



REPORT PREPARED ON THE  
OPERATION OF THE  
LITTER POLLUTION ACTS, 1997-2003

TUAIRISC ULLAMHAITHE AR OIBRIÚ AN

***ACHTS TRUAILLIÚ BRUSCAIR,  
1997-2003***



**March 2011  
Márta 2011**



## **Executive Summary**

In accordance with the requirements of the Litter Pollution Acts 1997 to 2003, this report has been prepared for the consideration of the Council to outline the measures taken during the past year in relation to the prevention and control of litter within the functional area of Kerry County Council.

The report is structured to assess:

- the litter prevention and control programmes undertaken, (pages )
- the extent of enforcement action taken, (page )
- the measures taken to promote public awareness including educational and information initiatives, (pages )
- The co-operation and assistance given by persons other than the local authority for the purposes of preventing and controlling litter, (page )

## **Litter Prevention and Control Programmes**

The litter prevention and control programmes undertaken incorporate such initiatives as the promotion of the very successful National Spring Clean campaign in April, together with other promotional events designed to promote and encourage a county-wide participation in the prevention and control programmes implemented. The following initiatives were implemented in 2010:

- The 'Adopt a Road' Scheme was introduced in co-operation with the Glenflesk Community Group. This initiative involves the local community participating in regular clean-ups of the road-sides in their local area, (covering approximately 20 miles of national primary and secondary roads.) The initiative, introduced in May, 2010, has been very successful and has resulted in this stretch of access roadway to the county being maintained in a litter-free status. Kerry County Council allocates a grant of €500 to the community, funded from the Anti-Litter Initiative Grant Scheme. The council also provides support materials and permits access to the Transfer Station for the disposal of the litter collected. It is proposed to expand the scheme to strategic roadways in the county during 2011.
- The 'Adopt a Bring Bank Scheme' continued to operate and 30 sites were monitored by local communities during 2010. A grant of €500 is also provided to each community participating in this scheme, again funded from the Anti-Litter Initiative Grant Scheme. Wheel bins and a collection system are also provided to facilitate the clean-up of litter at the sites.

### **Enforcement Action and Analysis**

The statistics relating to enforcement action are included on the tables inserted on page ? and indicate that in total ? cases of littering offences and ? cases relating to abandoned vehicles were investigated during the year. These investigations most often involve the litter wardens painstakingly filtering through the waste in an effort to find evidence identifying the offender and then arranging a clean-up of the area at a considerable cost to the council. The cost of a clean-up may be in the region of €3,500 per site and where the offender cannot be identified this cost is borne by the Council.

In relation to the sites investigated during 2010, the litter wardens have reported that there has been a significant decrease in the volume of waste recovered at these sites. While this is a welcome trend, there continues to be a difficulty in recovering evidence to identify offenders.

The Councillors will be aware that the use of overt and covert surveillance to be installed at identified litter 'black-spot' areas is proposed. There has been a longer than expected lead-in time with problems encountered in sourcing suitable equipment to meet our needs, particularly in relation to remote sites lacking both a power supply and broadband coverage. Both the covert and overt systems are now up and running. In relation to the covert monitoring, at the present time, we are actively monitoring a well-known illegal dump site in the county. When sufficient evidence has been gathered to support a prosecution, the file will be forwarded to the County Solicitor. The enforcement provisions of the legislation provide for the issue of a penalty notice with an associated minimum fine of €150 and maximum fine of €3,000. It is the council's intention to maximise the application of these enforcement provisions during 2011.

### **Public Awareness including Educational and Information initiatives**

Kerry County Council has made very significant progress in the design and implementation of effective educational programmes as may be evidenced from the number of primary and secondary schools having been awarded the Green Schools Flag (88 no.) and also the number of Tidy Towns Committees participating annually in the Tidy Towns competition and in the National Spring Clean Campaign. The yield from the recycling network of 103 sites is also evidence of the success of the educational programmes implemented. The educational programmes implemented during the year were co-coordinated by Mr. Micheál O'Coileáin, Environmental Awareness Officer. During the year, Micheál continued to work closely with all schools in the county in the promotion of environmental awareness initiatives. Micheal is also the Local Agenda 21 Officer and at local level assists local communities wishing to participate in the Local Agenda

21 Environment Partnership Fund grant scheme administered by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and local Government to support environmental awareness-raising initiatives in partnership with local authorities.

