

# Tidy Towns Competition 2016

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Leighlinbridge** Ref: **41**  
County: **Carlow** Mark: **322**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **22/07/2016**  
**11/08/2016**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2015</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2016</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41	42
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	43	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	37	36
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	17	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	63	63
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	41	40
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>322</b>

### **Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:**

Leighlinbridge is most welcome to the 2016 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your entry form which was presented in two distinct sections. It is suggested that for clarity these should be amalgamated into one lest there be any confusion. Having said that the way in which you have clearly identified your projects is excellent and makes adjudication all that bit easier. Leighlinbridge is indeed 'going for gold' and there is a palpable determination and commitment from this application. Your recruitment drive was especially admired and although calling door-to-door takes time it is these one-to-one contacts that produce the best results by far. It is this personal approach which has brought Leighlinbridge to where it is today, not only a high level in Tidy Towns but as a wonderful community where it is a joy to live. Your map is perfectly laid out and we apologise for having to tear it from its bindings but it was needed in loose-leaf while walking around. Another enhancement to the map would be if a 2 to 3 word key to the projects were to be presented on the sheet itself. The standard of application however is superb and well done on another successful year.

### **Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:**

You have completed a number of material improvements this year including to paving and boundary walls. These are small but significant enhancements. The adjudicator wonders are there any measures to promote the use of Irish? With such a rich seam of heritage are there many events through the year to bring this alive for local people? E.g. with a local historian for heritage week. You have painted a number of derelict buildings this year also which is great. Don't forget to include a before picture as well as an after to show the adjudicator the impact of what was achieved. The Lord Bagnel hotel is strikingly modern in its design and was thoughtfully landscaped. The lovely school was visited and admired for its greenery and fresh white facade. Painting the railings would take the edge off the cold steel. New paving in the town centre looks great. The visual impression here is really good now as well as providing safe passage for pedestrians. The plaque to John Tyndall on the entrance to the Garrison house was admired. It could do with a wipe to remove cobwebs while a neighbouring letterbox would be a fine feature if painted. The combination of castle, bridge and river could be from a master's painting. We'd love to see the now faded OPW sign refreshed. We nearly missed your monument to local notables – is there a reason why they are nearly enclosed within tall beech hedging? Some dereliction behind the sculpture park is sadly noticeable, are there are measures underway to address this? The community centre and newly occupied housing units look great. The church with its bell tower is well presented and a lick of paint on its facade would be a desirable long-term project.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

Do try to make sure that all projects are marked on the map. The garden of remembrance or your new monument to Nurse Kehoe did not appear (although we did later locate them). The stone bed along the road in front of the Lord

Bagnel is a little tired looking while stock piles of rubble are visible from this vantage. Brambles are growing over bushes while there is a lot of bare soil visible. This area needs a makeover. Similarly on the Tullow Road a bed in front of the tennis courts is maintained but had little impact as it is a mishmash of styles and forms with much visible bare soil. New tree planting at the entrance to Ballyhane Stud looks very well. Make sure you keep an eye on them and get advice on when best to remove the rubber ties. The Vivaldi garden is well maintained. Is water supposed to spout from the central feature? The photo of the original does not seem to reflect the current layout, the symmetry and aesthetic has therefore been lost to a degree. Beautiful trees and green areas are on show at the end of High Street. The flowerbed is colourful but it lacks an overall cohesiveness (again a mix of species in no particular order and a lot of bare soil). Containers of flowers near the 1798 plaque look very well. Ivy needs to be cut back slightly from the plaque itself while weeds are emerging from the cobblelock. Can these be hoed? We're not sure about the overabundance of flowers on the bridge as this antique scene really needs little decoration against the wonderful natural backdrop. Along the river again we're not sure if the three pillars need to be accompanied by the very large boxes with pink flowers as they are quite intrusive. The garden of remembrance is superb and we admired the view in every direction. New additions here blend in well.

### **Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádúrtha:**

Well done for refurbishing the old wildlife sign. You are applauded for undertaking the survey work starting this year. Three years is a very long time – what are you hoping to measure over this period? We look forward to an update in 2017. Later in your application form there was talk of a biodiversity walk but this should appear under this heading. It is the awareness raising activities that the adjudicator wants to see more of. Of course your survey results will be of great value but it is how you use them that will make the lasting impact. The special area of conservation network is of vital importance to people's health and well-being but it remains a rather obscure concept unfortunately. Have you considered participation in the national pollinator plan? You should take a look at this on the National Biodiversity Data Centre webpage. How are your local schools involved? It can be most rewarding to collaborate with them on nature studies projects. There is even a junior version of the pollinator plan to get them involved.

