

Naas Town Council



Litter Management Plan 2008

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1. Introduction

1. Background

Litter is a visible and objectionable kind of environmental degradation that scars our towns and countryside. The blight of litter countryside detracts from our national image of a clean and natural environment and is often the lasting impression for those who visit our town and country. Its presence devalues our living environment, makes it less attractive for leisure, tourism and investment, generates a negative impression of our town and places a significant financial burden on Local Authority finances.

The Litter Pollution Act 1997 was introduced to address the issue of littering countryside. The Act gives Local Authorities extensive powers to deal with litter, and requires that each Local Authority shall prepare a Litter Management Plan in respect of its functional area.

It is important to state at the outset that litter remains a national problem that requires a consistent, concentrated approach to address effectively. The co-operation of all community sectors is required here – Naas Town Council alone cannot eradicate the problem. Therefore education and enforcement are important. Achievements have taken place, and through implementing the measures outlined in this plan, and with full co-operation from every sector, further progress can be made to improve the overall situation.

2. Scope of the plan

This plan sets out Naas Town Council's objectives to prevent and control litter as well as measures to encourage public awareness of the litter problem, with particular emphasis on educational and information strategies aimed at young people.

The plan includes information on, and was prepared having regard to-

- existing litter prevention and control measures being carried out by the Council
- the policies and objectives of the Council in relation to the prevention and control of litter
- litter prevention and control activities being carried out by agencies other than the Council
- recycling and recovery facilities provided for public use
- the Council's enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act 1997.

3. Format of the plan

Naas Town Council believes that the litter problem in the town can be tackled through comprehensive action in five key areas, and this plan is set out accordingly. These areas are-

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

Each of the five sections commences with a brief overview of the relevant area. The activities and strategies being undertaken by the Town Council are then set out in some detail. The plan concludes with a list of contact information for relevant Council staff members.

4. Definition of litter

Section 2 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 defines litter as *“a 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, 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”*.

The definition of litter is quite wide and extends beyond casual pieces of paper or cigarette ends to anything large or small that is, or is likely to become, unsightly.

5. Fines

Local Authorities are responsible for implementing the litter laws in their own functional areas. They have the power to take enforcement action against individuals who break or ignore these laws.

Leaving or throwing litter in a public place is an offence which can be subject to an on-the-spot fine of €150 or a maximum fine of €3,000 in court. A person convicted of a litter offence may also be required to pay the Local Authority's costs and expenses in investigating the offence and bringing the prosecution. Naas Town Council has also adopted the 'Name and Shame' policy of publicly naming persons convicted of litter offences in the local press.

2. Education and information

Overview

The Council recognises that some people who litter are not aware of the fact that they are committing an offence. They may not realise the extent to which litter damages the environment and detracts from the image of Ireland as a clean and green land. The Town Council is committed to using a combination of measures to ensure that the anti-litter message is reinforced at every opportunity.

Furthermore, the Litter Pollution Act requires the Town Council, in this plan, to include details of its educational and information measures aimed specifically at young persons. Naas Town Council has developed a comprehensive schools environmental education programme which combines a friendly and informative approach with practical supports designed to ensure that an anti-litter ethos is fostered at all times. The National Green Schools Programme also targets litter and is a valuable addition to making the school-going population more litter-aware.

The Council considers that education does not solely rest with the school population. There is also a need to encourage and educate the general public and the commercial sector to reuse and recycle where possible, thus minimising indiscriminate dumping in the countryside and reducing levels of waste entering landfill sites.

Strategies

1. Publications

The “*Litter and You*” leaflet: This leaflet sets out in a clear and concise fashion the responsibilities of individuals, property owners and businesses in relation to litter, and was circulated broadly throughout the Town in June 2007.

Advertising: The Town Council makes use of the local media to publicise events such as National Spring Clean and the Town Council's Clean-up week in April.

Website: The Environment Section has published information on the Town Council's website where aspects of the Town Council's anti-litter measures are included.

