

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Centre: Leitrim Village | Ref: 1021 |
| County: Leitrim | Mark: 270 |
| Category: B | Date(s): 11/07/2023 |

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2022 | Mark Awarded 2023 |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80 | 36 | 37 |
| Streetscape & Public Places | 80 | 37 | 39 |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping | 80 | 37 | 39 |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality | 55 | 22 | 23 |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less | 55 | 14 | 15 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 55 | 57 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 55 | 28 | 29 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 55 | 30 | 31 |
| TOTAL MARK | 550 | 259 | 270 |

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 Super Valu Tidy Towns Competition for 2023. We thank you for your entry, and wish you all the best in all your future work. Good luck.

Leitrim Village, Sráidbhaile Liatroma - a mid-sized village with a population of 594 people – has entered the competition for the last 40 to 45 years and has a committee of 13 members with support of another 40 volunteers.

- Tidy towns meetings are held regularly in St. Joseph's Centre. Committee members and volunteers are notified by notes in the local newspaper and via WhatsApp groups.
- Support is received from National Tidy Towns, Leitrim Co. Council, Supervalu Carrick on Shannon, Drumsna Garden Centre, Leitrim Co. Co. & PPN, numerous local businesses.
- You communicate with the public via Local notes in the Leitrim Observer and Shannonside Radio, Parish Newsletter, Primary School Newsletter and committee / volunteer whatsapp groups and a very active Facebook group.
- You hold regular litter pick up days involving volunteers of all ages including local school children.
- Your involvement in the Tidy Towns competition has heightened awareness amongst the local community of the benefits of keeping your village presentable. Tourism is important to the local economy employing large numbers of people in Leitrim Village, during the busy summer months. Making progress in the competition will further improve community spirit and will bring tangible economic benefits.

The quality of the application form was very good and the inclusion of photos with individual descriptions showing the various tidy towns works and projects was very helpful. For next year it is advised that a map be included with your entry, with the location of the projects undertaken over the year clearly marked. This will assist the adjudicator in navigating around the village to assess the works undertaken.

The adjudicator's assessment is based on a recent site visit and the contents of the application form, which is suitably concise at 13 pages long including photos - well done. The text inserted on the form is also easy to read.

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

- You continue to undertake maintenance and enhancement works at the historic O'Rourke's Castle with the support of Leitrim County Council, Waterways Ireland, and a social employment scheme administered by Leitrim Development Company. New footpaths have been provided on the approaches to the village from the Keadue and Drumshanbo and where they are wide, these are adorned with new planters. Shopfronts at the Gift Shop / Post Office and at the Leitrim Inn / Blueway Lodge have also been improved.
- We called to Leitrim Village on a sunny day in mid-July. The main street in the village is characterised by

traditional style commercial and residential properties. All are presented to an excellent standard. The road surfaces and markings through the centre of the village are to a high standard with well-constructed footpaths providing safe access for pedestrians. A major feature of Leitrim village is the abundance of floral displays and planters, which provide a vibrant splash of colour throughout the village. The adjudicator particularly admired the colourful planters placed strategically which served to optimise their visual impact.

- We visited the car park with access to the Harbour and the site of O' Rourke's Castle. This was presented to a very good standard, with quality signage providing information on local walking routes and the Shannon-erne Blueway. The waste receptacle here was nicely disguised with perimeter stone walls. The stone tablet erected in 1952, provided information on the history of the Castle. The writing is somewhat faint and difficult to read. Perhaps this could be restored and repainted as part of your future works, including the sensitive removal of ivy from the Castle ruins. The finger post signage at the entrance to the car park, access road and the stone fronted toilet block all looked well and welcoming. The seat in the enclosed area where the information signs are placed requires some ongoing maintenance.
- St Joseph's NS on the Keadue Road was visited. The colourful frontage, bicycle parking facilities and sports facilities together with wall murals and historic plaques were admired. The commemorative tree planted in memory of Pádraig Pearse in this location is especially apt in view of the location. We also called to the site of St Joseph's Church and noted the neat and tidy Church grounds, the attractive castellated stone wall, the Church bell feature, the re-dedication stone, and wonderful mature trees. The nearby St Joseph's Community Centre was well presented with freshly painted façade and floral displays. The Bring Centre and car park were in a pristine condition. Perhaps for the future you may consider tree planting behind the boundary wall along the main road, where space is available.
- Some highlights noted along the main street included the Leitrim Inn, Carthy's Lock 17 Bar, Donnellan's Bar, and An Siopa Brionannais/Post Office, all of which were well tended and cared for. This list is not exhaustive. The entrance to the Marina Hotel looked well with attractive planting bed and signage.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