**The co-operation and assistance given by Tidy Towns Committees, Community Groups and Local partnerships**

The Tidy Towns competition now goes far beyond the concept of 'tidyness'. This annual competition has expanded to promote all facets of sustainable living. In 2010, fifty-five committees from County Kerry participated. To support these committees and particularly to assist with the preparation of the application, Kerry County Council hosts an annual seminar and invites a National Adjudicator as a guest speaker to address the more complex aspects of the application. In 2010, the area of ?? was addressed and for 2011 the area of bio-diversity is proposed .

Kerry County Council adopted a new Litter Management Plan at the July, 2010 Council Meeting. The Plan may be viewed on the council's website and is also available at the network of Council Offices and Libraries. In accordance with the statutory requirements, the Plan is structured under 5 principal objectives listed as follows:

- Objective No. 1:** To raise public awareness of the negative effects of litter on the local environment and to motivate a change in littering behaviour so that littering is perceived as socially unacceptable behaviour.
- Objective No. 2:** To prioritise the education of the younger generation and to encourage and assist with participation in the Green Schools Programme.
- Objective No. 3:** To work in partnership with community groups, tidy town committees, residents, local business/commercial interests, etc. to provide a litter free environment for all.
- Objective No. 4:** To identify problem areas and to employ remedial measures
- Objective No. 5:** To promote usage of the recycling infrastructure provided and to extend this infrastructure so that all towns and villages are adequately served with easily accessible recycling facilities

In accordance with the commitments given in the Plan, a second dedicated free phone line fro the receipt of complaints is now in place ([1800 326 228](tel:1800326228) & [066 7181686](tel:0667181686)) and a dedicated email address has been set up ([reportlitteroffences@kerrycoco.ie](mailto:reportlitteroffences@kerrycoco.ie)).

## **1.0 Litter Prevention and Control Programme**

### **National Spring Clean Campaign**

#### **Campaign implemented in 2010:**

The National Spring Clean Campaign continued its success year-on-year with over 700 volunteers out clearing up their communities in 2010. This partnership represents almost 1/8th of the population of the county and is done without any great national media campaign or fanfare. The 2010 campaign was launched by Mayor of Kerry, Mr. Bobby O'Connell and members of the Castleisland Tidy Towns Committee. Throughout the month of April, the Council worked in tandem with the volunteers by co-coordinating clean-ups and providing bags, gloves, and litter pickers to supplement the supplies provided by An Taisce.

#### **Proposed Campaign to be implemented in 2011:**

The 2011 campaign is scheduled to be launched on 22nd March by Mayor of Kerry, Mr Pat Leahy in co-operation with the Moyvane Development Association. Other initiatives to be implemented during the month, in addition to facilitating the annual clean-up campaigns, are as follows:

- Competitions for schools, Tidy Towns Groups, and Community Groups.
- Formal launch of the Glenflesk 'Adopt a Road Scheme' and expand the scheme to one other location.
- Presentation of the Green Schools award to successful schools.
- Advertising and promotion of the Campaign.
- Tidy Towns Seminar
- Distribution of 'Pooper Scoopers' and 'Gum and Smoke' collection pouches

### **1.3 Green Schools Programme**

Green Schools is a European Environmental Programme and Award Scheme for schools, which is co-coordinated in Ireland by An Taisce and implemented by the Local Authorities in primary and post-primary schools. In essence the programme incorporates the preparation and implementation of an environmental management system, which focuses on the reduction of waste and litter within the school and surrounding area. Following the initial Green Flag for Litter and Waste there are further modules based on Energy Conservation, Water Conservation,

transport and biodiversity which are renewed every two years. An Taisce, through funding from the Department of Transport, have employed two people to concentrate on the Transport Module. They began work in September, 2008 and this project will run for an initial period of two years. The initial Green Flag is awarded to a school for management of waste and litter. Thereafter, the green flag is required to be renewed every second year to ensure that the project is sustained. Each renewal includes a new environmental element such as energy conservation and water conservation in the school, while ensuring that waste management is also continued. Kerry now has 71 Green Flags. During 2009 a number of new Green Flags were awarded. The new schools which received awards last year were:

