

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Leighlinbridge -
Leathghleann an Droichid** Ref: **41**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **366**
Category: **C** Date(s): **12/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	53
Streetscape & Public Places	80	46	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	46	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	40	42
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	25	26
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	66	68
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	44	45
TOTAL MARK	550	353	366

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2023. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór! Welcome to the 2023 Supervalu National Tidy Towns Competition Leighlinbridge! There is great community spirit in your small town as evidenced by your extensive volunteer base across your Executive, Committee and Subcommittees. Furthermore, there are so many other community groups with whom you work with and support – this is exactly what Tidy Towns is all about and is testament to you entering the competition since it started. You also have a well thought out and succinct three-year plan which is guiding your work – excellent! Your submission is well laid out, perhaps for next year see about aligning the SDGs to each project – not just at the beginning of each section. Also having your photographs after each project description will make it easier for your Adjudicator to assess your application. Your map was very clear and made it easy for me to navigate the town and find your projects. In the legend you could also state or colour-code according to category and include if they are new or maintained.

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

Leighlinbridge is beautifully presented thanks to your group of hardworking members dedicated to maintaining the streets, buildings and public places. I understand the issues surrounding empty dwellings and you no doubt use your standing in the community to advocate for their upkeep. By actively encouraging shop owners to paint and care for their stores and by informing them about grants available from the County Council you are being proactive and supportive – keep this up. The Rainbow Bar and Kelly's Bar were very well presented as was Siopa Ui Braonain and the Lord Bagenal Hotel. Keep up your engagement with Electric Ireland and Telecom Eireann to bury cables underground. Well done on applying for a grant to build a monument honoring John Tyndall, an esteemed scientist. I particularly liked the reflective surface which was mirroring a beautiful evening sky when I visited. The work by Carlow County Council to footpath enhancements is most welcome. This is creating better living conditions for its residents, while their upcoming renewal of the Carlow Rd path and completion of other paths show their responsiveness towards the needs of the community. Indeed, even the installation of narrow street bins shows how they adapt to the old streetscape. Public buildings and the playground all looked wonderful. I noted the benches on the approach road to the town near the Lord Bagenal – this is no doubt a walking route but seems a somewhat dangerous place to encourage people to sit – when there is such a wonderful amenity on the Barrow Trackway Way Marked Way. You deserve tremendous recognition for all of your hard work in making their town look great!

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

There has been a remarkable commitment to developing and maintaining welcoming and vibrant green spaces.

Even when faced with obstacles such as winter blight affecting the Fáilte planting, you took proactive measures in the form of replacing it with welcome signs and appropriate planting. I note the hedging is still affected, don't worry this will come right in time but do keep an eye on it. Your dedication to wildlife conservation is equally impressive with dedicated areas as well as unmowed sections protecting native fauna – a win for this and your Biodiversity Category. When entering the town, blackthorn hedges on both sides along with beech hedges and trees creates a stunning picture-postcard atmosphere. Long-term planning and the dedication of volunteers are to be commended in maintaining healthy green areas. The shift towards permanent natural planting shows a dedication to sustainability; mature trees and shrubbery add further beauty. The Vivaldi Four Seasons Garden creates a breathtaking sight, making a powerful statement. I noted the pump mechanism was out from one of the fountains – is this being repaired? Replanting Carpet Roses that are pollinator-friendly at McSorleys Filling Station shows your commitment to creating an ecosystem rich with life. The Millenium Garden was wonderful, however there was a broken lamp shade which needs replacing. Overall, your work showcases a dedication to improving local environments while offering inviting spaces for residents and visitors.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

You demonstrate remarkable dedication to the surroundings through creating biodiversity projects. The Garden of Remembrance's transformation into a pollinator-friendly space showcases a commitment to biodiversity enhancement whilst also maintaining an attractive and welcoming public space. Well done on partnering with local beekeepers and adding an education and awareness element to your work. Also well done on aiding the swift conservation efforts; I heard several over the castle on my walkaround. Your collaboration with state agencies to reduce the invasive species Himalayan Balsam growth is an impressive example of collective environmental action. I noted some Winter Heliotrope near the entrance to the Arboretum; make sure to keep an eye on this as it will spread quickly and should be tackled. Similarly with Butterfly Bush along the trackway near your biodiversity signage. Ask for assistance from your local Heritage Officer. Additionally, preservation of the River Barrow as a wildlife habitat along with establishment of a Pollinator Vacation Resort and log pile are additional ways that contribute to biodiversity preservation. Success at winning the Pollinator Plan Award and continuing your dedication to sustainable practices such as allowing meadows to develop naturally and planting pollinator-friendly species demonstrates this commitment. Maintaining wildlife signage, reducing herbicide usage, and exploring alternative solutions like salt and vinegar demonstrate a responsible and eco-conscious approach to community engagement and environmental stewardship. Overall, your work sets an exemplary precedent of environmental responsibility.

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

You have made notable strides toward lowering your environmental footprint over the last year. Your initiatives have served the community well, creating eco-friendlier and more sustainable environment. The investment in a wood chipper has proved fruitful, producing mulch for shrub and flower beds that helps conserve moisture by decreasing watering requirements and weeding requirements. Your commitment to rainwater harvesting can be seen through the installation and use of water butts throughout the village and community garden, and with plans underway to add another one you will further reduce your environmental footprint. The water refill points along the Barrow track, providing access to clean drinking water for walkers, cyclists, riverbank users will let people know they can bring their reusable bottles with them and top up in the town! Excellent work on communicating the importance of the UN SDGs through the Parish newsletter.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You will be happy to hear that the town was 100% litterfree during my adjudication! Well done on a great Spring Clean event that not only strengthens community spirit but also emphasises environmental responsibility and cleanliness. It is admirable that you involve young people in this event, instilling a sense of civic pride and hopefully recruiting potential new volunteers in years to come. I would like to congratulate you on the exceptional upkeep of Recycling Facilities for cans and glass. Some small issues noted on the day included:

- A half torn COVID19 sign which can be removed from the railings at the crossing point on Main Street. A full sign on the opposite side can also be removed.
- The directional sign near the entrance to the Arboretum has some of the nameplate missing over the Irish name.
- There is an abundance of signage at the entrance to the Barrow Track – could this be reduced.
- Two streetlamps on Main Street are without their lanterns.

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

Well done for your tireless work in addressing housing development issues. It is encouraging that these problems appear to be diminishing with only a handful of properties remaining to be renovated - this represents an enormous step forward for both the community and individuals involved. So many of the homeowners go to tremendous efforts, you are very fortunate.

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

Excellent work on the remarkable management of your approach roads, all of which looked resplendent during adjudication. Through regular cutting and maintenance, and leaving areas aside for biodiversity, you have successfully created welcoming gateways to the town. You are fortunate to have the assistance of individuals outside of the committee who contribute tirelessly towards keeping our streets, lanes, and roads free from litter. Their selflessness and willingness to assist this collective effort deserves a mention in this Adjudication Report.

Concluding Remarks:

May your endeavors continue to thrive and may the positive difference you have made on your environment be an encouragement for others to follow in your footsteps. Congratulations and thank you for the outstanding work!