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meath county council

DRAFT LITTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

2025-2027

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Introduction

County Meath, situated on the east coast of Ireland and within the greater Dublin region, covers an area of 234,490 hectares (579,425 acres). According to the 2022 Census, the county has a population of 220,826 residents and 78,759 dwellings. There are 144 schools in the county serving 55,159 schoolchildren, along with an additional 7,377 students in third-level education.

The physical landscape of County Meath varies significantly. It features a short coastline of 12 kilometers in the east, tracts of peatland and raised bogs in the southwest, rolling drumlin hills in the north, and fertile pastures in the valleys of the Boyne and Blackwater rivers.

Meath County Council envisions County Meath as a place recognised locally, nationally, and internationally, not only as an excellent place to live but also as an attractive destination for visitors and investors.

Costs associated with litter

Every year, Meath County Council spends approximately €3 million on litter management throughout the county. Around €2 million of this amount is allocated to street sweeping, while the remainder is used for waste enforcement and other litter-related services, including the litter warden service.

Illegal and indiscriminate dumping is a persistent issue across the county. It affects scenic areas of natural beauty, such as our beaches and town centres, where bags of household waste are often left next to legitimate bins or street litter receptacles under cover of darkness. This waste is frequently torn apart by vermin and birds.

The cost of removing this type of waste is significant. It diminishes our enjoyment of the places where we live and can deter tourists and investors, ultimately threatening future economic development.

Why protect our county?

County Meath is rich in heritage and history. It boasts numerous archaeological sites, including the famous passage tomb of Newgrange and the celebrated Hill of Tara. The towns of Kells and Trim are recognised as heritage towns, while many historical sites, such as castles, abbeys, and high crosses of significant national and even international importance, can be found throughout the county. As a result, tourism plays a vital role in providing employment and generating revenue for the area. Meath Tourism, along with various tourist service providers, is actively promoting and developing the county as a key tourist destination.

Effects of litter on the County

Despite the County's beauty and rich natural resources, litter poses a significant threat. Its presence diminishes the quality of our living environment, creates a negative perception of our County, and places a substantial financial strain on County Council resources. Litter pollution affects not only towns and villages but also our roadsides, protected areas, recreational spaces, beaches, and bogs. If we allow this visible form of pollution to persist, it will negatively impact those of us who live and work in the County, as well as visitors who are vital to our economy.

Legislation

The Litter Pollution Act 1997 (as amended) requires local authorities to review their Litter Management Plans (LMP) every three years, as outlined in Section 10 of the Litter Pollution Acts from 1997 to 2009. The upcoming Litter Management Plan for the period 2025 - 2027 will build on the insights gained from past experiences and the significant investments and improvements made in Anti-Litter Activities throughout the county and the country.

The process for developing the Litter Management Plan for 2025 - 2027 is as follows:

Draft Plan

- Consultation with relevant LA Sections and Staff
- Evaluation of current litter problems and of previous plan
- Any Relevant Changes in Recent and Upcoming Legislation

Publish Draft , Consult with and invite Submissions from:

- Elected Members
- Members of Public
- Interested bodies

Review and Publish New Plan

- Taking into account and making amendments to draft following any relevant submissions made
- Elected Members Adopt Plan
- Full Litter Management Plan is published

Waste Management Act 1996 as amended.

Separate Collection (Deposit Return Scheme) Regulations 2024

Where any issue of litter is already legislated for under existing Byelaw, this Litter Management Plan also gives recognition to and supports existing Meath Byelaws such as:

- Parks and Playground Byelaws 2014
- Meath County Council Foreshore Byelaws 2010 as Amended
- Waste Management (Storage, Presentation and Segregation of Household and Commercial Waste) Byelaws 2018
- Meath County Council Climate Action Strategy
- Other Relevant Plans and Policies

- National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024 – 2030
- Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027

Penalty / On-spot fines

Littering or disposing of waste in a public area or in any location visible from a public space is considered an offence. This can result in an immediate fine of €150 or a maximum court fine of €4,000. Additionally, anyone convicted of a littering offence will be responsible for covering the costs incurred by the local authority for investigating the offence and prosecuting it in court, including any legal fees.

Evaluating the main litter challenges



Before we evaluate the issues at hand, it is important to define litter. The term "litter" encompasses a broad range of items, including graffiti, fly-tipping, domestic refuse placed in County Council receptacles, casual pieces of paper, cigarette-related litter, signage, and any other objects that may be large or small and/ or are likely to become, unsightly.

According to Section 2 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997, litter is defined as “a substance or object, whether or not intended as waste (excluding waste as defined in the Waste Management Act 1996, which is properly consigned for disposal) that, when deposited in a place other than a litter receptacle or an area legally designated for disposal, is or is likely to become unsightly, harmful, offensive, or unsanitary, either alone or in combination with other such substances or objects, regardless of their size, volume, or the extent of the deposit.”

We must also consider the impact of litter, which, while being visually unappealing, has many negative effects that hinder the County's ability to develop to its full potential.:

- The Social Impact on a town, community and individual and the negative effect on the psyche.
- The desire of the County to market itself better as a tourist destination will continue to be hampered by a careless attitude to litter.
- What potential investors with options of places to invest in will view a clean, vibrant county as opposed to a dirty, polluted one?
- Litter attracts more litter, which attracts more litter, ad infinitum.
- Money spent on cleaning up litter could be better spent on providing enhanced amenities in our towns and villages.

While evaluating the current litter problem areas in the County, the following methods of assessment were utilised:

- Complaints logged on our in-house call logging system (CRM).
- Complaints submitted through the EPA Litter Line Reporting System (NECL), the Fix Your Street platform, and other organizations.
- Surveys conducted by our Litter Warden, Irish Business Against Litter, and the National Litter Pollution Monitoring Surveys.
- Submissions and complaints received from local voluntary and representative groups.
- Activities of the Council's Waste Collection Service, including street cleansing, bin servicing, monitoring illegal dumping, and organized clean-up efforts.

