

A large, light green map of Laois County, Ireland, with a subtle shadow effect. The map shows the county's outline and internal regional boundaries.

Litter Management Plan 2015-2017



Laois County Council, Áras an Chontae,
Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
www.laois.ie



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Setting the scene

The Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended, outlines the need to produce a Litter Management Plan (Section 10), the requirements of the Plan (Section 11) and procedure for making, amending or replacing a litter management plan (Section 12). Laois County Council's latest Litter Management Plan highlights the projects we have undertaken to date and identifies where we will focus our efforts over the next three years.

We know that we cannot do this on our own. We need your support. That is why we are committed to engage and work with individuals, communities, schools and business because litter management is everyone's responsibility.

We would like you to help us by:

- ✿ Putting litter in its place – the bin (either on the street or your own waste bin at home).
- ✿ Adopt an area in front of or near your home or business and keep it litter free.
- ✿ Use only authorised and permitted contractors to remove waste on your behalf - otherwise it will end up in and ruin our beautiful countryside.
- ✿ Recycle Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE Goods) – they are accepted Free in Portlaoise and Portarlington recycling centres or the shop where you purchased the item.
- ✿ When you bring your dog for a walk, make a commitment to clean up after them (our Green Dog Walker programme will commence in 2015). Remember to bring a bag!
- ✿ If you smoke, make the commitment to bin your butt – don't throw it on the ground.
- ✿ If you use chewing gum, please dispose of it responsibly in the nearest bin.



What is litter? How is it defined?

Litter is defined in the Litter Pollution Act 1997 as amended as "a substance or object, whether or not intended as waste that, when deposited in a place other than a litter receptacle or other place lawfully designated for the deposit, is or is likely to become unsightly, deleterious, nauseous or unsanitary, whether by itself or with any such substance or object, and regardless of its size or volume or the extent of the deposit".

This definition means that any item or material which is disposed of improperly (i.e. not deposited in a litter bin or authorised waste facility) is considered to be litter. This can range, for example, from a single coffee cup or cigarette butt discarded on the street or thrown from a car window, to the dumping of larger volumes of litter or waste.

Everyone has responsibilities when it comes to litter.

If you are a member of the public you could get a fine if you:

- ✿ do not keep private property (visible from a public place) litter free
- ✿ drop cigarette butts, chewing gum, paper, food, etc. on the ground
- ✿ do not clean up after your dog in a public place (park or street)
- ✿ place your own waste in a public litter bin.

If I'm involved in business, I need to:

- ✿ keep the footpaths, pavements and gutters (not exceeding 100m of the premises) adjoining a premises located within a speed limit area free of litter
- ✿ secure transported material on a trailer or truck (use a trailer cover)
- ✿ dispose of my waste correctly with an authorised collector. Unauthorised collectors will dump your rubbish on a road side or in a public bin – that is not allowed by Law and you can be prosecuted
- ✿ get planning permission to put up promotional signs
- ✿ (operators of mobile outlets and organisers of major events also have additional obligations).

What are the penalties for littering?

Leaving or throwing litter in a public place is an offence which can be subject to an 'on the spot' fine of €150 and a maximum fine of €3,000 through the Courts (conviction on indictment for litter offences carries a maximum fine of €130,000). A person convicted of a litter offence may be required by the Court to pay the Council's costs and expenses in investigating the offence and in bringing the prosecution.

Large scale dumping will be prosecuted under the Waste Management Act 1996 as amended, with penalties on conviction or indictment of up to €15 million and/or a 10-year prison term.

We firmly believe that if litter pollution can't be measured, it can't be managed. That is why we participate in various national monitoring programmes including:

- ✿ Litter Pollution, in association with the Department of the Environment Community & Local Government and The Litter Monitoring Body/Tobin Consulting Engineers.
- ✿ Litter Quantification, in association with the Department of the Environment Community & Local Government and The Litter Monitoring Body/Tobin Consulting Engineers.
- ✿ IBAL in association with Irish Businesses Against Litter and An Taisce.
- ✿ Gum Litter Taskforce in association with in association with the Department of the Environment Community & Local Government and GLT representatives.
- ✿ Banking Protocol in association with the Department of the Environment Community & Local Government and the Irish Banking Federation.
- ✿ RMCEI (recommended minimum criteria for environmental inspections), in association with the EPA.