- Fybough National School, Keel
- Gleann na gCoileach NS, Caragh Lake
- Scoil Naomh Eirc Glenderry, Kerry Head
- Kilmoyley NS
- St. Joseph's NS Cahersiveen
- Kiltallagh NS Castlemaine
- Kilgobnet NS Beaufort

### **1.5 Blue Flag Award**

In 2010, Magherabeg Beach regained the Blue Flag Award bringing to thirteen the number of Kerry Beaches presented with the award. One of the criteria in achieving and keeping this award is that Kerry County Council is obliged to keep the beaches litter free and ensure waste management and recycling facilities are put in place as required. Before the commencement of the 2010 season, Kerry County Council placed recycling receptacles at all 12 beaches. Anti littering signs and bins specifically designed for dog fouling were once again placed at all Blue Flag Beaches for the 2010 season. Pooper scoopers are also made available free of charge from each of the lifeguard huts.

### **1.6 Pooper Scoopers**

During 2010 Kerry County Council continued to distribute pooper scoopers from certain designated sites and civic offices and also on demand to members of the public.

## 2.0 Enforcement Action Taken

The following table indicates the enforcement action during the period 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2009 to the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009. The corresponding figures for 2008 are also shown.

Year	No. of cases of illegal dumping investigated	No. of successful prosecutions	Total of fines and costs awarded on foot of prosecutions	No. of notices <sup>(1)</sup> served to prescribe clean-up measures to be implemented	No. of on-the-spot fines issued	Income from on-the-spot fines
2008	752	11	€4,741	41	154	€8,387.70
2009	*658 (Refer to breakdown hereunder)	5	€1,960	29	168	€10,500.00

Note: the 658 no investigations were undertaken on foot of complaints received together with the investigation of littered areas identified by the litter wardens during the course of their duties.

(1) Notices served include:

(a) **Section 9 Notices** i.e. Notice served to require the owner occupier of any property to take immediate action to remedy actual littering or to take specified measures to prevent the creation of litter, (1 no.).

(b) **Section 71 Notice** i.e. Notice to require the removal of an abandoned vehicle, 28 no.

### \* Abandoned Vehicles

**47 No.**

Cases resolved following initial correspondence	19 No.
Section 71 Notices Served	28 No.
<b>Total Abandoned Vehicles</b>	<b>47 No.</b>

### Littering/Illegal Dumping

**611 No.**

Referred to and pursued by other depts. i.e. Housing (5 No.), Town Councils (16 No.) Roads (11No.), Area Offices(10)c	42 No.
Cases resolved	89 No.
<u>Clean Ups by Litter Wardens</u>	392 No.
No Evidence recovered: 224 No. On the Spot fines issued: 168 No.	
Significant cases – Clean Ups by Area Offices	19 No.

Sites cleaned by landowners/no dumping signs erected	69 No.
<b>3.0 Promotion of Public Awareness including Educational and Information Measures</b>	

### **3.1 Anti-Litter Initiative Grant Assistance**

A grant of €32,000 was awarded to Kerry County Council under the 2009 Anti-Litter Initiative Grant Scheme, promoted by the Department of the Environment and Local Government. The grant assistance received facilitated the following campaigns