Litter Generators

Illegal dumping in rural areas, including forests, is the most visible, costly, and damaging type of litter and a significant source of complaints. Known litter blackspots require particular attention.

Passing motorists and pedestrians contribute significantly to littering, primarily through single-use packaging waste such as disposable coffee cups, plastic drink bottles, cans, chewing gum wrappers, and snack food packaging. The trend known as “dashboard dining” is a major generator of this litter and will be a focal point in this plan.

Dog fouling is another major source of litter, particularly in urban areas. Despite increased signage and public awareness campaigns, it generates many complaints. Dog ownership has risen significantly in recent years, contributing to the issue.

Additionally, the proliferation of unauthorized signage along public roads for events and businesses has led to numerous complaints. Several signage policies and procedural documents for County Meath are included in the appendices of this plan.

Cigarettes and Vaping

Cigarette and vaping litter remains a significant issue, especially in urban areas. The rise of single use vapes and vape stickers on bins is a notable new phenomenon.

Convenience food outlet /Outdoor dining

Disposable food and drink containers make up a significant amount of litter found in urban areas and on rural roads. Since the introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), there has been a noticeable decrease in the number of cans and bottles. However, packaging for food and hot beverages continues to pose a problem.

Abandoned Cars

Cars are frequently abandoned alongside roads and in public spaces, including residential areas. End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs) are classified as hazardous waste. Abandoning a vehicle is an offense under Section 71 of the Waste Management Act 1996. According to Section 9 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997,

abandoned vehicles in public places can be ordered for removal to prevent additional littering, and fines may be imposed for violations of Section 6 of the same Act.

Major and Minor events generating litter

Events like sporting events, concerts, and festivals often produce significant amounts of litter. This litter is typically casual in nature and related to packaging. Events Management Plans address the waste and litter generated by these events as part of the planning process for large gatherings.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Local Authority:

- Take all practical measures to prevent, control, and ensure the proper disposal of litter.
- Promote awareness of litter pollution and its impact on the environment.
- Encourage public and business participation in preventing and addressing litter pollution.
- Provide accessible waste receptacles and bins for residents and ensure they are emptied and cleaned regularly.
- Enforce the law, applying necessary penalties and legal sanctions.

Responsibilities of Businesses:

- Keep the area immediately surrounding their premises and up to 100 meters around it free of litter.
- Maintain any private land visible from public spaces free of litter.
- Ensure that mobile food and merchandise outlets and organisers of major events fulfil additional responsibilities.
- Prohibit the placement of unauthorized advertisements or public notices in public areas.
- Avoid placing advertising flyers on vehicles.
- Make sure that materials transported do not create litter and that they are securely loaded to prevent littering.

Responsibilities of the Public:

- Any owner or occupier of property visible from public places is required to keep that property free of litter. Failure to do so may result in fines or prosecution by Meath County Council.
- Individuals must not create litter in public places or areas visible from public roads.
- The public must dispose of waste in appropriate receptacles or bins, or at authorized waste facilities.
- Dog owners are responsible for removing their dogs' waste from public areas and ensuring it is disposed of properly.
- Individuals must only give household waste, including recyclable materials, to authorized collectors and exercise caution when leaving waste items based on unsolicited leaflets from individuals or companies claiming to represent charitable organisations.

Current initiatives:



Meath County Council, in partnership with different stakeholders involved in a wide range of Litter-related activities in society, aims to raise awareness of litter and its effects while ensuring that the streets, footpaths, and roads in our towns and villages are kept clean and tidy. The initiatives include objectives from previous plans, which have been expanded and are currently being implemented, such as:

- Green Schools Campaign: Most schools in County Meath are either registered for or actively participating in this initiative, with support from Meath County Council.
- Green KM: The Green KM Community Clean-Up Initiative allows individuals or groups to address litter in their areas. The Council provides litter-picking equipment and a waste collection service following the clean-up. Native saplings are offered to participants during the Winter Planting Season.
- National Spring Clean: Coordinated by An Taisce, this initiative provides equipment from the Council, including litter pickers, gloves, bags, and a collection service. It runs in conjunction with the Green KM initiative.
- Pride of Place: Up to 140 groups participate in the Pride of Place initiative each year. The significant achievements from this competition, along with Tidy Towns, have enhanced the appearance of our County.
- Beach Clean-Ups: These events are organized in collaboration with An Taisce, community groups, individuals, corporate CSR groups, schools, sports groups, and the Beach Management Committee.
- Community Grant Scheme: Administered by the Community Section, this scheme supports the work of Tidy Towns groups and residents' associations by providing annual funds for the upkeep and enhancement of public areas.
- Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI): This grant scheme aims to tackle dumping black spots in conjunction with DCCAE and local communities. It focuses on cleaning up dumping sites, implementing prevention measures to stop recurrence, and increasing local awareness and vigilance.
- Regular Bulky Waste Collections: These collections accept items such as mattresses, couches, kitchen and bathroom equipment, nursery items, and household hazardous materials.
- Community Wardens: Three Community Wardens are deployed across the county to address litter and waste issues, supported by waste enforcement and collection services. They help remove litter and waste and identify offenders.

- **Civic Amenity Sites:** The contract for operating the Council's three Civic Amenity sites in Navan, Kells, and Trim requires operators to develop education and awareness strategies on environmental issues, including litter, waste, and recycling. The contract for Bring Banks mandates comprehensive cleaning of each site during service.
- **Dog Fouling Initiatives:** Several initiatives are in place, including stencils, signage, dog bag dispensers, and community events with the dog warden and a dog behaviourist.
- **Signage Initiatives:** Anti-litter, anti-dumping, anti-car littering, and anti-dog fouling signs are provided to each Municipal District for appropriate placement.
- **Awareness Promotion:** Social media, press, and radio are utilized to promote awareness of anti-dumping and anti-littering initiatives.
- **Street Cleaning and Bin Servicing:** Each Municipal District manages its street cleaning and bin servicing schedule.
- **Leaf Mould Project:** This initiative creates compost from fallen leaves and will start as a pilot project in three communities in 2024, with a wider rollout planned for 2025.24, wider roll out in 2025.



