



Cavan County Council  
Comhairle Chontae an Chabháin

# Cavan County Council

## Litter Management Plan

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## Introduction

The policy statement 'Action Against Litter' issued by the Minister of the Environment in February 1996, was a comprehensive strategy for tackling the serious problem of litter. The strategy involved four main approaches:

1. Improving Local Authority performance in relation to litter prevention and control including tougher action against offenders.
2. New legislation to ensure more effective regulations and sanctions in support of litter control.
3. Creative partnership with business/industry to combat litter and to create a clean outdoor environment.
4. Promoting greater public awareness and education about litter, with a special focus on young people and with help from community and environmental groups.

Subsequently, Mr. Pat the Cope Gallagher, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, on the 15th September 2003 announced the commencement of Part 4 of the Protection of the Environment Act 2003 dealing with litter.

Part 4 of the 2003 Act amends section 19 and substitutes new sections for sections 21 and 24 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997, to give effect to commitments in the Government's Litter Action Plan to strengthen the existing litter laws. These provisions, came into effect on 1 October 2003:

- increase the fine for summary conviction for litter offences from €1,904 to €3,000, which is the upper limit of fine for offences heard in the District Court; the maximum daily fine for continuing offences also increases to €600 – more than a fourfold increase on the previous level of fine,
- introduce conviction on indictment for litter offences, with a maximum fine of €130,000 and €10,000 per day for continuing offences,
- widen local authority powers to make local byelaws, and
- impose greater restrictions on advertising materials in public places, including a ban on the placement of advertising flyers on vehicles.

"Local authorities have intensified action against litter in recent years," said Minister of State Gallagher. "More litter wardens are being employed, with significant increases in the number of prosecutions taken and on the spot fines issued for litter offences." The Minister also referred to a range of anti-litter actions – such as awareness initiatives, National Spring Clean, a national litter pollution monitoring system – being pursued at national level as part of the Government's Litter Action Plan to support strengthened local authority action against litter.

"Good progress has been made but much more needs to be done. That is why these

tougher measures, especially the increases in fines and the introduction of conviction on indictment for litter offences, are being introduced. They signify this Government's commitment to tackle litter pollution and will add further impetus to the progress that has been made in recent years in the fight against litter," concluded the Minister.

In the preparation of this Action Plan, Cavan County Council has had regard to the Government's overall strategy and also the guidelines for Local Authorities as prepared by the Department of the Environment. In addition an effort was made to study all existing litter prevention and control programmes and to assess what changes may be necessary to achieve desired standards of cleanliness as a minimum.

The plan is intended to outline the activities carried out by Cavan County Council and Cavan Town Council and to highlight areas of achievement in this field. It also outlines how Cavan will continue to improve its performance in this regard by maintaining good standard practices as its foundation and by exploring areas such as partnerships with commerce that are a first for Ireland. The report is categorised in a similar format to the original Litter Plan of 1996 which uses the guidelines issued by the Department at that time.

## Street Litter

The system of street cleaning operated by Cavan County Council varies according to each town and village. The minimum each of the main villages and towns are swept is once a week, in most towns it is twice a week, Monday and Friday. In those towns with a large volume of litter it has been increased to 3 - 7 days a week. In the smaller villages and towns litter is kept to a minimum due to the involvement of the Tidy Towns Committees and Residents Associations.



Cavan County Council has recently employed 2 additional Litter wardens who patrol specified areas of the County. This will provide additional enforcement and awareness raising resources to the County.

Cavan Town was given the title of the cleanest town in Ireland by IBAL in 2003, a title that Cavan Town Council and Cavan County Council had been working towards over the previous year or two. Significant efforts had been made to achieve this status and Cavan Town remains at the top of the table and clean to European standards.

## Strategy

1. A determined effort will be made to encourage retail owners to maintain the areas (footpaths, parking areas, etc.) outside their premises to an acceptable standard. This has become more of an issue since the introduction of the smoking ban which has consequently increased the amount of cigarette butts along the footpath outside public houses, restaurants etc.
2. Cigarette disposal receptacles have been sourced and are actively being offered to all outlets by the litter wardens to prevent litter.
3. Resources will continue to be provided to maintain a high quality litter free standard in the County Town, in the form of street cleansing operatives, weekend shifts, street sweepers.
4. Enforcement of the Litter Pollution act will be maintained and an increased visible presence will be provided through the employment of additional Litter Wardens

## Litter Bins

Cavan County Council has provided litter bins on an ongoing basis to town and villages. Where active Development Associations highlight an area where additional bins would be necessary, Cavan County Council has provided financial support for the purchase of these by the Association through a grant scheme.