2. Personnel

Community Wardens: Naas Town Council employs 4 Community Wardens who are the visible face of the Council's various litter prevention strategies and represent a considerable opportunity to increase public awareness of the litter problem and the Council's response to it. Their duties include the issuing of parking and litter fines and also liaising with and assisting Residents' Associations with anti litter initiatives and estate clean ups. They also advise shop owners as to the best practise in the avoidance of litter.

The Wardens' information activities include-

- Attendance at meetings of Community Groups, Residents Associations and Tidy Towns Committees to advise on their activities and discuss any litter-related problems.
- Ongoing informal contact with involved parties, which enables the Wardens to take immediate action in relation to new litter blackspots, fresh incidents of illegal dumping, abandoned cars etc.
- Visits to retail, industrial and commercial premises in the town to advise owners, occupiers and staff members of their responsibilities under the Litter Pollution Act.
- Meeting members of the public in private to discuss litter matters directly affecting them.
- Visits to schools to publicise their presence and to discuss the contents of this Plan and the Litter Pollution Act with students.

Environmental Awareness Officer: Kildare County Council employs a full-time officer to raise public awareness of all aspects of the environment. An integral part of the officer's duties is to ensure effective publicity for, and development of maximum public participation in, the Council's activities regarding litter pollution. These duties include-

- Development and implementation of the schools education programme
- Preparation of the Council newsletter
- Liaison with Community Groups
- Assisting with the implementation of this Plan and the Waste Management Plan
- Responding to general environmental queries

Administrative Support: All the Environment Section administration staff members are trained to deal with general litter-related queries. There is a specific member of staff dedicated to supporting the Community Warden services and to issue and deal with litter fines.

Tenant Liaison Officer: The role of the Tenant Liaison Officer employed by Naas Town Council has advanced the function of Community and Estate Management in Council estates through

advising and informing tenants of their responsibilities in the area of litter control and estate enhancement. Levels of dumping and littering have reduced in areas where these roles have been fostered and developed.

Outdoor Staff: Naas Town Council employ a Direct Labour staff of 25, three of whom are full-time responsible for the emptying of bins, the cleaning up of littered areas, and the patrolling of areas around the Town for fly-tipping. These diligent and hard-working Staff look after street cleaning services in the town from 6.00am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday and from 6.00am to 9.00am Saturdays and Sundays.

In addition, Naas Town Council have a Parks Maintenance Crew of three operatives who have full-time responsibility for the cleaning up and maintenance of the public parks and open spaces in the Town.

Following on from our policy of improving resources in this area, Naas Town Council since 2007, have purchased a custom-made graffiti removal machine, and a custom made bin emptying machine. Both machines are on full-time duty tending to littering and street cleaning duties throughout the Town.

Provision has also been made in the 2008 budget for the employment of an additional staff member, for the summer period, to deal exclusively with litter along the public streets and parks in the town.

3. Schools Education Programme

The Town Council believes that by bringing the anti-litter message to students through the measures indicated below, substantial progress can be made in ensuring that the next generation will consider a litter-free environment to be a basic entitlement.

The Green Schools Programme

This national programme, which is co-ordinated by An Taisce, aims to promote whole school activity to develop environmental awareness in both the school itself and the wider community. There is particular emphasis on litter in the early stages of the five-module programme. 2 schools in Naas have registered for the programme, and 3 schools have received the prestigious Green Flag. Kildare County Council acts as a facilitator for schools that wish to become involved in this programme and actively encourages all schools to join this project.

The Green-Schools programme is funded by Kildare County Council, through an annual payment directly to An Taisce. In addition, Naas Town Council provides materials for appropriate projects for participating Green-Schools.

In 2005 St. Patrick's Community College undertook a project, which achieved third place in the Young Environmentalist Award. The project involved the reconstitution of a border garden in the school environs, which had fallen into neglect. The emphasis of the project was to engender community voluntary involvement, team spirit and environmental compatibility.

School Visits

The Community Wardens visit the primary schools in Naas in September and June of each year to talk to students on a wide range of environmental issues. Discussions on litter-related matters are especially popular as are the pencils and rulers saying 'Keep Naas Tidy' that are distributed to all the students.