Objectives of the Litter Management Plan 2025 – 2027

The overall aim of the Litter Management Plan is to make County Meath a litter free County with the support, cooperation, and Involvement of the Local Authority, Businesses, Communities, and Individuals.

The following five cross-cutting themes underpin the individual objectives of the Litter Management Plan 2025-2027:

1. Education and Public Awareness
2. Litter Prevention and Control
3. Enforcement
4. Community Participation and Partnership
5. Recycling and Recovery

1. Education and Public Awareness

Objective:

To raise public awareness about litter's negative effects on the local environment and motivate a change in littering behaviour, making littering socially unacceptable. Additionally, we aim to increase the number of schools participating in Environmental Programmes by 5% each year until all Meath schools have at least one Green Flag or Environmental Action Programme in place.

Supporting Measures:

Green Schools: Meath County Council will continue the established program of collaborating with local schools to promote anti-littering, waste prevention, and recycling among students. We hope these values will extend to their families. On average, approximately twenty new schools receive Green Flags each year, with 40% of Meath schools flying a current flag at any time. We aim to increase this by 5% annually until all Meath schools achieve at least one Green Flag.

Brown Bin/Stop Food Waste Campaigns: Meath County Council supports the rollout of Brown Bins across the county.

Rubbish Film Festival: Targeted at Transition Year (TY) students, this initiative consists of a two-day workshop in participating schools, training students to develop advertisements related to litter for TV, radio, and print using modern technology. Each school will present their work and screen their film at an awards event in Solstice during Spring. This initiative engages students with environmental issues in a relatable manner and encourages them to raise awareness among their peers.

Picker Pals: In 2024, 65 Meath schools participated in the Picker Pals program, funded by Meath County Council, and operated in conjunction with Voice Ireland. Picker Pals is an enjoyable environmental activity program for primary school children, their families, schools, and communities. Through engaging stories and songs, participants receive a pack containing all needed materials for litter-picking. This annual initiative encourages children to lead litter-picking adventures with their families, fostering a sense of stewardship for their local environment.

Composting and Recycling for Schools: This programme, developed by Meath County Council in collaboration with the Clean Technology Centre and Craig Benton, focuses on implementing comprehensive recycling and composting initiatives in primary and secondary schools across the county. Each year, up to twenty schools can participate in this scheme.

In-House Initiatives: To limit litter creation, Meath County Council practices what it preaches. The Council engages in energy and waste awareness initiatives within the organization, such as using reusable coffee mugs, implementing waste segregation in canteens and offices, promoting biodiversity projects at Council offices, and installing solar panels for energy generation.

Dog Litter Awareness: Meath County Council has procured stencils used in popular amenity areas to draw public attention to issues related to dog fouling. A media campaign targeting dog owners, including social media, radio, and press, highlights the risks associated with dog littering.

Green KM: Year-round support is provided for all communities and individuals in Meath wishing to participate in clean-up activities in their local areas. Over three hundred groups and individuals are registered in this scheme, receiving litter-picking equipment and a waste collection service.

In recent years, the National Anti-Dumping Campaign has been very effective in conveying a clear message across various platforms. Local authorities have utilised the assets to enhance this message within their communities.

Media Campaigns: The use of media, particularly social media, radio advertisements, newspaper articles, billboards, and cinema ads help highlight litter and waste-related issues, including dog fouling, vaping and cigarette-related litter, dashboard dining/fast food litter, illegal dumping, and bogus collectors. The Department of the Environment and the Regional Waste Management Offices have assisted in national campaigns. Meath County Council is committed to expanding these campaign messages throughout the county via local press, radio, and social media.

2. Litter Prevention and Control

Objective

In addition to raising public awareness about the litter problem, it is essential to implement litter prevention and control measures. The aim is to reduce reported incidents of littering and dumping by 10% over the lifetime of this plan.

Supporting Measures:

Technology: We will utilise CCTV in areas such as bottle banks and known litter blackspots to deter, prevent, and control litter. The Circular Economy Bill 2021 allows for the use of CCTV as an enforcement tool under the Waste Management Act 1996 and outlines all relevant data protection measures. This enables the Enforcement Team to use technology more extensively and prosecute more people throughout this plan's duration. Meath County Council has invested in new technology, including cameras and drones, for deployment under this measure.

Solar-Powered Litter Bins: We continue to invest in the rollout of environmentally friendly and cost-efficient bins throughout towns and villages in the County. These bins are equipped with telemetry that provides real-time fill-level information, thus enhancing the efficiency of servicing schedules. A Waste Collection Service Contractor has been engaged to promptly collect illegally deposited litter and waste. They have conducted thorough checks to identify responsible parties and gather evidence for prosecution.

Litter Complaints: We use a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software package to record and track all environmental complaints and reports. Our objective is to decrease the number of litter and waste-related incidents by 10% over the plan's lifetime (see Appendix). This may be challenging, as economic slowdowns often lead to an increase in reported incidents.

We will distribute pooper scooper dispensers and bags at key amenity areas, including parks and beaches.

Cigarette Butts: All new litter bins will be fitted with receptacles for cigarette butts. Cigarette butts continue to constitute a significant portion of litter, especially in urban areas.

Cleansing Rotas and Bin Replacement Schedule: Each Municipal District (MD) will implement an appropriate cleansing and servicing schedule for their area. Using the Small Business Support Scheme, we will send annual reminders to all ratepayers with small businesses regarding their obligations under the Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended (Part 2, Section 6(4)), to keep the area outside their property litter-free for up to one hundred meters. Spot checks will be conducted, and enforcement actions will be taken against repeat offenders.

3. Enforcement



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Supporting measures:

Employing Enforcement Staff: Meath County Council has a clear policy to issue fines and/or prosecute individuals for littering offences. To achieve this, Litter Wardens are employed, supported by administrative staff, who act against those caught littering. If fines are issued and not paid, or if a littering incident is deemed serious enough, prosecution will be pursued under the Litter Pollution Acts of 1997-2009. The previous Litter Management Plan resulted in many successful prosecutions, and we aim to expand on these efforts in collaboration with other agencies, including the Gardaí, when necessary. We continuously strive to improve and expand our procedures and technology to hold litterers and dumpers accountable.

