



# Businesses hit out at litter blackspot poll

by Sarah Stack

BUSINESSES leaders have hit back at a survey which found that parts of Dublin were a litter blackspot.

Dublin City Business Improvement District (BID) fears tourism, revenue and jobs could be jeopardised by what it claimed was misleading and untrue information on the cleanliness of the city.

It said the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) survey was amateur and included residential areas, presenting them as Dublin city centre.

Richard Guiney, chief executive of Dublin City BID, said a tourist considering visiting the capital could be misled into believing it is dirty.

"The majority of Dublin's main tourist areas are recorded as clean," he said.

"While there are areas outside the BID area which are regarded as

unclean, we note again that these are mainly in private or residential areas, for example, in basements which cleaning organisations cannot access.

"It's also important to point out that these surveys are a snapshot of a point in time and are not representative of the true situation on the streets."

Trim, Co Meath, was named the cleanest town in Ireland at an IBAL ceremony, pipping Swords in Dublin and Killarney, Co Kerry, in the 2011 survey of litter levels in 53 towns and cities.

IBAL said 38 towns were classed as "clean to European norms", while nine were moderately littered.

Portlaoise, Letterkenny, Dublin city and Tipperary town were listed as littered.

However, Dublin's north inner city and Knocknaheeny in Cork were both listed as litter blackspots.

Chairman Dr Tom

Cavanagh said IBAL had no involvement with checking towns and cities, but commissions An Taisce to carry out the surveys in accordance with internationally accepted standards.

"IBAL refutes the suggestion that the survey of Dublin City is misleading.

"For several years we have made it quite clear that the high footfall tourist areas of the city — such as Grafton St — are clean to European norms.

"Our issue is with the areas of the city centre where residents of Dublin live, such as Gardiner Street and Smithfield. These have been found to be littered.

"Have not the residents of Dublin the same right to a litter-free environment as its visitors?"

The Dublin BID area spans 2.5km and includes 115 streets, 4,000 buildings and 2,000 businesses, from St Stephen's Green to Parnell St and from Capel

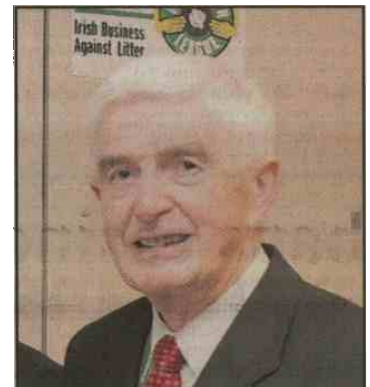
St to Amiens St.

The not-for-profit organisation, which aims to enhance the appeal of the city centre for shoppers, tourists and businesses, responded to 5,100 calls last year to remove waste, posters, stickers, side street washing and unsightly graffiti.

Mr Guiney claimed the methodologies employed in the survey did not meet industry standards and was based on amateur misinformation.

He called on the Department of Environment to consider its support and funding of IBAL.

"We would also ask the Department and other supporters of IBAL, such as the Irish Hotel Federation, to re-examine the methodologies used to conduct these surveys as well as the areas being surveyed," he said.



**Clockwise from left: Trim County Council chairman Cllr. James O'Shea, and manager Des Foley, show off the award, while Killarney, top, ranked well in the survey. Dr Tom Cavanagh, Irish Business Against Litter chairman, backed the poll. Pictures: Colm Mahady/Don MacMonagle**