### **Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaíthe:**

You are doing really tremendous work in this category. The way in which John Tyndall's legacy is carried on through your climate change talk is really excellent. Your promotion of composting is most impressive and shows how perseverance is required to change behaviours. Your perseverance is certainly paying off. Perhaps you could do the same now with rainwater harvesting. Despite the battle over water charging it will still be necessary to use our water resource more wisely. It's great to see young and old doing their thing. In fact the older generation grew up in an age where resources were seldom wasted so it is this spirit which we need to rejuvenate. The school's achievement in the green flag program is very important in this heading, to do provide full details here. For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

You evidently have a vigorous and energetic approach to litter and tidiness issues. This has stood you in good stead and has been instrumental in elevating Leighlinbridge to the high standards which you now enjoy. The bring bank was very clean on adjudication day. Commentary in this section is necessarily short as there was virtually nothing to comment on! Litter control was excellent on adjudication day while some dog foul on Main Street was the only thing to raise attention.

### **Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:**

Your project at Ballyknockan Manor would have been best described under this category. It is wonderful to see essential works finally being carried out. It would have been nice to have had the lettering in Irish as well as English but however. Some eye-popping displays of colour were admired in front gardens on High Street – what a show! At Inis Garden the wonderful display of roses is obscure in the name sign. An area cordoned off by metal fencing should be tidied up to reveal a handsome wall. St. Lazarian's Terrace is another attractive estate. Residents here enjoy a really excellent green space. In a few instances rubber ties urgently need to be removed from trees along with wooden support stakes. While the standard is high the beds seem to have no particular style or focus to them.

### **Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:**

Works to the old Leighlinbridge road fall under this heading and its tremendous to have a safe footpath leading to the village from here. This is a most important development for the people of Ballyknockan Manor especially. The approach road from Carlow is a large task in terms of maintenance and it is impressive that it is maintained so well. On the Tullow Road a fine stone marker is complemented by begonias and well trimmed verges.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Your group has put a tremendous effort into the community and the fruits are there for all to see. Be aware that at this high level a greater degree of scrutiny comes to bear so do not be overly discouraged by remarks for potential improvement. Best of luck!

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Leighlinbridge – the garden village.

You have four distinct gardens in the village and the village itself was a wonderful array of hanging baskets and floral displays. Have you chosen flowers that would benefit local wildlife in providing nectar? It was particularly nice to read and learn of the local links and famous people in your Garden of Remembrance and Sculpture Garden. It was great to see how many inspiring people have come from Leighlinbridge -including Walter Keogh who fought in Custer's last stand! But your second adjudicator didn't understand the choice in the development of the Vivaldi Gardens and felt the seasonal statues looked out of place in the more rural setting at the northern edge of the village. The competition is about embracing your natural surroundings and building on the natural settings which is why the landscaping around the River Burrow works so well. So your second adjudicator would agree with the first that you are beginning to add too many decorations of different styles around the bridge area. The 'spire' was rusty and looked out of place here, and two adjacent signposts seemed unnecessary – could the two signposts not be amalgamated onto one?

Crossing the bridge to the northern side of the village the upgrade works here helped show off the homes and businesses here to their best and wall-flowers on homes here look lovely. Your adjudicator particularly loved how you have looked after the older buildings such as the mill complex and the bright red wooden windows were visual from the top of the hill by the school. Maybe the school gates and railings could be a bit brighter or have some fun murals added to the boundary wall here?.

There are five separate roads into the village from the N9, each of which looked well. The old stone walls and beautiful mature trees should be celebrated in the village. The road upgrade on the Old Leighlin road looked well, as did the explanation and signs detailing the 'Don't Mow' wildlife corridor (check spellings on notices). It was good to have this information but your adjudicator was surprised by the extent of grass cut – going from the hotel out the entire length of the Carlow Road. If you do want to mow this whole length - maybe just mow one side of the road here? The garage looked well and its forecourt was neat. Could the yellow gates at the garage could have their rust removed?

You have targeted key areas for improvement and have made significant inroads and the repainting of the derelict property on Poes Hill looked great – well done. Maybe on the road around the corner here some of the broken windows could be targeted for enhancement next year? This street was poor.

Three years to carry out a wildlife survey does seem to be excessive -maybe incorporate some of this work with actions to show the wildlife to the locals. No doubt you would have many duabenton's bats around the bridge and bat walks are always very popular for example. Do you take part in dawn chorus walks?

The development of the 15 homes by the church was lovely but the only poor thing here was the very ugly large funding sign – how quickly can you have this removed??

Whilst the school has done great work on their aims to gain a Biodiversity Green Flag, there was no information in your entry on the national pollination plan and choosing flowers and bedding plants that would benefit pollinators also. You also mention releasing ducks to increase the local populations. Mallards are not under conservation threat so it is recommended you work on actions and recommendation that arise from your wildlife surveys on areas where habitats need to be enhanced and take professional advice from your National Parks Wildlife Serves ranger or others.

You work well as a community and certainly get things done. But are you working towards a long-term plan? This could help you work on strategic issues such as undergrounding of cables. Finally thank you for the youth submission from Emma Byrne which was great to read. How are you engaging young people outside of the school and litter picking? Maybe they can be asked to input some ideas into a long-term plan for the community?