Appraisal of previous campaigns

As outlined earlier, we work with many agencies to help promote sustainable litter management practices. Following is a selection of comments based on what our partners have thought of our efforts:

Laois County Council is a key partner and stakeholder in the Green-Schools programme for over 10 years. The critical financial and on-the-ground supports provided to schools from Laois County Council has seen 68 schools receive the prestigious, internationally accredited Green Flag Award from An Taisce.

On average, participating schools have reduced their waste to landfill by 56%. The fact that Ireland is seen as "best practice" internationally, and has the highest percentage of awarded Green Flags in all 59 participating countries is in no small part due to the involvement of Local Authorities like Laois County Council.

Cathy Baxter,
Green Schools
Manager,
An Taisce

Anne Goodwin,
CEO,
Laois Partnership
Company

Laois Partnership Co has worked in partnership with the Environment Section of Laois County Council to deliver on litter reduction in the county. The Environment Section provided Leave No Trace training to members of our walks groups and have provided equipment eg litter pickers to our CE and RSS scheme participants to support local tidy towns groups in their litter management efforts.

We understand that as we progress, we must strengthen our existing partnerships that we have built over the years while at the same time identifying new complementary programmes and partners.

We will do this by providing support by providing financial support, capital investment and ensuring full transparency of our efforts with all parties involved.

How to report a complaint

Laois County Council provides numerous ways to report a litter pollution complaint including:

-  Freephone the confidential litter hotline 1800 323230 (24 hours)
-  Phone our main switch 057 8664000 (office hours) and ask to speak to a member of our Environment team
-  Email envcomplaints@laoiscoco.ie
-  Via the Contact / Report it features on www.laois.ie
-  Call into our office in Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise during opening hours.

Please note that you will be asked for your name and contact number, which will remain confidential, as well as details regarding your environmental complaint. We need this information in case we need further details or to clarify your query. This information is not passed to any third party.

When we receive a complaint we follow a series of steps including:

-  Log it on the Environmental Complaints Database.
-  Assign it to the relevant personnel, depending on the nature of the complaint and the location.
-  Our Litter Wardens investigate, take photographs and report back to the office.
-  A litter fine may issue (depending on evidence found).
-  People that make a complaint may also receive an update when the complaint is closed. Please let a member of our team know if you wish to be notified when the complaint is closed.

If a fine remains unpaid within 21 days, a 7 day reminder notice is issued. If this also goes unpaid, with no effort made to engage / discuss the fine, legal proceedings will be initiated.

Statistics relating to numbers of litter pollution complaints received will be provided during our annual progress reports to Strategic Policy Committee and Elected Members of Full Council.

Meet our staff

Laos County Council employs 3 Litter Wardens:

1. John Ging who covers Portlaoise town and surrounding countryside.
2. John Rogers who covers the western area of the county and
3. Emily Doyle who covers the eastern area of the county.



L-R John Rogers, Emily Doyle, John Ging

They investigate all complaints received and take appropriate actions to deal with the litter. However, they cannot do their work in isolation. They are part of a larger team that works to protect our local environment, consisting of

- ✿ **Environment Section Staff** - Martina, Dorothy, Finbarr, Anne and Martina provide additional administrative support and log complaints.
- ✿ **Waste Enforcement Staff** – Michael, Ann Marie, Audrey and Dermot provide additional investigative support and look after bring bank infrastructure.
- ✿ **Community Staff** – Ann-Marie and Siobhan provide administrative support on specific anti litter campaigns.
- ✿ **Landfill Staff** – Ken, Liam and Pat provide support with clean ups on an ongoing basis.
- ✿ **Area Engineers and Staff** – provide additional support to the Environment Section with clean ups in specific areas as well as servicing / maintaining litter bins.
- ✿ **Traffic Wardens** – Derek and Ken also provide support on an ongoing basis.

Laois Local Authorities Waste Facilities



Recycling Centres and Transfer Stations

Laois Local Authorities have two recycling centres (Portlaoise and Portarlington) open 6 and 4 days a week respectively.

Our landfill, located at Kyletalesha on the Mountmellick Road, now operates as a waste transfer station i.e. no waste is deposited on site. It is placed in a compactor and when full, it is transported to another landfill site in a neighbouring county for disposal.

Full details are provided in *Appendix 1*.

Bring Bank Sites

There are 46 bring bank sites around the county. These banks accept glass and aluminium cans. In some instances, textiles can also be recycled at the site. Our bring banks are serviced weekly at a minimum while busier sites are serviced twice a week with additional collections for seasonal surges (e.g. Christmas, Easter and sunny weather!)