The responsibilities of the Litter Wardens, in consultation with the Waste Management Enforcement team for larger cases, include the following:

- Conducting street patrols in towns and villages.
- Engaging with the public to encourage reporting of littering, with the intent to issue fines and take legal action.
- Working with landowners and occupiers to ensure their property is free of litter visible from public spaces.
- Issuing on-the-spot fines of €150 when evidence identifies the person responsible for littering.
- Attending court to testify against litterers, which can result in fines of up to €4,000 for offenders.
- Removing unauthorized advertising signs and issuing fines for violations of the Council's signage policy.
- Acting and issuing fines against dog owners who fail to clean up after their pets.
- Conducting litter surveys in accordance with the National Litter Pollution Monitoring Scheme.
- Collaborating with community and voluntary groups to coordinate clean-up efforts, provide equipment, and remove collected waste.

Enforcement Campaigns: Over the duration of this plan, the County Council has committed to reallocating resources for specific campaigns targeting polluters. Two notable proposed campaigns include:

1. Anti-Dog Fouling Campaign: In response to recent calls for stronger enforcement regarding dog fouling, we plan to increase the number of fines imposed. Mutt Mitt bag dispensers are available at popular dog walking locations, including the beach, Blackwater Park, and Johnstown Park.
2. Litter Black Spots: While Enforcement Staff will continue to investigate and pursue all reported incidents of illegal dumping, we will focus on particularly littered areas. Covert monitoring will be implemented to catch and prosecute the worst offenders and deter others.

In addition to these two campaigns, further initiatives will be organised as the need arises and resources permit.

Advertising Signage Policy: The Litter Management Plan includes a new Advertising Signage Policy, which regulates the procedures for erecting temporary and permanent advertising signs. Details of this policy are in Appendix I of this document.

CCTV: Meath County Council has invested in CCTV and drone Technology, which will be used at locations subject to continual littering or dumping. This has resulted in several successful prosecutions in court, and it will continue to be used to pursue those littering our beautiful county.

Parks and Playgrounds Byelaws 2014: These Bye Laws, adopted in July 2014, regulate the use and enjoyment of Parks, Playgrounds, and Playing Pitches. They complement the Litter Management Plan in tackling litter issues.

Meath County Council Foreshore Byelaws 2010 as Amended—These Byelaws, adopted in June 2010, regulate the use and enjoyment of Meath Coastal Areas, and complement the Litter Management Plan in tackling litter issues.

Meath County Council Waste Management (Storage, Presentation and Segregation of Household and Commercial) Waste Byelaws, 2018—The Council will enforce litter issues arising from the presentation of household and commercial waste for collection.

Separate Collection (Deposit Return Scheme) Regulations 2024 – The council supports the rollout of this scheme in terms of planning and enforcement.

Public Participation: Meath County Council cannot be everywhere, and often, littering occurs outside of hours. To this end, we actively encourage the reporting of littering incidents and aid persons who witness such incidents and wish to report them. Where persons are willing to bear witness, Meath County Council will issue litter fines against such offenders and, if necessary, pursue them through the courts.

Bogus Collectors: Ongoing awareness campaign using social media, press, radio, and billboard – highlighting the damage caused by Bogus Collectors and the onus on each household or commercial premises to ensure their waste is managed by an authorised collector or facility. This campaign has resulted in a reduction in the number of bogus collectors advertising and operating in the Meath area. Together with free bulky waste collections at recycling centres and increased vigilance for householders the aim of the council is to put the man in a van out of business in County Meath.

4. Community Participation and Partnership

Objective

To work in partnership with community groups, tidy town committees, residents, local to create a litter-free environment for everyone, we aim to increase community participation in various initiatives by 10% over the duration of this plan.

Supporting Measures:

Each year, a significant amount of illegally dumped waste and litter is collected at a considerable cost to the Council. However, evidence is only available in approximately 10% of these cases, which limits the ability to enforce follow-up actions.

Meath County Council provides litter-picking equipment and a waste collection service to individuals and groups interested in improving and maintaining the appearance of their local areas. The Council acknowledges the tremendous contributions these groups make in the fight against litter through

their participation in initiatives such as Green KM, National Spring Clean, Pride of Place, and the Tidy Towns Competition.

Support may also be provided for community recycling days, especially where there is clear evidence that materials collected are being delivered to authorised recycling facilities, particularly in areas not serviced by recycling centres such as East Meath and Ashbourne.

The coastline is one of the most popular recreational areas in the county, and the Council will continue to collaborate with local communities that regularly participate in clean-up efforts, as well as in litter control activities managed by the Litter and Beach Wardens. Additionally, any litter-related recommendations from the Beach Management Plan will be considered, including increasing bin capacity during the summer season, and adding larger bins at the entrance to Bettystown Beach.

There is a high level of participation in voluntary activities in Meath, both within the community and in schools. This plan aims not only to maintain current participation levels but also to increase them by 5% over its duration through various initiatives, including Green Schools, Pride of Place, Spring Clean, Green KM, and other environmental campaigns, all of which contribute to developing vibrant and resourceful communities.

Pride of Place Initiatives: Meath County Council encourages individuals and groups to enhance and maintain their local areas through the Pride of Place Initiatives. These initiatives include a variety of competitions for schools, urban and rural areas, housing estates, public buildings, and more. Highly competitive Municipal District contests are held across the county's six regions. Additionally, groups are nominated each year to take part in the All-Island Pride of Place competition.



5. Recycling and Recovery

Objective

To promote the use of the recycling infrastructure provided and, subject to available resources, to expand this infrastructure so that all towns and villages are adequately served with easily accessible recycling facilities. Our goal is to increase the volume of waste presented for recycling by 10% over the lifetime of this plan.

