

An Taisce Report – IBAL Anti-Litter League, Survey 2, 2024

Cork City Centre: Moderately Littered. 31st out of 40 towns / cities surveyed.

As was the case in the previous year, Cork came up short of clean status in 2024. There were no litter blackspots, but five sites were heavily littered, including William St, Penrose Quay, Kennedy Quay and Anderson Quay. Alcohol related litter and graffiti were very much a feature of many of the sites surveyed. Improved sites included: North Abbey Street; South Mall; Caroline Street; Bridge Street – this was a hugely improved environment, very much deserving of the top litter grade this time around. Other top-ranking sites included Mardyke Walk, Mardyke Street, Cork Skate Park, Opera Lane and Lee Banks Walkway – a freshly presented waterside environment with all elements in very good order.

Mardyke Walk: Grade A. A lovely 'tree-lined' approach to the city with an abundance of autumnal leaves both on the trees and lining the pavement. The presentation was good, albeit with some obvious graffiti. The overall impression with regards to litter was a very good one.

Mardyke Street: Grade A. This short residential street was generally good with regards to litter and road surface / markings were freshly presented. The pavement appeared old / somewhat grubby but wasn't littered.

Western Road: Grade A. (from Mardyke Walk to UCC). There was a virtual absence of litter along this route, there were just some minor items. These were well scattered throughout, resulting in the top litter grade. As with several sites surveyed in Cork City, electricity type box was covered in graffiti.

Cork Skate Park: Grade A. A lovely park space which looked very well on an autumnal day. There was a virtual absence of litter at the skate park. While graffiti / tagging is very much a feature of skate parks, the signage associated with the use of same has been completely defaced / illegible.

Lee Banks Walkway: Grade A. Another lovely open space which was very much deserving of the top litter grade. Pedestrian surface / life-belts / railings were in good order. Freshly presented litter bins were covered in graffiti.

South Mall: Grade B+. Certainly, South Mall wasn't as heavily littered as previous IBAL litter surveys. Major works were taking place at some buildings / boarding lined another large site. However, there were traces of a wide variety of food and alcohol related items and cigarette butts, none of which were particularly prevalent. The flood warning signage should be removed if it's no longer relevant.

Parliament Street: Grade A. There were no obvious litter issues along this small, hilly approach to the city. Recent road re-surfacing has resulted in a mish mash of surfaces, some of which were cleaner than others.

Grafton Street - Laneway: Grade C. A very narrow laneway connecting two streets, the walls of which were covered in graffiti. While the laneway was lined with commercial bins / keg storage, the overall appearance was poor, with discarded pallets / other large indistinguishable item. As well as these large items, regular litter included heavy levels of alcohol bottles (& associated broken glass), cigarette butts and some food related items. The area outside 'Vibe' was clean.

St. Patrick's Street: Grade B. A more thorough approach to cleaning could address the issue of trapped cigarette butts along this freshly presented city centre street. The former 'Debenhams' store was surrounded by hoarding, (itself covered in graffiti) and butts lined the base. Other items included coffee cups and sweet wrappers.

William Street: Grade C. Another narrow laneway, part of which was attractively paved, the remainder not so. Alcohol related litter was particularly pronounced, along with other food items, cigarette butts and clothing. Overall impression was poor, with graffiti very much a feature.

Opera Lane: Grade A. What a contrast! Just moments from William Street and yet a completely different environment altogether. A gleaming and glistening site, with a complete absence of litter throughout.

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Cork Bus Station: Grade B. On the whole this bus station was generally quite good with regards to litter but badly let down by heavy concentrations of cigarette butts along Parnell and next to Anderson Quay. Other litter items were food related e.g. coffee cups, fast-food wrappers and sweet papers.

Brian Boru Bridge: Grade B. This short bridge, though not heavily littered, had a definite litter presence, not just typical food related items but vodka bottles / plastic ties / promotional flyers / cigarette butts etc. There didn't appear to be any visible name attached to the bridge.

MacCurtain Street: Grade B. Extensive rejuvenation / enhancement works have taken place along MacCurtain Street resulting in wide paving, substantial planter boxes, attractive 'olde' style street lamps, seating, etc. Street looks very well but is somewhat marred by the dearth of litter bins, resulting in many of the planter boxes being used to 'hold' the litter. Main items were food related, along with alcohol bottles, vapes and cigarette butts.

Railway Street: Grade B. This was a very mixed site in terms of presentation – one side was fresh and shiny; the other side was characterised by derelict properties. The overall impression was somewhat littered, a mix of food / alcohol / cigarettes / vapes, along with significant graffiti.

Penrose Quay: Grade C. The riverside presented well with attractive paving, seating, tree planting etc. but it was let down by a very obvious litter presence, frequently at the base / around the seating. Alcohol cans / bottles and fast-food wrappers were the most obvious litter, with lower levels of a variety of other items.

Kennedy Quay: Grade C. While the built environment is changing here, there was no improvement on the litter situation. There were vast quantities of alcohol bottles (vodka, in particular) and some fast-food wrappers, with lower levels of a wide variety of other items.

Marina Walk: Grade B+. This site was very much in a state of flux with plenty of temporary metal fencing erected. As with so many other sites surveyed in the area, alcohol bottles featured, some vapes and other food related items.

Anderson Quay: Grade C. Another very 'mixed' site in terms of presentation – some parts by the waterside / railings were attractively landscaped (paving, grass, tree planting), other parts were in a poor state of repair and subject to dumping .e.g corner location which has been cited in many previous IBAL surveys. It seems that this area is subject to a completely different cleaning regime to the surrounding area.

Caroline Street: Grade B. Overall, this was much improved compared to recent IBAL surveys – not much effort is required for the top litter grade. Attractive paving looked well.

Smith Street: Grade A. There was a virtual absence of litter along this 'link' street, just a minor amount at the Oliver Plunkett St. end. Streetscape was in very good condition.

Deposit Return Scheme - Lidl, Cornmarket Street: Grade A. There was no litter directly associated with this facility.

North Abbey Street: Grade B+. A notable improvement was recorded here, this site was well on its way to Grade A status.

Knapps Square: Grade B. A heavily graffitied 'link' street with some litter – alcohol bottles, cigarette butts, sweet papers and chewing gum. The private bin area was spotless.

Bridge Street: Grade A. This is a hugely improved environment with attractive paving and seating at the bus-stop. This time around it was very much deserving of the top litter grade.