Although the frequency of emptying litter bins varies from town to town, the minimum standard is once a week. In busier towns they are emptied more frequently by Cavan County Council or in partnership arrangements with Development Associations which allows for the bins to be emptied as required and then collected by the Council as normal.

## Strategy

1. Litter bins will be provided where the need arises either through direct purchase by the Council or by the grant scheme whereby local associations contribute to the cost.
2. All open top litter bins will be replaced by covered top bins as part of an upgrade programme as the opportunity presents itself. Any old or damaged bins could also be replaced as part of this programme.
3. Bins may be relocated where necessary after consultation with local Tidy Towns Committee.
4. Efforts will be made to standardise litter bins, therefore, sponsors of bins for retail outlets will be encouraged to provide covered bins to replace the existing open top bin.
5. Retail outlets will be encouraged to provide covered top bins which they would agree to empty as required.
6. The Litter management Officer and litter wardens will monitor litter bin usage and follow up on any misuse of litter receptacles for disposing of household and commercial refuse.

## Household / Commercial Refuse

As from January 2003, the Refuse Collection service provided by Cavan County Council is based on a pre paid bag system. Anyone now wishing to use the service must present their waste in 'branded' refuse collection bags designed exclusively for use in the Local Authority Service.

The new system was intended to allow customers to control individual waste disposal costs by adopting sustainable waste management practices.

The effect this new system has had with regard to litter has been significant. This is mainly due to the amount of bags being left out significantly dropping and with it the potential for litter caused by bags being torn open by birds etc. It has been found that the service provided by Cavan County Council, through the use of pre paid bags, no longer represents a potential litter risk.

The enforcement of the Packaging Regulations has increased. As a result the vast majority of businesses within the towns in County Cavan are now presenting packaging waste such as cardboard , glass or plastic for recycling through private waste contractors. This has again reduced the amount of waste being presented for collection and disposal . This service was introduced to Cavan Town in 2004 and has shown similar benefits for all involved.

### Strategy

1. Efforts will be made to encourage all householders to present their refuse in a manner that will minimise litter on collection days – To present bags only on the morning of collection and to present bags in traditional bins with lids if preferred.
2. Businesses will continue to be encouraged to maintain footpaths and recycle all packaging waste in accordance with the Packaging Regulations
3. Advice Sheets will be issued as appropriate for users of the Refuse Collection Service on management and presentation of refuse.
4. The option of introducing Bye Laws for the presentation of waste will be explored.



## Strategy

1. The Council will encourage the public to use these sites fully through awareness initiatives and through the introduction of the volume based refuse service, which encourages recycling and the minimisation of waste destined for landfill.
2. The frequency of servicing will be monitored to ensure an efficient service is being provided at all times. Additional collections will be made available at peak times such as after the Christmas period etc.
3. The Council will continue to actively enforce legislation or support any other viable recycling initiatives in relation to packaging waste, agricultural plastic, in conjunction with the relevant business and farming groups.
4. All bring sites are routinely checked weekly as a minimum by the Councils Litter Wardens who will follow up on any activities of illegal dumping or littering at these sites
5. The use of fixed CCTV cameras are being used at 4 of the sites at present with the utilisation of mobile CCTV systems for the other sites in order to support the enforcement work being carried out .

## Developing Partnerships

It is the policy of the Department of the Environment to promote Action Against Litter at national level with representatives of the different economic sectors. Cavan County Council has recently launched an initiative that actively involves the private sector in the efforts made in reducing litter in the County. The 'Adopt A Road' Litter Maintenance programme allows private businesses to adopt stretches of road for the purpose of litter maintenance.

With the assistance of Cavan County Council, large stretches of roads will be kept litter free by employees of the companies involved. In return Cavan County Council provide equipment and permanent signage along these 'adopted roads', advertising to passers by the efforts being made in this regard. The initiative is a first for Ireland and if proven to be effective will be extended out to other towns in Cavan shortly.

### Strategy

1. Local business groups/organisations will actively be sought to become involved in anti litter campaigns and Cavan County Council will assist and support such groups and organisations where possible.
2. Shopping centres and supermarkets will be encouraged to maintain the area of their premises free of litter to standards agreed with local authorities and to hold themselves out publicly as being committed to a clean local environment.

## Clean Up Campaigns

In 2003, the Council launched an annual Spring Clean competition, which that takes place during National Spring Clean week. The competition provides prizes for the best 'Before and After' clean ups in the County with €2000 worth of prizes . The competition adds a further incentive during National Spring Clean to a wide variety of community groups , schools, scouts and businesses that get involve themselves in clean ups in their community.