Laois currently participate with Offaly and Westmeath County Councils in a shared service for bring bank servicing.

CCTV surveillance has been used to deter, monitor and prosecute littering at bring banks.

Implementation Programme

1. Enforcement of Litter Pollution Act 1997 as amended

- ✿ Investigate litter complaints.
- ✿ Issue on the spot fines.
- ✿ Prosecute offenders.
- ✿ Work programme for Litter Wardens.
- ✿ Promote Litter Hotline – 1800 323230.
- ✿ Include relevant data in RMCEI returns.
- ✿ Use various methods to catch offenders e.g. CCTV as and when needed.
- ✿ Conduct spot checks regarding litter/waste disposal.

2. Management of Litter

- ✿ Actively engage with and send reports of local surveys to the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System.
- ✿ Actively participate in other monitoring projects which are facilitated by external agencies e.g. IBAL.
- ✿ Engage with Planning Section regarding event licences e.g. Electric Picnic, Ploughing Championships, Durrow Scarecrow Festival etc to ensure litter management is a top priority for all events.
- ✿ Support community initiatives.

In order for us to ensure the litter management plan remains a priority, we propose the following year round actions and a series of complementary ongoing activities.

3. Promotion of Education and Awareness Campaigns

- ✿ Schools programme.
- ✿ Tidy towns.
 - ✿ Promotion of national campaigns at local level.
 - ✿ Promotion of green initiatives with internal departments, external agencies and local events.
 - ✿ Issue relevant correspondence to media.
 - ✿ Run social media campaigns.
 - ✿ Continue to promote bilingual information where appropriate.
 - ✿ Identify suitable projects which can be funded under the Department of the Environment Community & Local Government's Anti Litter Grant.

4. Provision of Waste Facilities

- ✿ Continue to provide bring bank recycling facilities for glass and aluminium cans and textiles.
- ✿ To promote the use of Portlaoise and Portarlinton Recycling Centres.
- ✿ To promote the use of the keyfob pay as you go system for Kyletalesha Landfill.
- ✿ To provide litter bins if appropriate/possible taking into account Leave No Trace ethos.

Education and Awareness Campaigns

Everyone knows that prevention is better than cure – litter management is no exception to this rule. Our Plan sets out our objectives for preventing litter pollution (education and awareness campaigns) and identifies ways that we can manage it (bins, litter picking, street sweeping) when unfortunately it does arise. Our staff work closely with schools, community and business groups on litter prevention and educational initiatives. It is also very important to recognise the work undertaken by Tidy Towns groups, resident associations and other volunteers as this is an invaluable support to the Council.

When people break the law in terms of littering offences or illegal dumping, we prosecute. Our 3 Litter Wardens conduct daily visits around the county and work in conjunction with our Waste Enforcement team when large scale dumping is reported. The Environment section also works with our Area Engineers and their Staff as well as the Roads section to address issues of dumping around the county.

Our staff also works closely with partner agencies e.g. Coillte, the OPW, Gardaí, HSE, Inland Waterways, voluntary Housing Associations, landowners, local groups including Downtown Portlaoise, Service Providers and Elected Members. We are an innovative county when it comes to conducting educational and awareness campaigns on litter.

- Our longest running initiative is Clean Up Laois Week, held annually in April, in association with An Taisce's National Spring Clean. We provide clean up kits (bags, gloves, litter pickers) to voluntary groups and arrange to have the items picked up. In 2015, 17.4 tonnes of litter was collected by 97 groups.
- Green Schools programme: there are now 68 awarded Green Flag schools in Co Laois, leaving only a few schools yet to achieve this prestigious award. We work continuously with teachers and pupils of schools and provide a variety of supports (workshops, visits, teacher seminars etc) to them as they continue on



Bingy at GLT launch



Caution Litter Picking in Progress



How to report a litter complaint

their green schools journey. We also work very closely with An Taisce's Green Schools development office to promote this programme and other complementary initiatives.