Support materials

In order to assist schools with litter clean-up campaigns, items such as litter pickers, bags and gloves are provided free of charge. In addition, educational material from ENFO and several other sources is readily available. Kildare County Council also provide compost bins for biodegradable matter to all schools.

3. Litter Prevention and Control

Overview

The Council recognises that regardless of the efforts of all concerned in raising public awareness of the litter problem, there will always be a requirement to undertake litter prevention and control measures to a greater or lesser extent. The Council will continue to provide these services as resources allow in order to ensure Naas is as free of litter as possible.

Strategies

1. 2008 Budget

The Council's commitment to providing a litter-free environment can be seen by the 2008 annual financial provision as the 2008 allocation under Street Cleaning has increased by €46,930 from 2007 to €424,000.

The table below demonstrates the considerable increases in expenditure in environmental protection areas from 2006 to 2008.

Description	2006	2007	2008	Increase % from 2006 to 2008
Street Litter Disposal	55,000	75,000	80,000	45.5%
Provision of Litter Bins	8,500	16,000	20,000	135%
Anti-Litter Initiatives	10,500	20,000	25,000	138%
Grant to Tidy Towns	5,000	€17,000	€20,000	400%

2. Street Cleaning

The Council has been undertaking the sweeping of the streets on a 7-day-a-week basis, the street cleaning service is a combination of mechanised cleaning with manual sweeping as necessary. The street sweeper undertakes the cleaning of the main streets very early in the mornings and then proceeds to the other streets throughout the town.

3. Litter bins

The Council has installed and services approximately 450 litterbins throughout the town including the side streets, the parks, walkways and along the canal with particular attention being paid to

potential litter blackspots, e.g. schools, bus-stops, etc. In 2006, the Council spent €8,000 on bin replacement. In 2007, a further €16,000 has been spent on providing 36 new bins. The special custom-made bin-emptying lorry, which has recently been commissioned is in full-time use emptying bins and patrolling litter black-spots.

4. Environmental Crew

Staff of Naas Town Council's Parks Department carry out the day to day duties of keeping the town clean and looking well. The mobile crew has been employed to undertake a range of functions for the environment section. Their duties include cleaning of litter blackspots, erection of "No Littering " and related signage and monitoring of recycling facilities for littering. The crew liaise with the Community Warden service and administrative staff in order to provide a prompt and efficient response to such incidents.

5. Graffiti Removal

It is the policy of Naas Town Council to prosecute graffiti offenders under Section 19 (1) of the Litter Pollution Act 1997. It is expected that the recently installed CCTV system will assist in identifying offenders. The Council purchased a graffiti removal machine which cost €13,000 in 2007, the only one of which exists in the entire County. Naas Town Council is one of a few local authorities that have their own graffiti removal machine. Prior to the purchase of the machine, the Council had been contracting out the work. However, there was sometimes a delay in having graffiti removed as well as a very high cost factor. It was recognised that rapid removal is the most effective way of preventing graffiti from reappearing so the purchase of this machine is one of the many initiatives that Naas Town Council has undertaken in order to lift the image of our town.

In addition to removing graffiti this machine can be used to power wash public areas and remove gum.

Generally only graffiti on public walls is removed by Naas Town Council. As a rule, the Council do not remove graffiti from private property or private boundary walls. Occasionally, if graffiti is on a private wall that can be seen from a public location it will be removed subject to the property owners indemnifying Naas Town Council in relation to accidents and claims.

6. Future Plans

Naas Town Council proposes to make special Bye-Laws to prevent and control litter in respect of the following:

- distribution of advertising material which contravenes the Litter Pollution Act.
- premises (including mobile units) selling food and drinks for consumption off the premises.
- Storage and presentation for collection of household and commercial waste.

4. Enforcement

Overview

Naas Town Council has been committed to enforcing all aspects of the Litter Pollution Act since its introduction. The Council will continue to exercise these powers in a firm and fair manner at all times.