Cavan County Council also support these initiatives by providing refuse sacks, reflective jackets and litter pickers where necessary and actively promote litter clean ups throughout the year.

Cavan County Council , during the Summer months employ students to assist the Litter wardens in the clean up of Litter hot spots. Not all areas can be cleaned up as regularly as is required to keep them litter free, but the employment of the students during the summer months allows for these areas to be targeted. There is no doubt that the contribution made by the students assisted Cavan Town in achieving litter free status in 2003 and 2004.

## Litter Wardens

Cavan County Council has one Litter Management Officer and 2 Litter Wardens. The Litter Management Officer is responsible for the overseeing of all activities carried out by the Litter Wardens and reports directly to the SEO. The Litter Management Officer and the 2 Litter wardens are fully mobile, having been provided with vehicles suitable for the task and carry out all the duties required of them in this regard, including issuing fines, gathering evidence, prosecutions and awareness campaigns / advice.

A structured approach has been implemented to provide the most effective use of the litter wardens. As part of Cavan County Councils waste enforcement programme, each Litter warden has been given an area of the County to patrol. The litter wardens are required to carry out normal enforcement functions, but also to regularly inspect 'black spots' and bring sites. Each of their areas are split into 12 smaller 'monthly inspection areas'. In essence this will mean that each road and lane in County Cavan will be inspected at least once a year, with areas of larger population density, main roads etc being inspected as frequently as once a week. All incidents in relation to littering or dumping is recorded and dealt with accordingly.

Mobile CCTV equipment is also utilised in the efforts to prevent littering throughout certain locations in the county. Several fines have been issued based on then evidence gathered using CCTV. Cavan County Councils Litter wardens also carry out their duties on behalf of Cavan Town Council and have been fundamental in the successes in the IBAL Litter league programme.

## Anti Litter Campaigns and Educational Programmes

Anti Litter campaigns in the form of bill boards advertising and posters in retail outlets have been used to raise the profile of Littering in County Cavan and Cavan Town. In addition to this, schools are regularly visited by the Litter wardens to carry out litter / waste presentations and awareness programmes.

In 2003 the LA21LEPF funding was used to fund an NGO theatre group which visited several schools teaching children about the environment in a colourful and memorable way.

Leaflets have been produced that provide information and advice on the effects of littering and the law surrounding this area.

Measurable improvements have been seen over the past few years in the area of litter awareness amongst the public and the business sector as a result of the ongoing education and awareness programmes that compliment the enforcement activities carried out in this regard, to the extent that Cavan Town is now recognised as being the cleanest town in Ireland in the IBAL litter league.

## Strategy

1. The Council will actively try to involve other organisations in its anti-litter campaigns - local
2. Chamber of Commerce, Farming Representatives, Residents Associations, Youth clubs, as part of the Councils on going awareness raising initiatives.
3. The Council will continue to highlight litter issues by using the local media to focus attention on the promotion of an anti litter attitude in this county.
4. The Council will continue to fund anti litter awareness initiatives through the LA21LEPF fund

## Shops and Fast Food Outlets

Some shops and fast food outlets tend to contribute to the litter problem to a greater extent than other outlets. This has recently been compounded by the No Smoking legislation, which in effect has forced smokers to stand outside public houses and restaurants etc to smoke. The result being that the number of cigarette butts on the pavement potentially increases. Take away fast food outlets also have the potential to add significantly to the litter problem in their area.

## Strategy

1. All fast food outlets have been visited and will continue to be visited by the Litter wardens. They will be advised of their responsibilities regarding the maintenance of the footpath frontage. Any offenders will be dealt with appropriately.
2. They will be requested to provide or sponsor litter bins outside their premises which they will undertake to empty as required.
3. Cigarette disposal units have been sourced by Cavan County Council and have been and will continue to be offered to all Public Houses and restaurants for purchase and use for their customers. Over 40 have been supplied to date.
4. Mobile fast food traders, under the provisions of the Casual Trading Act 1995, will only be allowed to trade with a licence that includes a condition relating to the provision of litter bins and litter control in the vicinity of their outlet.
5. The 'Adopt a Road' Litter maintenance programme ( See Section 5) will be initiated and offered to all suitable businesses.

## Major Events

Considerable costs can be incurred by the Council for the carrying out of the clean-up operations after large public events. In any event additional receptacles and man hours are required to effectively deal with the increase in Litter during and following large events.

