

Athlone: 26th out of 40 towns / cities surveyed. Moderately Littered.

A disappointment, as Athlone loses its clean status, with just four top ranking sites. If some of the moderately littered sites could be improved, it would make a big difference to the overall result. Count John McCormack Square / Place was attractively presented and maintained and excellent with regards to litter. Hopefully once the works are complete along Dublin Gate Street / Church Street, that the overall presentation will be easier of maintain. The two most heavily littered sites were Athlone Bus Station and Ballymahon Road – the latter generally presented well but was let down by litter in a few isolated locations, noted in previous IBAL surveys as well.

N61 Roscommon Approach Road: Grade B+. This busy route just missed the top litter grade – main items were food related e.g. coffee cups, fast-food wrappers, mineral cans and sweet papers. The briars along one stretch were overgrown.

Athlone Shopping Centre: Grade A. A sparkling shopping centre environment with all elements in very good condition. A colourful map details the various stores. Seating and litter bins were freshly presented. There was a complete absence of litter throughout.

Count John McCormack Square / Place: Grade A. An attractively presented town centre environment with colourful map / information about Exhibition, seating, bicycle parking, grass area etc. All aspects were in very good condition. There was a complete absence of litter throughout the survey area.

Dublin Gate Street / Church Street: Grade B+. Extensive works are underway with regards to paving / enhanced pedestrian space. Large planter boxes looked very well. With a little extra effort this main shopping area could easily be top ranking.

Preaching Lane: Grade B. A quiet cul-de-sac laneway with fresh road surface / double yellow lines markings. Many of the individual properties presented well, brightly painted / with window boxes. One property, somewhat recessed from others, was littered, mostly food related but also a discarded Christmas Tree. Care needs to be taken that this doesn't attract further littering.

Ballymahon Approach Road: Grade C. The shrubbery 'WELCOME' signage was a lovely feature along this route. The majority of it was well tended, litter free and welcoming. There were some food related items scattered about and large pieces of green / black plastic. Litter was most obvious at the area adjacent to the shops at the inner end of the road, near the shops and traffic lights. The area under the fire escape stairwell was still heavily littered, suffering long-term abuse / neglect – this area has been noted in previous IBAL surveys.

Retreat Road & Lower Road: Grade B. (from Killyon Heights into roundabout at Irishtown / Castlemaine Street) The road surface / paving were freshly presented and on first impressions this route appeared a well-tended and pleasant one. However, a variety of food related litter could be seen, much of it in the low-lying shrubbery – a more thorough approach to street cleaning is required to address this. The inner stretch, Lower Road, was virtually litter free.

Deposit Return, Dunnes Stores: Grade A. A 'stand alone' facility which was freshly presented and virtually litter free. The litter bin right beside it was almost full / overflowing.

St. Mary's Primary School: Grade A. All appeared in good order within the grounds of this school. Area was enhanced by nice planting. Area directly outside the school was spotless.

Athlone Bus Station: Grade C. The station building / entrance were freshly presented and litter free. Visitor information notice, seating, litter bins etc were in good condition. Similarly, the waiting area was in good order. The litter grade was primarily brought down by very significant levels of cigarette butts at all the bus bays and another corner location by a bin – the latter appeared to be there for some considerable time. All of this, despite a very obvious cigarette butt unit in full view.