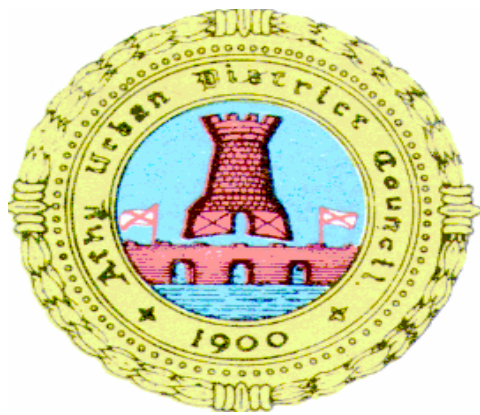


DRAFT LITTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

2004 - 2007



ATHY TOWN COUNCIL

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Background

This Plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 and replaces the previous Plan. An annual report on the implementation of the Plan will be submitted to Council and will be available to members of the public.

The Council recognises that the problem of litter will not be eradicated unless every sector of society takes responsibility for its share of the solution. We need to recognise as a society that litter is not the sole responsibility of the local authority, and that cleansing alone is not the most cost-effective or sustainable, long-term solution.

There is undoubted need for a major change in public attitudes, so that littering is viewed as an anti-social and uncivil act. This change of attitude needs to be complemented by a consistent and high profile enforcement policy by the local authority so that fines and prosecutions are utilised to their full extent.

Introduction

Athy is a historic market town on the River Barrow to the south west of County Kildare. Athy is growing with a population of 6058 in 2002 (CSO, 2002) an increase of 14.2% of 752 persons from the 1996 census of population.

The Towns heritage status is however threatened by the presence of litter. It is the view of Athy Town Council that this challenge is best addressed by working in partnership with all key stakeholders in society to raise awareness of litter and its effects, as well as reviewing and enhancing where necessary the local authorities' own role in litter prevention and control.

Litter is defined in the Litter Pollution Act 1997 as "any substance or object, whether or not intended as waste (other than waste within the meaning of the Waste Management Act 1996, which is properly consigned for disposal) that, when deposited in a place other than a litter receptacle or other place lawfully designated for the deposit, nauseous or unsanitary, whether by itself or with any other substance or object, and regardless of its size or volume or the extent of the deposit."

When deposited in a public place or within sight of a public place, litter has a detrimental effect on the visual amenities associated with a living or built environment. Litter damages not just the economic potential of Athy's heritage, but the quality of life of Athy residents.

Indeed, litter has been identified as a major environmental issue in its own right by the National Anti-Litter Forum. Whilst the causes of litter are many and varied, it has the effect of downgrading an environment for all those who use and enjoy it.

Policy

Athy Town Council believes that the litter problem in the town can be successfully tackled through comprehensive action in five key areas.

These are:-

1. Education and information
2. Litter prevention and control
3. Enforcement
4. Community Involvement
5. Recycling and recovery

Objectives

Objective 1 To heighten public awareness of both individual and commercial sectors' responsibilities towards litter and waste management in the Athy area and to develop a comprehensive schools education programme in the town that focuses on anti-litter measures and waste reduction as an effective strategy for environmental protection.

Action 1 A leaflet will be issued on "litter and the law" in a clear and unambiguous way outlining the responsibilities of individuals, property owners and businesses in relation to litter. Athy Town Council will also have readily available brochures and leaflets produced by the ENFO as part of "It's easy to make a difference" environmental campaign. Initial contact has been made by the Litter Warden to the schools in Athy and it is the intention that an extensive school campaign will be carried out during the life of this plan.

Objective 2 To provide additional and improved litter bins in strategic locations and to maintain, or to make arrangements for the maintenance of existing bins and to maximise existing staffing and resources for litter prevention and control measures. A total of €153,500 was included in the 2004 budget for street cleaning and litter pollution control.

Action 2 The Council will implement the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System to enable it actively monitor the activities and performance of the local authority in tackling litter. A Derelict Sites register is currently being prepared and Athy Town Council will be liaising with property owners in the town with a view to rendering these sites as non derelict.

Objective 3 To intensify the vigorous enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 and to review current policies regarding enforcement to ensure that maximum use is being made of the enforcement powers of local authorities under the Act.

Action 3 Athy Town Council appointed its first full time litter warden in July, 2002. The Litter Warden issues litter fines for offences under the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, the on the spot fine is now €125 and the maximum fine which the Courts can impose is €3000. The number of fines being issued is increasing with 97 fines issued in 2003.

Objective 4 To actively encourage increased public participation in anti-litter awareness activities by residents associations, community groups, tidy towns committee and all relevant groups at local level.

Action 4 The support of the wider community is vital if the litter problem is to be dealt with successfully. The Council currently supports the National Spring Clean campaign and other clean-up operations at local level in conjunction with Kildare County Council and continues to encourage all community-based initiatives. This will continue. Suggestions from all persons active in this area are welcome.

Objective 5 To work towards making Athy litter free and to protect and enhance the town's image as a heritage town.

Action 5 There is currently a bring bank at Edmund Rice Square car park where glass, cans and textiles can be recycled. Kildare County Council has recently received planning permission for a civic amenity site at Gallowshill, Athy which is due to open to the public in early 2004.

Waste accepted at the site will consist principally of :

- Recyclable material from the private and commercial sectors
- Domestic waste from private individuals
- Household hazardous waste

Some of the waste recovery activities will include:

Acceptance of hazardous and non hazardous domestic refuse such paints, solvents aerosols etc.

Acceptance of recyclable materials i.e.

- Glass bottles (clear, brown and green)
- Glass - general
- DIY waste
- Tyres
- Electronics
- Fluorescent strip light tubes
- Batteries

"Litter free zones" will be established in specific areas in Athy

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing Athy Town Council is to encourage public action against litter. Litter is generated by all sectors of society and its implementation can only be achieved by shared action. Athy Town Council will endeavour to fund the required measures through the annual local authority Budget. However the Council cannot go it alone. Litter prevention is a shared responsibility and the Council looks forward to working with all sectors in Athy to achieve this mutually agreed objective.