Strategies

1. Community Warden Service

In 2001 the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government initiated a pilot scheme for Community Wardens in six local authorities including Naas Town Council. The Community Warden Scheme received permanent status in 2006 after the initial success of the pilot project. Naas currently has four full-time Community Wardens. In July 2007, the Town Council upgraded one Community Warden position to that of Supervisory Warden.

The Community Wardens carry out a range of enforcement duties under the Litter Pollution Act as well as under Parking Byelaws and Road Traffic Legislation. The Wardens provide an essential link between the administration staff of the Council and the Community. They are the Council's eyes and ears on the ground and are actively involved in Anti-Litter Awareness campaigns in the local national schools as well as liaising with Residents' Associations and An Garda Síochána. In June 2007, three of the Town Council's Community Wardens commenced going the extra mile having taken to the streets of Naas on bicycles. This will further enhance the services Naas Town Council provide to the community.

2. On the spot fines

The on the spot fine for litter offences increased from €125 to €150 on 30th September 2007. The administrative staff issue these fines for offences under the Litter Pollution Act. A total of 203 litter fines were issued in 2007. 66 fines have been issued from January to the end of June 2008. It is Council policy that unpaid fines are pursued through the Courts.

3. Advertising Flyers/ Signage

The law forbids the putting up of posters & signs on poles or other structures in public places unless permission is granted in advance. The placing of advertising leaflets on vehicle windscreens is also prohibited. Auctioneers / Estate agents who fail to comply are subject to a litter fine and /or prosecution under the Litter Pollution Act.

Unauthorised signage will continue to be targeted by the Wardens. Any signage found to be illegally erected along the public by-way, will be removed immediately by the Wardens and a fine will be issued under the Litter Pollution Act. Signs will only be returned to the owners following the payment of a fee proportionate to the cost of removing and storing of the unauthorised sign.

4. Retail Outlets

The owner or person responsible for a place to which the public has access is obliged to keep the place litter-free, regardless of how the litter got there. The Council will continue to encourage retail outlets to maintain the public area in the immediate vicinity of their premises, particularly in relation to shopping centres, licensed premises, and transport hubs.

5. Major Events

The Council monitors major events and pro-actively works with promoters, sporting groups and the community to ensure litter control measures are in place at the venue and surrounding areas before, during, and after the event. Licensing of major events such as music concerts includes provisions for dealing with litter on and off-site.

5. Community Involvement

Overview

The support of the wider community is vital if the litter problem is to be dealt with successfully, and the Council gratefully acknowledges the ongoing dedicated efforts of the very many concerned individuals and groups working to tackle litter at a local level. To this end, the Council operates a number of schemes designed to assist local communities with financial aid, materials and equipment or any other support possible. The Council will continue to encourage all community-based initiatives and welcomes suggestions from all persons active in this area.

Strategies

1. National Spring Clean

This national initiative takes place for the month of April each year in conjunction with An Taisce. Its aim is to encourage individuals and groups to take practical steps to remove litter from their local areas. Naas Town Council actively supports the campaign through the provision of bags, gloves, litter pickers and skips for organised clean up events. Naas Town Council in collaboration with Naas Tidy Towns Committee recently held its 'Spring Clean-Up Week' from Saturday 12th April until Saturday 19th April giving the town a 'face-lift'. The clean-up was a great success with a turnout of several hundred volunteers throughout the town.

2. Clean-up Operations

The Council will provide bags, gloves and litter-pickers for approved projects. The environmental crew will collect and safely dispose of all materials collected. The scheme is not intended for cleaning out houses, garages etc., and a detailed schedule of the proposed works must be provided. It is important to note that only clean-ups of public places, such as walks, road margins, streets etc. will be supported.

3. Anti-litter Awareness Grants

In conjunction with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Kildare County Council operates this scheme on an annual basis. The scheme provides funding for projects that promote greater public awareness and education in relation to litter pollution. Particular emphasis is placed on projects that involve schools and/or young people in general. The scheme is advertised in the local press. All Schools and Tidy Towns groups are notified and

invited to apply for funding under the scheme. In 2008, Naas Town Council received €1,500 from the scheme which was used to purchase pencils and rulers which say 'Keep Naas Tidy' to distribute to the primary school children. Naas Tidy Towns Committee received €2,800 from the scheme.

