

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: Lismore - Liosmor Mochuda	Ref: 229
County: Waterford	Mark: 369
Category: C	Date(s): 07/06/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	53	54
Streetscape & Public Places	80	47	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	50	52
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	42	43
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	25	26
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	65
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	43	44
TOTAL MARK	550	360	369

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

Lismore must have the largest volunteer force in the country – 125 people to call upon. It is wonderful to see how you have enveloped within your work groups the International Protection Applicants who temporarily call Lismore home. When we offer people the chance to contribute, they deliver. Your next generation's contribution is critical & having the Transition Year students involved each year sets a wonderful precedence. The reestablishment of the Forige Club should pay dividends as they take on mutually beneficial projects. The Mens Sheds have been the backbone of many projects with their creativity & physical prowess. The financial support of businesses & agencies is essential for all Tidy towns groups & great to see you have this support in spades.

You certainly have all traditional means of communication covered. It is now imperative to meet people where they currently receive news. Today social media platforms are invaluable tools for reaching the widest possible audience in your locality. Your adjudicator unfortunately could not locate your current Facebook page, only the much older one. Facebook has an older audience now with Instagram the social media of choice for those under 35 years. Perhaps this would be an interesting project for a transition year student working towards attaining their Gaisce award.

The Heritage Centre certainly delivers for Lismore – it is an attraction in itself let alone the VR Castle Experience, guided tours, escape rooms & educational events. Your adjudicator will be recommending to all & sundry. Your primary schools are to be congratulated for their active involvement in projects focusing on sustainability & nature.

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

What can be said when the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has 11 pages on the architectural heritage of Lismore – quite remarkable for a location to encompass so many examples of styles from various eras. Once again an interesting project for a student interested in history - send updated photos of the buildings referenced to NIAH as those featured online are now 20 years old. Your adjudicator was charmed on their walk around Lismore with all the lovely private & commercial buildings. It would be unfair to single out the many examples. So many of the commercial premises are beautifully presented & it is certainly noticeable that many have been freshly painted.

The cobbled laneways to rear yards presented a charming vista. The bilingual heritage street signs are very in keeping with the Lismore's tradition.

It is heartening to hear that Waterford County Council are actively proceeding on the issue of derelict premises. In many villages & towns, these buildings are an eyesore & impact negatively on the visual impact of a streetscape. Well done to the owner of the vacant property at the end of Church Lane, the colour combination works very well & makes presentable something that could easily be an eyesore. A year will reveal a lot in relation to the compulsory purchase orders on the two properties & it would be fantastic to see them re-imagined as either residences or

commercial entities. Sometimes the twin pronged effect of positive encouragement & potential punitive fines or enforcement can be the impetus for property owners to take responsibility for the upkeep & maintenance of their buildings. It is regrettable to see that the current economic climate has forced some businesses to close. It would be hoped that new tenants could be found in time for the commercial vacancies.

The ongoing refurbishment of both the Lismore House Hotel & the Blackwater Community School are good news stories. The completion of both projects will add positively to the town's panorama. Has the completion of the Tech Hub resulted in people reducing their work commute or have they opted to use it in conjunction with working from home? Do let us know a little more about it in next year's submission.

On a glorious summer's day, your adjudicator was delighted to see the outdoor seating at the various eating establishments well used. It creates a wonderful ambience. So too do the numerous seating areas throughout the town. Lismore must have the most outdoor seating in situ per head of population – a wonderful & most welcome facility.

It was lovely to see the Living Wall on New Street is still in pride of place – a most unusual installation.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Whatever words your adjudicator uses to praise the Millennium Park will be inadequate. So much in a relatively small space & the peace & tranquility enjoyed inside when bordered by main arteries on two sides is remarkable. How you have fitted in with aplomb & with an absence of clutter - fountain, waterfall, stream, bridge, bandstand, statues; memorials, plaques, obelisk, information boards, composting corner, perennial planting, circular gardens, specimen trees; pathways & the latest project – upgraded Fairy Garden is remarkable. The styling of the latter is quite unique & most interesting. Well done on an excellent job.

Your focus on perennial planting is in line with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan & should reduce your annual expenditure, keep the bees & insects happier and reduce your water usage. The "trough" baskets with the perennials on the Millennium Park outer walls were looking well & should show well over the summer. The planting designs at the Monument, North Mall & within the Millennium Park demonstrate what can be achieved with perennial planting. The predominantly purple show of colour at the linear perennial bed by the Lismore House Hotel is striking & many visitors were taking the opportunity to photograph the sight. The box hedging around the trees on South Mall is most unusual & presents a lovely structural impact.

Well done to Blackwater Community School for continuing to maintain the lovely rose gardens in front of the reception building in the midst of a busy build.

The burial ground at St Carthage's Cathedral is an excellent example of managed green space – long grass left at the outer perimeter & in several other areas where gravestones tilt, mature trees & short meadows.