- Under this category you have undertaken landscaping work as part of the Pump Area project around the base of the Chestnut Tree in the centre of the village. Your committee is also heavily involved in the maintenance of flower boxes and hanging baskets around the village. Pollinator friendly plantings are selected to encourage biodiversity and the local wildlife, in particular the bee population. New planters have been provided this year, planted with flowers which have an abundance of pollen and nectar.
- The village pump area was visited and the enhancement scheme carried out around the horse chestnut tree is a prominent feature in the village and was much admired. The new planting with bark mulch and improved access paths and seating, entices the visitor to stop and enjoy the vista. The TT meet up sign was positively noted for its inclusivity. The nearby premises which is in a state of some disrepair, detracts from the overall presentation of this area. No doubt there are plans for the future improvement and development of this site.
- The pedestrian bridge adjacent attached to the vehicle stone bridge over the canal integrates very well with the streetscape and is a focal point in the village. It is suggested that this general area could be improved with the following actions - repainting of sections of the metal railings on the bridge. Also planting in the vicinity of the Lock 17 metal seat, where there is a collection of visually prominent service junction boxes. Where space is available, a planting scheme could be used to soften the visual impact of these structures.
- The Canal Bank picnic area was visited. The recycled plastic picnic benches and timber fencing enhanced the amenity value of this area. Consideration could be given to providing a low planting scheme along the fence to soften the visual impact of the fence in this area. The site could provide a starting point for a cycle/walkway along the canal.
- The open space area beside Carthy's Bar was visited and there may be an opportunity to provide a footpath link from the gated entrance to the Canal Quay. Existing tree planting on the boundary of this site provides good screening along the nearby boundary walls. There are two concrete posts which are visually prominent in this area and could be removed. Screen planting along the remainder of the concrete block wall near the public house is recommended. The existing seat on this site also needs ongoing maintenance.

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

- It is noted that the canal banks from Leitrim Village to Lock 16 are a designated biodiversity area and growth is allowed to flourish undisturbed, to provide suitable habitat for birds and other animals. No cutting of grass or landscaping is carried out in these areas to protect the biodiversity along this stretch of the Canal. Canal water is used to water flowers / plants in the village.
- It is noted that some of the more traditional flowers like Petunias/Begonias, have been replaced with more pollinator friendly species in your village floral schemes. This is a positive development and the colourful displays have not been negatively impacted by this change

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

- A recycling centre is located at St. Joseph's Centre in the village, which allows the local community to recycle glass, plastic, and clothing. This reduces waste generated from the community as a whole and extra containers have been located at the Centre this year.
- When considering new projects under this category it is worthwhile first of all considering how the proposed project will align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The information provided in the Tidy Towns newsletters and handbook is very informative in this regard.
- You might in the future consider installing a community composter in the village. These are useful and provide a quantity of mulch to use on your planted areas, which will ensure rapid establishment of the plantings.

- Other areas worthy of consideration by the Leitrim Village Development committee for the future under this category, which is in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals, include the development of small electric microgeneration schemes for Wind, Solar and Hydro in partnership with the Local Authority - these may also attract suitable SEAI or Leader funding.
- You might look at the provision of public e-car charge points and additional bicycle parking/off road cycle tracks and other facilities in the village, and where there are deficiencies, suggest suitable locations where these could be provided in the short term.
- The Committee might also consider in the future initiating membership of the Sustainable Energy Communities programme run by the SEAI which includes engaging in learning networks, preparation of energy masterplans and local energy action plans etc. The following are useful links in this regard.
<https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/sustainable-energy-communities/><https://www.codema.ie/sec>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

- Your committee organises regular Litter Picks which are coordinated for different sections of the village, involving of residents and members of the community of all ages. This is building pride of place across the entire village and helps to educate the next generation coming along about the effect of littering and the work that is required to clean up afterwards.
- On the day of adjudication, the village area was found to be pristine, tidy and litter free - well done and congratulations to all involved with this work.

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

- Under this category you mention the fact that flowers have been planted at the nameplates at the entry to the village on each of the approach roads and the nameplates have been repainted to make the name of the village more prominent to visitors.
- The adjudicator called to several residential estates in the village including Cois Abhainn, Holly Park, Dún Carraig Céibh, Riversdale, Church View, Leitrim Quay, Drumheirney Manor, Cluain Óir, Wood ville and Acorn Woods. The general standard of maintenance and presentation of these housing estates was very good. Given the number of estates within Leitrim Village a Tidy Estates competition would be a useful way to achieve a consistent standard of presentation. This may be an initiative for your committee to consider for the future.

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

- It is noted that grass margins are cut regularly on all approach roads to Leitrim village. Habitats are left for local wildlife, especially for pollinators as part of this grass cutting process. Trees have been planted at the layby on the Drumshanbo road.
- On the Carrick-on-Shannon approach to the village, the well-maintained roadside margins with suitable wildflower areas and attractive name sign and floral display were admired. A timber fence along the frontage of Cois Abhainn estate is visually prominent and would benefit from suitable native hedge planting on the roadside.
- On the Keadue approach, the carpark and attractive sculpture piece and tree planting at Drumheirney Woods were admired. The mature trees along the roadside boundaries greatly enhance this approach.
- On the Drumshanbo approach the attractive name sign and planting provide a welcome to visitors. The well-maintained grass margins with suitable wildflower areas are to be commended. As a general rule, where possible boundary fencing along the road approaches to the village should be softened with the planting of native hedgerow species.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a delight to return to visit Leitrim Village this year. The unique setting along the canal adds greatly to the character and charm of the village. From the standards achieved overall this year, your committee is clearly very active. You have great potential to progress well in the competition. We hope you found the adjudicators comments useful and we wish you well with all your future endeavours.