Supporting Measures:

Meath County Council operates **Civic Amenity Sites, Recycling Centres, and Bottle Banks** throughout the county. The operation of this infrastructure is contracted to a private waste company, with a strong emphasis on public education and awareness campaigns throughout the duration of this plan. The gate fee of €2 per visit offers a cost-effective service to householders. (Visitor numbers/waste volumes data can be found in the appendix.)

Meath County Council has a strong history of promoting public awareness of recycling initiatives, including the 'Reduce, Reuse, recycle' campaign, Brown Bin Awareness Campaigns, and events focused on preventing packaging and food waste.

The locations of recycling facilities are widely advertised on the Council's website www.meath.ie, as well as on www.mywaste.ie and www.repak.ie

While the provision of 31 Bottle Bank Facilities and three Civic Amenity Sites in Kells, Navan, and Trim has been positively received and widely used by the public, it has also led to certain challenges. There is an ongoing problem with individuals illegally leaving receptacles behind and dumping domestic and commercial waste, resulting in increased costs for both Meath County Council and taxpayers. To address this, CCTV is utilized across the network to detect and deter dumping at these facilities. (Waste Volume data can be found in the appendix.)

Bulky Waste Events are now an essential part of the calendar at Meath Recycling Centres. Each centre hosts several free events throughout the year, accepting items such as couches, beds, mattresses, toys, household hazardous waste, baby and nursery equipment, and kitchen and bathroom fittings. An extensive Halloween Bulky Waste Collection is organized each year to prevent bonfire activities.

Deposit Return Scheme: Meath County Council will continue to support the new Deposit Return Scheme in terms of planning, operation, and enforcement.

Additional Recycling Facilities: The Council will continue to seek appropriate locations for installing new recycling facilities across the county, making visits to your local bring bank as convenient and efficient as possible.

Summary

This plan aims to succeed by strengthening the relationships between individuals, communities, local authorities, and businesses to address litter at its source. All sectors of the community must recognise the importance of a clean and vibrant living environment for everyone and collaborate to achieve this goal.

Useful Links

Meath County Council: www.meath.ie

An Taisce National Spring Clean: www.nationalspringclean.org

Green Schools: www.greenschoolsireland.org

Tidy Towns: www.tidytowns.ie

Department of Environment, Climate and Communications:
www.gov.ie/en/organisation/departments/departments-of-the-environment-climate-and-communications

Irish Business Against Litter: www.ibal.ie

National Waste Collection Permit Office: www.nwcpo.ie



Litter Management Plan – Metrics

Year	Number of Schools in Meath	Numbers receiving New Green Flags	Number involved in Meath Co Co Schools initiatives	No. Involved in Schools Pride of Place
2020	139	21	NA - Covid	NA - Covid
2021	140	18	76	46
2022	140	23	104	43
2023	140	27	112	49
2024	140	26	132	45
Year	Groups/Individuals Registered for Env. Initiatives	Number in Tidy Towns Competition	Number (projects) Pride of Place Competition	Total Engagements
2020	141	NA - Covid	NA - Covid	141
2021	230	35	363	628
2022	275	35	314	624
2023	292	33	222	547
2024	320	32	247	599
Year	Meath CC Spend on Street Cleaning	Litter & Awareness Initiatives & Grants, Signage etc	Waste Collection Service	TOTAL (€)
2020	1,574,980	613,317	183,998	2,372,295
2021	2,013,138	523,689	164,111	2,700,938
2022	1,903,370	491,581	143,455	2,538,406
2023	2,019,012	384,723	158,530	2,562,265
2024	2,395,220	490,840	165,968	3,052,028
Year	Recycling Centre Visitor Numbers	Volume Waste Collected (tonnes)	Bring Bank Waste Collected (tonnes)	TOTAL (tonnes)
2020	91,797	5,988	1,952	7,940
2021	88,534	5,667	3,629	9,296
2022	90,874	5,482	2,965	8,447
2023	89,623	6,274	2,898	9,172
2024	92,688	6,646	2,879	9,138
Year	Incidents Reported - Litter Waste etc	Fines Issued	Notices Issued	Prosecutions
2020	1532	214	103	31
2021	1855	52	283	66
2022	1629	50	231	43
2023	1912	64	320	13
2024	1774	46	268	11

MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY ON ADVERTISING SIGNAGE

Introduction

Advertising is an accepted part of business and provides information to the general public. However, advertising signs, separately or in groups, can often cause injury to amenities and can detract from the appearance of an area or building. They can also be a major distraction to road users. It is the policy of Meath County Council to control all advertising signage in the county to minimise environmental dis-amenity and danger to road users.

This policy will be implemented by the following departments of Meath County Council

- Roads Department
- Planning Department
- Environment Department

Legislation

The legislation governing Advertisements and the erection of Signage is as follows:

- The Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2010
- The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2011
- Roads Act 1993 and associated regulations
- Litter Pollution Act 1997 – 2003
- Meath County Council Development Plan

Permanent Advertising Signs on Private Property

Permanent signs are defined as signs that are erected on durable poles made of metal, wood, plastic, or other materials with a concrete base or are permanently fixed to the ground. This category includes large hoarding signs and finger post signs.

Examples of permanent signs may include those for tourist attractions, accommodations, industrial estates, sports facilities, and public buildings.

In general, permanent signs on private property require planning permission unless they fall under the exemptions listed in the Exempted Development – Advertisement Regulations – Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2011 (refer to Appendix 1.1).

The standard planning process applies, and a planning fee will be charged based on the size of the proposed structure, in accordance with the fees outlined in the County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

Application forms for a permanent advertising structure are available from the Planning Section at Meath County Council at 046 9097000 or www.meath.ie/countycouncil/planning.

Permanent Advertising Signs on Public Property

These are signs placed on any part of a public road or street, including verges, footpaths, hard shoulders, lay-bys, roundabout islands, public car parks, median areas or islands, public rights-of-way, or any location that is deemed by Meath County Council to be a public area.