## Strategy

1. The Council will encourage litter management and clean up operations to be incorporated into the planning of these events by meeting with the organisers well in advance of the event. This clean up operation and the prior litter control will not only apply to the immediate vicinity of the event but also the surrounding area.
2. Additional receptacles will be provided for the disposal of litter along the main thoroughfares on which crowds will be travelling.
3. It will be the policy of Cavan County Council to recover costs, where appropriate, from the organisers of such events and to encourage the full, part or co sponsorship of any additional activities or equipment in this regard.
4. Pre event advertising through local media will highlight the issues of littering at major events and will request attendees to deal responsibly with the waste they may produce etc.

## Fly Tipping/Posting

Fly tipping of refuse in rural areas continues to be a problem in certain areas. Powers for Local Authorities in dealing with illegal dumping and fly-posting are now well established and are used on a daily basis by the Litter wardens and Waste Management staff.

As part of the new enforcement programme all incidents of illegal dumping are investigated immediately and the appropriate action taken. The number of permitted sites for the controlled disposal of waste originating from development works has increased dramatically over the last 12 months. This assists to ensure that such materials are not disposed of in a manner that may cause environmental concern.

Fly posting is not a major issue in Cavan. However, any incidents of fly posting are dealt with by the Litter management Officer who advise all offenders that failure to remove them within a specified period will result in steps to remove and charge for the removal of the posters or in extreme circumstances to prosecute for an offence under the Litter Pollution Act 1997.

## Strategy

1. The public will be actively encouraged to report indiscriminate dumping at locations in the County to the Council. It is policy of this Council to instigate proceedings in relation to illegal dumping when so notified where adequate evidence is available.
2. A freephone number has been activated and is displayed on the side of the Litter Warden Patrol vehicles.
3. All incidents of illegal dumping are investigated immediately by the Litter Wardens or enforcement staff in Cavan County Council.
4. Routine roadside waste haulage vehicle inspections are carried out to ensure all waste travelling through County Cavan is accompanied by the appropriate

- documentation that shows source and destination of the waste on board.
5. Notices under the Waste management Act such as notices under S55. are used frequently in this regard to prevent dumping or to require the removal and proper disposal of waste.
  6. The organisers of events shall be encouraged to place their advertising posters in shop windows.
  7. The Council will allow free standing advertising hoardings to be placed at suitable locations on the outskirts of towns and villages, only if prior permission has been granted and no other issues such as obstruction to visibility on roads etc is of concern .
  8. Offences in relation to abandoned vehicles will be pursued by the Council when empowered to do so. Arrangements with a private company to handle the collection process are in place and the Litter wardens work closely with the Garda in this regard.

## Tidy Towns

Many communities have achieved lasting progress in an improved and less littered local environment as a result of entering the Tidy Towns competition. In 2003, 8 towns and villages in Cavan entered the competition. The comments from the adjudicators were favourable and in most cases litter was not evident on the day of adjudication.

Cavan County Council has always supported, where possible, the Tidy Towns Committees and will continue providing assistance in this regard. In 2003 Redhills won the 'Endeavour award' for most improved town in the country and Loch Gowra gained the highest number of points in Cavan with 236 points. This initiative is another method of raising litter awareness issues in communities across the country and should be encouraged in every way.

## Strategy

1. The Council will continue to support Tidy Towns committees in any way possible, through the supply of litter picking equipment or other machinery.
2. The advice of the Council's Horticulturist will be made available to local groups in appropriate cases.
3. Many areas will benefit from the improvements to be carried out by the Council under the Village Renewal Scheme.
4. The Council will encourage and facilitate the provision of "Welcome to ....." signs on the outskirts of towns.
5. Consideration will be given to the introduction of a yearly competition for Housing Estates.
6. The Council will offer the 'Adopt a Road' scheme to any Tidy Towns group that request it.

## Conclusion

Litter is a form of pollution, and causes the most visible and objectionable kind of environmental problem which scars our towns and our countryside. Litter does not have to exist on its present scale. It is mostly created by careless or anti-social behaviour at all levels. Clean and litter-free areas present a positive and attractive image for shopping, leisure and tourism. Conversely heavily littered areas are less attractive for tourists and home consumers. This action plan provides the basis for ongoing improvements in the efforts to control littering in County Cavan. Proposals in this plan require co-operation from various community organisations, business organisations and other sectors of the community as well as members of the public.

There is a need for a sustained and comprehensive effort to fight the problem of litter. This will require the co-operation of the public, environmental organisations, business/industry and other groups as well as better education and awareness to bridge the gap between aspiration and reality.

The Council, through the measures outlined in this plan, will work in co-operation with all sectors to ensure that the County of Cavan continues to be at the forefront in maintaining an attractive litter free environment which we can all be proud of and benefit from.