- **Adopt a Bank Scheme**. Twenty five groups/persons have been granted sponsorship to take responsibility for litter clean-ups in the vicinity of bring banks and public areas in their towns.
- **Cinema advertisement**. A professionally produced cinema advert promoting anti litter awareness ran for a 26 week period at cinemas in Tralee, Killarney, An Daingean and Listowel. The advert was shown in a total of 12 screens with a potential audience of over 2,000 people per screening.
- **Anti-litter awareness signs**. Signs carrying an anti-litter awareness message aimed at passing motorists, dog owners and the general public were placed at beaches and public locations throughout the County.
- **A Radio Kerry and print media advertising campaign**. A campaign ran during the summer months which promoted an anti-litter theme and encouraged people to take responsibility for the litter they generate.
- **Car Stickers** Bi-lingual car stickers with an anti-litter message have recently been designed and distributed through schools and other public functions.
- **Tidi Bags** One of the main causes of litter is from motorists and these bags are geared towards preventing roadside litter. They are easy to use and they have been successful to date. They have been distributed through public events, schools and public offices.

### **3.2 Environmental Awareness Officer**

Mr. Micheál O'Coileáin is employed as Environmental Awareness Officer. As part of his work programme, Micheál works closely with all schools in the county, visiting them on a regular basis promoting and working with all pupils/students on all environmental issues. It has been shown on many occasions that the most effective way of getting parents to become more environmentally aware is through learning from their children and the environmentally sound habits they bring home from school. Over 70% of all primary schools and over 90% of secondary schools in Kerry are registered for the Green Flag Project. Litter pickers, battery boxes, composters etc are delivered to each of the participant schools. Schools are also encouraged to participate in the National Spring Clean as part of their Green School programme which involves a day of action, generally a clean up of a local area. Currently there are 71 successful schools in Kerry flying the Green Flag for environmental excellence.

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Green Schools in Ireland and recent research on the economic value of the programme to schools in Ireland has revealed that the programme has saved schools in Ireland a minimum 2 million euro in waste, electricity, water and fuel costs over the school year 2008-2009. The results reveal a minimum of 12 tonnes of waste diverted from landfills in Ireland every school day by schools undertaking the programme, 3.7 million units of electricity saved, 200 million litres of drinking water saved, and around 500,000 litres of transport fuel saved over the school year. These are conservative estimates and considering the programme also involves the wider community, the overall savings could be several times the 2 million euro saved by the schools. As the number of schools participating is growing every year, this year's savings are expected to be even higher.

Micheal also liaises with community groups, active retirement groups and Tidy Towns Committees, delivering presentations on good practice in relation to waste management/waste prevention, water quality and energy conservation. Dealing with individual communities on any given evening is an effective way of raising the awareness of the individuals who attend, and through word of mouth, to the wider community.

Amongst the community initiatives towards sustainable living have been the development of Transition town movements in Kenmare, Tralee and on the Dingle Peninsula. Transition town deals with the twin threats of peak oil and climate change and provides information to people on how to live more sustainably in relation to energy, waste, water, transport, food etc.

A further initiative promoted by Micheál has been the publication of a weekly article "Environmental Issues" in The Kerryman newspaper on topics such as Litter Management, Waste

Management, Water Pollution, Energy Conservation, etc. There are also regular features on Radio Kerry and Radio na Gaeltachta.

#### **4.0 The co-operation and assistance given by persons other than the local authority to the Litter Control Programme**

- 4.1 The continued co-operation and assistance provided by Tidy Towns Committees is recognised as a fundamental element of any effective litter control programme. The Council acknowledges and is appreciative of the on-going partnership with Tidy Towns Groups.
- 4.2 We have initiated a community based project for Tidy Town Groups aimed at keeping bring bank sites free of illegally dumped waste, plastic bags, cardboard boxes etc. Each group who sponsor a bring bank site will keep the site clean and in return will receive a donation of €500, along with a bin for the waste which will be collected free of charge. Twenty five communities participated in this scheme in 2009.
- 4.3 Kerry County Council would like to congratulate the towns that won medals in the 2009 Tidy Towns Competition and acknowledge the excellent results achieved by all the Tidy Towns committees in the county and wish them every success for 2010.