A licence is required from the planning department of Meath County Council (Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 – 2010 and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2011) before the erection of signage.

www.meath.ie/CountyCouncil/Planning/PlanningPermissionApplicationForms/File,3854,en.doc

Fees

- A license for a Fingerpost sign (not exceeding 1 metre in length) indicating a tourist accommodation currently costs €50.
- A licence for any other sign currently costs €630 on application. This is an annual fee.

Unauthorised Development

Unauthorised advertising signs or structures will be addressed in accordance with the enforcement provisions of the Planning Acts 2000–2010.

The individual, company, or business responsible for erecting unauthorised signs on public property will receive an enforcement fine and will be required to remove the sign within 7 days. Failure to comply with this request will result in additional fines.

All signs erected without a license on public roads or places will be removed. Meath County Council may recover the costs associated with the removal of signs.

Temporary Signage

Temporary signs, also known as short-term signs, encompass various types of small advertising displays, such as auctioneer signs, billboard-style signs, signs on motorized vehicles, signs mounted on trailers, and bridge drawings. These signs are typically used to promote events that occur over a short period, including property sales, agricultural shows, circuses, concerts, meetings, fundraising events, and recreational activities.

Any signs placed on private land that are visible from public spaces, such as roads, may affect road safety. Additionally, they can impact the local environment or the overall amenity of the area. A sign may be erected without planning permission if it meets the exempted development requirements outlined in the Planning and Development Regulations. However, if a sign poses a risk to road safety, Meath County Council may take action to have it removed. It is advisable to consult with Meath County Council before erecting such signs.

If a sign negatively affects the local environment or amenity, a notice will be issued to the landowner requesting its removal under the Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended. If the sign is erected without the landowner's permission, the notice will be directed to the person, company, or business responsible for putting it up.

Meath County Council, in collaboration with local auctioneering representatives, has established guidelines for auctioneer signs (see Appendix 1.2).

Temporary signage may be permitted on public land for charity, sporting, or cultural events in the community. There is a specific policy and procedure for this type of event signage, administered by the Environment Section of Meath County Council (see Appendix 1.3). Organizations wishing to promote such events must apply to the Council; signage should not be erected until the applicant receives a letter of approval. There is no fee for this application. Successful applicants must remove all signage within three days after the event to avoid litter fines.

Cars for Sale

Under Section 71 of the Roads Act 1993, offering vehicles for sale on public roads is an offense. According to this Act, vehicles may be removed and stored by Meath County Council or An Garda Síochána. A fee will be charged for the release of any vehicle that has been impounded under this legislation.

Election Advertising

Please note that this policy does not apply to signs related to presidential elections, general elections, bye-elections, referendums, or elections for members of the European Parliament unless the sign has been displayed for 7 days or longer after the date of the relevant poll. If the sign has been up for more than 7 days, action may be taken under the Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended.

Appendix 1.1

Exempted Development - Advertisements

The following list are the exempted advertisement developments permitted under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Schedule 2, Part 2: Exempted Development - Advertisement and subject to Article 6 of the Regulations.

Note that all exemptions must be confirmed by Meath County Council, Planning Authority.

Column 1	Column 2
Description of Development	Conditions and Limitations
<p><u>CLASS 1</u></p> <p>Advertisements (other than those specified in classes 2, 3 or 5 of this Part of this Schedule) exhibited on business premises, wholly with reference to the business or other activity carried on or the goods or services provided on those premises.</p>	<p>1. The total area of such advertisements exhibited on or attached or affixed to the front of any building on the premises shall not exceed an area equal to 0.3 square metres for every metre length of such front, less the total area of any such advertisements exhibited on the premises but not exhibited on or attached or</p> <p>affixed to a building, and in any event shall not exceed 5 square metres.</p> <p>2. The total area of such advertisements exhibited on or attached or affixed to any face of a building on the premises other than the front thereof shall not exceed.</p> <p>1.2 square metres and the total area of any such advertisements on such face which are illuminated shall not exceed 0.3 square metres.</p> <p>3. The total area of such advertisement which are not exhibited on or attached or affixed to a building on the premises shall not exceed 3 square metres of which not more than 1.5 square metres shall consist of advertisements which are illuminated.</p> <p>4(a). No part of any such advertisement which is not exhibited on or attached or affixed to a building on the</p>

	<p>premises, or of an advertisement structure on which it is exhibited, shall be more than 2.5 metres in height.</p> <p>4(b). No part of any such advertisement which is exhibited on or attached or affixed to a building on the premises shall be more than 4 metres in height above ground level.</p> <p>5. Where any such advertisement projects more than 5 centimetres over any public road, the sign or other advertisement structure on which it is exhibited shall not be less than 2 metres above the level of such road and shall not project more than 1 metre over such road.</p> <p>6. Where any such advertisement consists of a circular sign and projects more than 5 centimetres over any public road, the diameter of such sign shall not exceed 1 metre, and no other such advertisement shall be exhibited on a sign or other advertisement structure projecting more than 5 centimetres over such road.</p> <p>7. Where any one or more such advertisements are exhibited on a swinging or fixed sign or other advertisement structure (other than a circular sign) projecting more than 5 centimetres from any external face of a building, the total area of such advertisements shall not exceed 1.2 square metres and the area of any face of any such advertisement shall not exceed 0.4 square metres.</p> <p>8. No such advertisement shall contain or consist of any symbol, emblem, model, logo, or device exceeding 0.6 metres in height or any letter exceeding 0.3 metres in height.</p> <p>9. No such advertisement shall cover any part of any window or door of any building on which the advertisements exhibited or to which it is attached or affixed.</p>
<p><u>CLASS 2</u></p> <p>Illuminated advertisements exhibited as part of any shop or other window display on business premises and other advertisements affixed to the inside of the</p>	<p>The total area of any advertisements so exhibited shall not exceed one quarter of the area of the window through which the advertisements are exhibited.</p>