- **Eco Media project:** We work with secondary schools and training centres to produce a cinema ad with a special focus on litter management, prevention and/or reuse. Previously, we have run campaigns with specific focus on cigarette related litter, chewing gum, dog fouling and reuse. The winning creative is show in the Odeon Cinema, Portlaoise as an advertising campaign.
- **Leave No Trace:** is an outdoor ethics educational programme designed to encourage people to make better decisions when using the outdoors.
- **Green Dog Walker Programme:** this is a positive and proactive way to encourage responsible dog ownership. As part of this programme, participants are invited to take a pledge to clean up after their dog and to encourage others to do the same. Promotional material will also be available to groups from 2015.
- **Gum Litter Taskforce:** this programme addresses the issue of changing behaviour when it comes to the disposal of gum litter. It is a national campaign which operates at local level and is a partnership between representatives of the chewing gum industry; Department of the Environment Community and Local Government; Food and Drink Industry Ireland; Department of Education and Science; Laois County Council and the people of Laois.
- **Laois Federation of Tidy Towns:** consisting of 32 members from all parts of Laois and chaired by Noreen Byrne, Ballacolla Tidy Towns, the federation aims to provide a forum for all committees to share best practices and allow for ongoing peer support. The Council run local competitions, seminars and workshops, study tours, a grants scheme to support the ongoing work of the Tidy Towns groups.
- **Local competitions focusing on litter** e.g. the Inter Community Litter Challenge also provides smaller committees with a chance to be recognised for their work in litter management. The competition has been run on an annual basis, however it is now being moved to a biannual project to allow groups an opportunity to implement projects in the interim.
- **Litter Management at Events:** we work directly with the Planning Section and provide guidance and input into litter management at large events e.g. Electric Picnic, National Ploughing Championships and smaller events e.g. Durrow Scarecrow Festival.



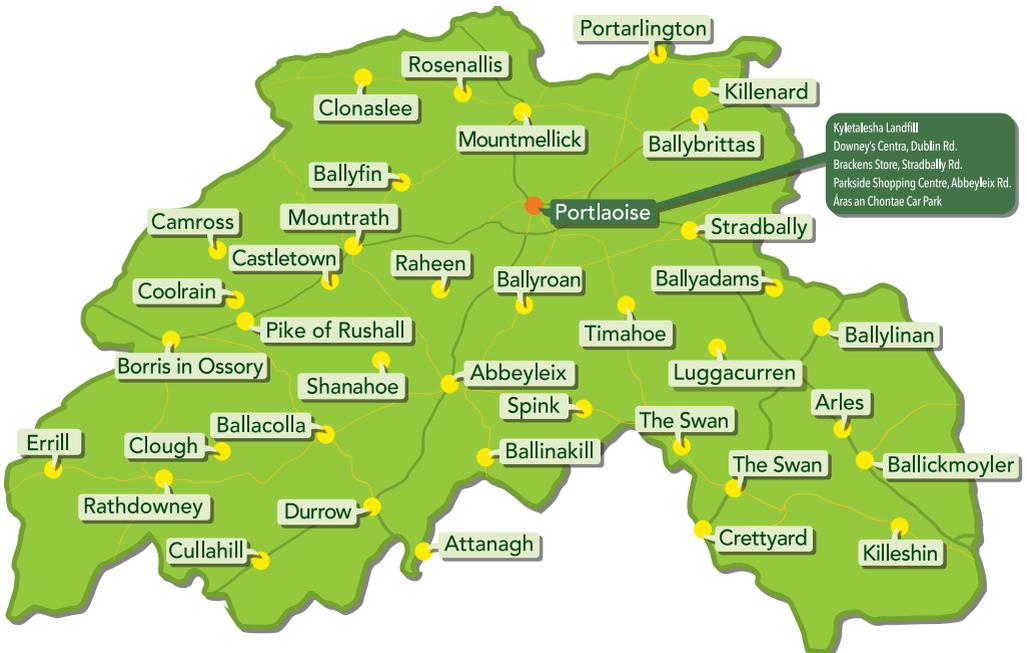
Sample of billboard advertising

- **Billboard advertising:** we have recognised the impact that billboard advertising can take. We have successfully ran various billboard campaigns covering chewing gum disposal, cigarette butts, dog fouling and bogus waste collectors.

Appendix 1

Bring Bank Facilities

There are 46 bring bank sites in Co. Laois, detailed below.