The continued commitment of Tidy Towns Committees, Community Groups and Local partnerships is relied upon as an invaluable resource to the council in the fight against litter. These local communities work tirelessly year after year to improve the appearance of their areas and the council will continue to work closely with this county-wide network of local communities. The preparation and adoption of a new Litter Management Plan in 2010 will afford an opportunity to members of the public and community groups to set appropriate objectives and targets for the three year period of the plan. Participation in the plan review will be encouraged and welcomed and all submissions received will be carefully considered and incorporated as appropriate within the objectives of the new Plan.

#### **5.0 Proposed Programme to be implemented in 2010**

##### **5.1 National Spring Clean Campaign 2010**

In preparation for this years campaign, which will again run throughout the month of April, registration forms will issue to all primary, post-primary schools, tidy town committees and

community groups, etc. Participants are encouraged to identify the date and nature of the event to be organised by them. Any assistance required will be provided by Kerry County Council.

Litter Pickers, bags and gloves will again be provided, the collection of bags filled will be arranged and waste disposal charges waived for the disposal of any litter collected.

A media launch and advertisement campaign will also be promoted to further encourage participation in the campaign and a weekly column published in the Kerryman newspaper to focus attention on clean-ups and publish photographs of the local events organised. A regular sponsored link on the morning programming schedule at Radio Kerry to provide an update of the clean up throughout the County is also proposed.

## **5.2 National Litter Pollution Monitoring System**

The National Litter Pollution Monitoring System has been developed and implemented to assist and allow for the self-monitoring of the progress of Local Government in the discharge of their duties under the Litter Pollution Acts, 1997-2003. Specifically, the purpose of the Monitoring System is to enable the authorities to generate accurate and reliable statistics relating to litter pollution levels in their own functional areas. This involves:-

- overseeing local authority surveys on the composition of litter
- overseeing local authority litter pollution surveys to determine the extent of litter in their areas
- collating, assessing and publishing survey results
- overseeing follow-up surveys in later years

## **5.3 Illegal Dumping**

In 2009, 658 complaints relating to littering/illegal dumping/unauthorised signage in Kerry were received, 168 on the spot fines were issued as a result of the subsequent investigations and a further 5 cases have been the subject of court proceedings.

Although we are of the firm view that it is a minority of people who illegally dump their waste, the negative image this creates for a county with 2 million visitors each year is significant. We now have two full time litter wardens dealing with the investigation of these sites.

#### **5.4 Adopt a Bank Scheme**

The Adopt a Bottle Scheme is designed to foster working relationships with Tidy Town Groups / Community Groups to work towards keeping the Bottle Bank site free of illegally dumped material, and/or to inform the Local Authority when the bottle banks are almost full and require servicing. As previously stated, twenty five groups have been granted sponsorship to take responsibility for litter clean-ups in the vicinity of bring banks and public areas in the towns. This has proved to be a most effective method of keeping these areas litter free. It is hoped to increase the number of groups/persons partaking in the scheme to thirty during 2010. The scheme involves a community group giving a commitment to clean up their local bottle bank on a regular basis during the year. Wheelie-bins are provided to the groups with 20 no. free collections per year together with an annual payment of €500 to be invested in the groups community based activities.

There continues to be a problem of illegal dumping in Kerry, however, the general public are now more vigilant in reporting littered areas as is evidenced from the number of complaints received. We continue to encourage the public to police their own areas and to notify the local authority of littered areas/illegal dumps identified. The co-operation of the public will continue to play a significant role in securing successful prosecutions particularly with regard to presenting evidence in court .

The assistance of local groups in arranging the clean up of littered areas is an invaluable resource to the local authority, particularly given the significant expense associated with such clean-ups.

## **6 Conclusion**

During the past year, Kerry County Council has continued to tackle the problem of indiscriminate littering/waste disposal in a pro-active manner. As outlined in this report, considerable resources have been allocated to promotional events, environmental awareness initiatives and enforcement activities with a view to imparting the message that litter reduction involves all sectors of the community. This multi-focused approach has yielded some positive results in terms of the extent of litter pollution in the County and the adoption of best practice by householders, children, businesses etc with regard to Litter Management.

**“Ní neart go cur le chéile”**  
***Together we can make a difference***