glass surface of a window of a business premises or otherwise exhibited through a window of such premises.	
<p><u>CLASS 3</u></p> <p>Advertisements displayed within a business premises, and which are not visible from outside the premises.</p>	
<p><u>CLASS 4</u></p> <p>An advertisement in the form of a flag which is attached to a single flagstaff fixed in an upright position on the roof of a business premises and which bears no inscription or emblem other than the name, device or logo of a person or business occupying the business premises.</p>	Not more than one such advertisement shall be exhibited on a business premises.
<p><u>CLASS 5</u></p> <p>Advertisements, exhibited at the entrance to any premises, relating to any person, partnership or company carrying on a public service or a profession, business, or trade at the premises.</p>	<p>1. No such advertisement shall exceed 0.3 square metres in area.</p> <p>2. Not more than one such advertisement, or, in the case of premises with entrances on different road frontages, one such advertisement for each such frontage, shall be exhibited in respect of each such person, partnership, or company on the premises.</p>
<p><u>CLASS 6</u></p> <p>Advertisements relating to any institution of a religious, educational, cultural, recreational or medical or similar character, any guesthouse or other premises (other than a hotel) providing overnight guest accommodation or any public house, block of flats, club, boarding house or hostel, situated on the land on which any such advertisement is exhibited.</p>	<p>1. No such advertisement shall exceed 0.6 square metres in area.</p> <p>2. No part of any such advertisement or an advertisement structure on which it is exhibited shall be more than 2.5 metres in height above ground level.</p> <p>3. Not more than one such advertisement or, in the case of premises with entrances on different road frontages, one such advertisement for each such frontage, shall be exhibited in respect of any such premises.</p>
<u>CLASS 7</u>	

<p>Advertisements exhibited on land wholly or for the most part enclosed within a hedge fence, wall or similar screen or structure (not being land which is a public park, public garden or other land held for the use and enjoyment of the public, or a part of a railway undertaking's enclosed land normally used for the carriage of passengers or goods by rail) and not readily visible from land outside the enclosure wherein it is exhibited.</p>	
<p><u>CLASS 8</u></p> <p>Advertisements exhibited within a railway station, bus station, airport terminal or ferry terminal and which are not readily visible from outside the premises.</p>	
<p><u>CLASS 9</u></p> <p>Advertisements relating to the sale or letting of any structure or other land (not being an advertisement structure) on which they are exhibited.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The area of any such advertisement shall not exceed — <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) in the case of an advertisement relating to the sale or letting of a house, 0.6 square metres, (b) in the case of an advertisement relating to the sale or letting of any other structure or land, 1.2 square metres. 2. Not more than one such advertisement shall be exhibited on the structure or other land. 3. No such advertisement shall be exhibited, and no advertisement structure erected for the purpose of exhibiting such advertisement shall remain on the structure or land, for more than 7 days after the sale or letting to which the advertisement relates.
<p><u>CLASS 10</u></p> <p>Advertisements relating to the sale on or before a date specified therein of goods or livestock, and exhibited on land where such goods or livestock are situated or where such sale is held, not being land which is normally used, whether at regular intervals</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No such advertisement shall exceed 0.6 square metres in area. 2. Not more than one such advertisement shall be exhibited on the land concerned. 3. No such advertisement shall be exhibited, and no advertisement structure erected for the purpose of exhibiting such advertisement shall

or otherwise, for the purpose of holding sales of goods or livestock	remain on the land, for more than 7 days after the date specified.
<p><u>CLASS 11</u></p> <p>Advertisements relating to the carrying out of building or similar works on the land on which they are exhibited, not being land, which is normally used, whether at regular intervals or otherwise, for the purpose of carrying out such works.</p>	<p>11. Where only one advertisement is exhibited, such advertisement shall not exceed 3.5 square metres in area and shall not be exhibited more than 6 metres above ground level.</p> <p>2. Where more than one advertisement is exhibited, no such advertisement shall exceed 0.6 square metres in area, the total area of such advertisements shall not exceed 3.5 square metres and no such advertisement shall be exhibited more than 4 metres above ground level.</p> <p>3. No such advertisement shall be exhibited, and no advertisement structure erected for the purpose of exhibiting such advertisement shall remain on the land, for more than 7 days after the completion of the works.</p>
<p><u>CLASS 12</u></p> <p>Advertisements for the purposes of announcement or direction or warning exhibited by a statutory undertaker in relation to the operation of the statutory undertaking.</p>	
<p><u>CLASS 13</u></p> <p>Advertisements for the purposes of identification, direction, or warning with respect to the land or structures on which they are exhibited.</p>	No such advertisement shall exceed 0.3 square metres in area.
<p><u>CLASS 14</u></p> <p>Advertisements relating to an election to the office of President of Ireland, an election of members of Dáil Éireann, the Parliament of the European Communities, a local authority or Údarás na Gaeltachta, or</p>	No such advertisement shall be exhibited, and no advertisement structure erected for the purpose of exhibiting such advertisement shall be left in place, for more than 7 days after the date of the election or referendum to which the advertisement relates.

<p>a referendum within the meaning of the Referendum Act, 1994.</p>	
<p><u>CLASS 15</u></p> <p>Advertisements required to be exhibited by or under any enactment, including advertisements the exhibition of which is so required as a condition of the valid exercise of any power, or proper performance of any function, given or imposed by such enactment, or for compliance with any procedure prescribed by or under any enactment.</p>	
<p><u>CLASS 16</u></p> <p>Advertisements other than advertisements specified in class 17 of this Part of this Schedule, announcing any local event of a religious, cultural, educational, political, social, recreational, or sporting character, and advertisements relating to any temporary matter in connection with any local event of such a character, not in either case being an event promoted or carried on for commercial purposes.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No such advertisement shall exceed 1.2 square metres in area. 2. No such advertisement shall be exhibited more than 2.5 metres above ground level or be glued, pasted, or otherwise affixed to any structure other than an advertisement structure. 3. No such advertisement shall be exhibited, and no advertisement structure erected for the purpose of exhibiting such advertisement shall be left in place, for more than 7 days after the conclusion of the event or matter to which it relates.
<p><u>CLASS 17</u></p> <p>Advertisements consisting of placards, posters, or bills relating to the visit of any travelling circus, funfair, carnival, show, musicians, players, or other travelling entertainment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No such advertisement shall exceed 1.2 square metres in area. 2. No such advertisement shall be exhibited more than 2.5 metres above ground level or be glued, pasted, or otherwise affixed to any structure other than an advertisement structure. 3. No such advertisement shall be exhibited, and no advertisement structure erected for the purpose of exhibiting such advertisement shall be

