

TIME TO CLEAN UP ON ILLEGAL DUMPING

Despite a recent national litter survey showing improvements in cleanliness across the country over the past year, a new enforcement initiative involving local authorities, agencies and voluntary bodies now aims to tackle the growing problems of fly-tipping and illegal dumping.

Over 80% of towns and cities are as clean as our European counterparts; Dublin, Cork and Galway city centres all scored well in the ranking of 40 areas while over 90% of rural towns surveyed were deemed clean, according to the findings of the latest survey by Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL).

IBAL says a lack of “community involvement” explains why certain disadvantaged urban areas continue to be plagued by litter despite improvements elsewhere.

“In the 16 years we have been conducting these surveys, this is possibly our best result,” stated Conor Horgan of IBAL.

In welcoming the IBAL survey results, Environment Minister Denis Naughten said he was concerned about levels of fly-tipping and illegal dumping.

And in a bid to tackle these problems, he said he has provided €1.3m for a new enforcement initiative, which will involve local authorities, agencies and voluntary bodies.

TULLAMORE TOPS RANKINGS

Topping the rankings, Tullamore was praised by the inspectors for having many top-ranking sites, which they described as either “spotless” or “looking very well with so much colourful planting in the form of hanging baskets, ornamental trees and large planter boxes”.

Showing a vast improvement was the environs of Dublin Airport, which were deemed a “litter blackspot” when first surveyed five years ago. There was a wide gap between towns and disadvantaged city areas, with the latter occupying the bottom six places in the ranking.

While no area was brandished a “litter blackspot”, Galvone

ABOUT IRISH BUSINESS AGAINST LITTER

Set up in 1996, Irish Business

Against Litter (IBAL) is an alliance of companies which shares a belief that continued economic prosperity in tourism, food and direct foreign

investment sectors is contingent on a clean, litter-free

environment. As part of the IBAL Anti-Litter League, An

Taisce monitors towns independently and in accordance with international grading standards.

Visit www.ibal.ie for further information.



in Limerick City was again seriously littered, while Dublin’s north inner city and Cork City North were littered. “We haven’t seen as much improvement in these social housing areas, where community groups and tidy towns committees are lacking compared to in mixed communities,” Horgan noted.

“Without volunteer forces supporting the efforts of the council, these areas will simply not be clean on a sustained basis.” Despite improvements in Dublin’s north inner city, the inspectors highlighted a “dumping ground” near Sheriff St Park, rubbish along the canal pathway and several sites suffering from “long-term abuse and neglect” rather than just casual litter.

The surveyors expressed disappointment that previously highlighted littered sites have not been cleaned up. Examples of extreme littering on beaches, for example, this summer display a worrying indifference to the natural environment, according to Horgan. “Marine litter is a source of great concern at present and an issue IBAL may concentrate more on in the future,” he stated.

DUMPING ON THE INCREASE

The business campaign group concurs with the ‘polluter pays’ principle behind the mandatory pay-by weight collection system, but believes some of the monies raised should be ring-fenced for councils to tackle the increased dumping that will result from people looking to evade the charges.

Horgan said that with dumping on the increase, the more IBAL asks people to pay for waste disposal the greater an issue it is likely to become. “It may not be as widespread, but dumping is the new litter in many respects,” he added.

Some 85% of tourist sites surveyed were clean, including the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre, Muckross House in Killarney, Guinness Storehouse and Newgrange, with the remainder of the 32 sites exhibiting small amounts of litter.

