town. There was no obvious litter presence.

Deposit Return Scheme, Aldi: Grade A. A separate, stand-alone feature. It was spotless.

Car Park leading to Abbey Graveyard: Grade B. Apart from loose litter items around the perimeter of the car park, it was the plastic bag of rubbish which brought down the litter grade. The signage associated with the use of the car park was clear and legible, with colourful ‘Age Friendly’ parking facility.

Coral Leisure Centre & immediate Environs : Grade A. On arriving at this facility, one is immediately struck by the numerous solar panels on the roof of the building. This very much sets the tone of the overall environment. There were wonderful scents at the ‘Dementia Friendly Garden’. Other features included the ‘drafts board tables / seating’, colourful playground, artwork at the ‘Crazy Golf’ and a ‘Xeriscope Garden’ to the rear. ‘Young Lungs at Play’ signage at the playground asks the public to refrain from smoking. There was a complete absence of litter throughout the area surveyed.

Clothing Bank at Coral Leisure Centre: Grade C. The one clothing bin unit had been subjected to dumping – piles of loose clothing had been discarded to the side of the unit, along with a bag of clothing.

Riverwalk – Bridgewater side of River: Grade B+. The shopping centre side of the road was cleaner than the river side of the road – the latter appeared to not be cleaned as thoroughly. Items were mostly food related, along with dog fouling / bagged dog fouling and alcohol bottle.

Approach from M11 – Wexford direction: Grade A. Colourful planter boxes close to the town looked very well, with some sponsorship of same by local businesses. Major road works / enhancements on the outskirts of the town were taking place. Overall impression created along this route was a very good one with regards to litter.