4. Naas Tidy Towns Committee

Naas Town Council is committed to the support of Naas Tidy Town Group. Naas Tidy Towns Committee is in existence since the late 1960s. In conjunction with other local support groups and Naas Town Council, a hard working tidy towns core group keep up the effort in presenting the town in its best appearance. Hanging baskets and flower tubs are prepared, set out and maintained by the members during the summer season and at least one new project is undertaken every year. A general pride in the profile of the town exists across all sectors of the Community. Naas Tidy Towns Committee will continue to spearhead the drive to the tops of its category in the IBAL litter examination and welcomes continued support from the wider community, Naas Town Council and the Chamber of Commerce. A budget figure of €20,000 has been included for 2008, which is an increase of €3,000 from 2007.

Various programmes aimed at Community Groups and Residents Associations, including Pride of Place Initiatives, etc are available to assist local voluntary effort. These schemes allow for the provision of litter bins, street furniture, plants and shrubs, and the improvement of green areas. Council staff are also available to assist individual tidy towns groups in the participation process of the National Tidy Towns competition. Naas won the 'Pride of Place award in 2005.

6. Residents' Associations

Residents' Associations are an integral constituent of community life in Naas. Visitors to the town invariably comment on the high standard to which estates are maintained. Naas Town Council offers financial assistance to the Residents' Associations to assist their work by way of a grant.

The Civic Awards Nights was held on Friday the 16th November 2007. This night recognises the outstanding activities and energies of the town's Community Groups and the wealth of effort put in by voluntary organisations in the enhancement of our community. A total of 49 Residents Association Grants were awarded grants, the total in the amount of €51,632. In 2007, for the first time, the Supervisory Warden inspected each estate that applied for a Residents Association Grant and the amount of grant was awarded according to the general condition of the estate.

7. Naas Anti-Litter Committee

Naas Anti-litter Committee was formed in 2007 and organised “Community Clean-up Weeks”, whereby local communities were actively involved in the cleanup of their local areas with the assistance of the Town Council. This initiative will continue a number of times during the year.

8. Irish Business against Litter

Irish Business against Litter, which was set up in 1996, is an alliance of companies sharing a belief that continued economic prosperity is contingent on a clean, litter-free environment. As part of the IBAL Anti-Litter League, An Taisce monitors all towns of populations of 6,000 and over independently in accordance with international grading standards.

Naas Town which had previously been named as a “Litter blackspot” improved to the status of “Litter Free” in 2007 and came in 13th out of the 50 towns/cities that were surveyed.

6. Recycling and Recovery

Bring Bank Sites

Three new recycling facilities were provided for Naas in 2006. The Town Council carries out regular monitoring of bring bank sites by the Wardens to ensure a rapid response to incidents of illegal dumping. The Council is willing to assess potential sites for additional bring banks suggested by members of the community.

Current sites are shown in the following table:-

LOCATION	GLASS	CANS	TEXTILES
Civic Offices	Yes	Yes	Yes
Friary Rd Car Park	No	No	No
Tesco Car Park	Yes	No	Yes
Ballycane/Craddockstown	Yes	No	No
Fairgreen Eurospar	Yes	Yes	No

RehabRecycle make recyclable glass collections once a month from 4 sites, and collects approximately 45 tonnes a month.

The Council also provides a Christmas Tree recycling service in January at a number of locations in the town, where members of the Public can dispose of their Christmas trees free of charge.

The Council will continue to look at how it can further assist in relation to the promotion of recycling.

7. Contact Information

1. Environment Section

Address: Naas Town Council, Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co. Kildare.

Telephone: (045) 980990

e-mail: tclerk@naasudc.ie

Fax: (045) 980985

web: www.naastowncouncil.ie

An after hours phone service has been set for environmental complaints and the number is 045/980990.