

# Laois Nationalist

## Big Belly hits the streets in Portlaoise

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LAST week, people in Portlaoise will have noticed that Big Belly has taken up strategic positions around the town. No, Big Belly is not the latest big name in professional wrestling.

Big Belly is a 'solar powered' litter bin. And before you ask what the hell is 'a solar powered litter bin,' let me explain. The new bins are designed not just to accept your waste and mine but will also compact the waste prior to removal.

Over the week, ten bins were installed in various locations on a trial basis. At a cost of €4,000 each, they are by no means cheap but the county council estimated they will retrieve the cost inside three years.

The Big Belly consumes six to eight times the trash of standard litter bins. Increased capacity reduces collection trips and can cut operating costs, fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions by up to 80%.

As trash collects inside a Big Belly compactor, an internal "eye" senses when the bin is filling and automatically triggers compaction of the waste inside. As the compacted trash reaches the level where pick up is desirable, a message is sent through the notification system, essentially "calling home" to say "I'm full."