	left in place, for more than 7 days after the last performance or closing of the entertainment.
<p><u>CLASS 18</u></p> <p>An advertisement relating to any demonstration of agricultural methods or processes on the land on which the advertisement is exhibited.</p>	<p>1. No such advertisement shall exceed 0.6 square metres in area.</p> <p>2. Not more than one such advertisement shall be exhibited on the land concerned.</p> <p>3. No such advertisement shall be exhibited, and no advertisement structure erected for the purpose of exhibiting such advertisement shall remain on the land, for more than 7 days after the date of the demonstration to which it relates.</p>

Appendix 1.2

Guidelines For Auctioneer Advertising Signage

All Auctioneer Advertising on Council, ESB and Eircom Poles within the County shall be prohibited.
Advertising signs shall only be permitted within the boundary of the property for sale, except as allowed hereunder.
Within the town and village boundaries (within the speed limit), advertising shall only be permitted on the property for sale.
Advertising outside towns and village boundaries (outside speed limit) will be by way of directional signs plus advertising on the property as normal (subject to number and size restrictions hereunder).
For properties outside town and village boundaries, no more than three directional signs per property shall be permitted.
Directional signs shall be standardised and are to be no larger than 16 inches x 8 inches (0.4m x 0.2m) for finger signs and 26 inches x 18 inches (0.7m x 0.45m) for flag signs. They will be free-standing and no more than 3 feet (0.9m) from ground level. The location of directional signs shall have regard to traffic safety requirements.
Roadside verge advertising shall be prohibited except for directional signs and where signs within the property boundary would be obscured by high trees or hedges.
All roadside verge advertising, including directional signs, shall be prohibited on National Primary Roads, except in the case of properties fronting the road and, in the case, where signs within the boundary of the property would be obscured by high hedges or trees. All advertising on secondary roads will be considered in line with this policy.
Advertising signs to be removed within 7 days of the sale of the property (exchange of contracts)
<p>The maximum advertising sign size to be displayed on the property shall be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) In the case of advertising relating to the sale or letting of a dwelling, the sign shall not exceed 0.6 sq.m. in area.(ii) In the case of advertising relating to the sale or letting of any other structure or land, the sign shall not exceed 1.2 sq. m. in area

In the case of an advertising sign erected on private property not in the ownership of the vendor (or Agent), documentary evidence of the landowner's permission to erect the sign shall be submitted to the Council prior to the erection of the sign.

Directional signs shall be standardised and should be no larger than 16 inches x 8 inches (0.4m x 0.2m) for finger signs and 26 inches x 18 inches (0.7m x 0.45m) for flag signs. They will be free-standing and no more than 3 feet (0.9m) from ground level. The location of directional signs shall be in accordance with traffic safety requirements.

Appendix 1.3

Event Signage – Policy and Procedure

The application must be in writing on the prescribed application form to Meath County Council Environment Section; form can be submitted electronically.

Applicants should be for charitable or public events that are not inflammatory or likely to offend other members of the public.

[Political advertising does not apply as requirements for election posters are set out under section 19 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 and the Electoral (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2009.]

Permission for Signage should only be granted on approach roads into urban areas within speed limit areas, but not within the town/village centre.

The sign's area must not exceed 1.2 square meters, it cannot be erected more than 2.5 meters from the ground, and it must not be glued or pasted to any other structure.

The signs shall not be erected upon roundabouts or affixed to any traffic signs or traffic lights.

The signs shall be erected at locations that do not conflict with sight lines at roundabouts, junctions, or entrances or in any other place that might impede the visibility of road users from other road users or in any place that might hinder pedestrians.

The applicant shall erect, maintain, and remove the signs properly and safely so as not to give rise to a danger or nuisance to any person.

The applicant shall be responsible for any damage to the public road, footpath, or underground services caused by the sign's erection, placement, or maintenance.

Meath County Council will accept no liability for any persons harmed during the erection or removal of posters or for any persons harmed resulting from the placement of signs.

The Protection of the Environment Act 2003 requires that an article or advertisement carries the name and address of the person who is promoting or arranging the event or, in any other case, carries the name and address of the person on whose behalf it is exhibited.

On receipt of Completed Application form, MCC acknowledge and process. A letter of Approval or Refusal goes out.

Road traffic and planning legislation should be adhered to by applicants, and the letter of approval will specify details and conditions of approval.

Any letter of approval will authorise the erection of signage from the earliest date of 21 days before the event only and for up to 3 days after the event.

All Event Signage must be removed by the close of business on 3rd day after the event.

There will be no fee on application; however, any sign remaining after the prescribed 3-day post-event period will be subject to individual litter fines of €150.

Approval will only be granted for events of a religious, cultural, educational, political, social, recreational, or sporting character not promoted or carried out for commercial purposes.

Refusal of application will be based on grounds contradicting the item above.

Appendix 1.4

Anti-Dumping and Anti-Litter Signage – Policy And Procedure

Meath County Council Environment Section will provide bi-lingual signage with Anti-Litter, Anti-Dumping and Anti Car Litter message.
Requests for signs arising from members of Meath Co and members of the public will be passed to each MD for consideration.
All new signs must be erected with due consideration given to safety of all persons - pedestrians, drivers, cyclists etc.
A proliferation of signage is undesirable, and consideration should be given to the amount of existing signage in an area before installing new signs.
The MD should be satisfied that there is a genuine need for a sign due to on-going or repeated littering or dumping in the area before installing same.
In general amenity areas and 'resting locations' for vehicles will present a suitable location for anti-litter signage.
Litter wardens may see fit to install signage highlighting use of CCTV where appropriate, in line with above considerations.
Signs will be placed on public property only.

www.meath.ie.