Waste Recycling Facilities

Portlaoise Recycling Centre

Kyletalesha Landfill
Portlaoise
Co Laois
Phone: 057 8620653

Portarlington Recycling Centre

Lea Road
Portarlington
Co Laois
Phone: 057 8642845

Up to date information on opening hours, charges and items accepted are available on www.laois.ie

Waste Disposal Facility: Kyletalesha Landfill, Portlaoise

Please note you must have a keyfob account in order to use this facility. Full details are available on www.laois.ie



Appendix 2

Draft Litter Management Plan 2015-2017

Key Performance Indicators

KP1: Policy Action: Design and deliver environmental awareness initiatives with a dedicated focus on litter management

Targets	Conduct environmental awareness campaigns
Expected Timeline	Annually for life of LMP
Indicator	Number of campaigns delivered
Responsibility	Laois County Council

KP2: Policy Action: To enforce all breaches of litter legislation as required

Targets	When and where breaches occur
Expected Timeline	Annually, as required
Indicator	All litter complaints investigated and fines issued as appropriate
Responsibility	Laois County Council

KP3: Policy Action: Provision of appropriate infrastructure

Targets	Providing litter bins, bring banks, recycling centres
Expected Timeline	Annually for life of LMP
Indicator	Provision of infrastructure
Responsibility	Laois County Council

Draft Litter Management Plan 2015-2017

Key Performance Indicators

KP4: Policy Action: Participate in monitoring programmes with partner agencies.	
Targets	Conduct monitoring programmes in line with partner agency requirements
Expected Timeline	Annually, as required
Indicator	Annual monitoring returns
Responsibility	Laois County Council, Partners

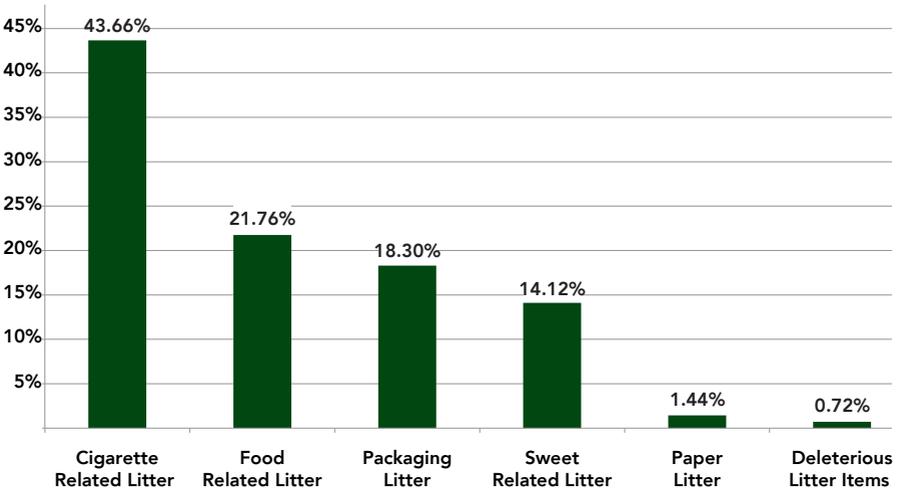
KP5: Policy Action: Prepare an annual report on the progress of policy actions and the implementation of the Litter Management Plan 2015-2017	
Targets	Prepare annual report and distribute findings
Expected Timeline	End of Q1 annually 2015-2017
Indicator	Production of annual report
Responsibility	Laois County Council

KP6: Policy Action: Maintain, develop and integrate litter management practices into ongoing work of Laois County Council and county wide events 2015-2017	
Targets	Highlight obligations - LMP and LPA 1997, as amended
Expected Timeline	Annually for life of LMP
Indicator	Disseminate information regarding obligations
Responsibility	Laois County Council and Partners

Appendix 3

Composition of Litter Pollution in Laois

Based on survey results provided by Laois County Council to The Litter Monitoring Body/Tobin Consulting Engineers, we now know that the following items are the most commonly found littering our beautiful county:



Useful contacts

Freephone Litter Hotline:	1800 323230
John Ging, Litter Warden:	087 7988312
John Rogers, Litter Warden:	087 9473159
Emily Doyle, Litter Warden:	087 2339116
Laois County Council:	057 8664000
Log an environmental complaint:	envcomplaints@laoiscoco.ie

By Post: Laois County Council, Environment Section, Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise, Co Laois.





Litter Pollution is a major threat to the health and aesthetic quality of our local environment. Everyone can make a year round commitment to help us deliver sustainable litter management activities in Co Laois. People can volunteer with their local Tidy Towns Group, they can put litter in its rightful place (the bin) or make a complaint when they see someone breaking the law.

This graphic represents that as we work together, we promote sustainable litter management activities all year round and it is something which remains a priority for us throughout the lifetime of this current Litter Management Plan.