There were some lovely examples of landscaping through Lismore – the rose bed on Deerpark Road, the Grotto, the bed on Ballyanchor Road & the containers at various locations. Some of the lamp standard planters were yet to be planted when we visited. Your plan to change the plants in these to pollinator friendly plants will be beneficial.

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

It is impressive how you have moved to primarily pollinator friendly planting in Lismore. The benefits of this were very evident as there was plenty of visible insect life about. We are delighted to hear that you secured funding in February this year for a local biodiversity action plan. It will be interesting to hear the main points of the plan in next year's submission & your thoughts on the future direction.

Education is key in this area – nature walks, bird walks, workshops & surveys for the community are great strategies to get the message across. We all take in more information the more of our senses we use & these are ideal opportunities to engage people in this area. We will be interested to hear in next year's submission the results of the project you are undertaking this summer with Cork Nature Network.

Your adoption of many of the promoted actions as outlined by Biodiversity Ireland are to be commended – no mowing in May & doing this in conjunction with the county council; verge cutting only to allow wild flowers & grasses to opportunity to bloom & seed; ensuring the safe supply of appropriate local wild flower seeds etc.

As the new Blackwater Community School is currently in construction stage, has there been any discussion about including Swift Bricks into the structure? This was done to remarkable effect with a convent conversion in Baltinglass, Co Wicklow.

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

Many visitors to Lismore park in the public car park opposite the Lismore House Hotel. On walking from there through to the Millennium Park, there is a prominent sign "Lismore Tidy Towns Waste Minimisation Project" & it was fantastic to see people actively using the facilities – availing of the public drinking water (great idea with the bucket & stones); segregating their waste into the specific receptacles; disposing of plastic bottles in the bottle shaped wire sculpture & filling dog bowls from the rainwater harvesting barrels. It is a fantastic amenity. All you need now is a solar power phone charging facility!

Liosmór Mochuda National School's theme of Eco Towns with school gardens & reusing materials for the creation of jewellery, using willow for the creation of Christmas decorations, etc are great fun strategies for getting across the sustainability message.

The Green Schools Programme has been a game changer & well done to the students & teachers in Bunscoil Bhothar na Naomh for running projects monitoring energy use, focusing on Global Citizenship & Marine Environment and focusing on reducing litter & why this is critical.

It is a joy to see sustainable architecture at play as could be seen on adjudication day at the reception building for Blackwater Community school. A remarkable building & the restoration & sympathetic retrofitting is admirable.

It is wonderful to see that residents, community groups & businesses are adopting the green ethos. The ChangeX platform may be worth exploring for Lismore as it has plenty of ideas from other communities in this area & has

access to funding. <https://www.changex.org/ie>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On adjudication day, there was an army of Tidy Towns volunteers out sweeping paths, weeding, pruning, planting, painting, drilling & much more besides. The Lismore Tidy Towns At Work signs were prominently placed & the intensity of work was quite something to behold. There is no doubt this is the main part of the reason there was so little litter about – a few wind strewn pieces but nothing to remark upon. A daily roster of 90 people for litter picking is the stuff of dreams for many communities. You need to let everyone else in on the secret!

An annual audit of street furniture would be worthwhile as there are redundant poles about in addition to commercial signage on ESB poles & on walls. If they were removed when no longer required, it would reduce clutter in the streetscape.

Our compliments too to whoever looks after the public conveniences – they are maintained to a very good standard & were a welcome sight.

There are quite a few notices re dog dirt & while you referenced the application of stencils on footpaths your adjudicator could not locate one. Certainly, fewer notices & more stencils would reduce street clutter.

It was nice to see the Heritage Centre took on board the suggestion by last year's adjudicator & removed the Christmas decorations. There are quite a lot of notices on the railings & from the gate to the door. Could the existing flagpoles be used instead for some of the information?

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

As referenced earlier, the majority of residences & gardens are well kept. The terrace of houses on Church Lane is charming. Mountain View has some lovely mature trees & the green areas are well maintained. The new hedging inside the stonewall is thriving. The complex directly opposite has a lovely communal space complete with seating, mature trees & large flowerbed, all of which are presented well. Beech Grove's entrance is well planned & the green clad walls & mature shrubs with the tree-lined avenue create a wonderful vista. They might be persuaded to add a few more summer flowering shrubs to those empty spaces. Devonshire Cottages looked so colourful on adjudication day – a cohesive colour scheme on the front railings would complete the picture. The residences on Parks Road with the lovely railings & verdant gardens were a lovely sight. It was a pleasure to walk the streets of Lismore & see how much pride the community has in their abodes & see how well maintained they are.

As many of the estates have green spaces, it might be worth advising them of the organizations, Pocket Forests & Easy Treesie, who work with communities to plant mini forests in small spaces. <https://www.pocketforests.ie/> <https://easytreesie.com/> They could be added in housing estates where trees are not thriving or added to existing solo trees in order to make a triangle & then leave a meadow underneath. An alternative option may be to plant edible hedges. Some of the young trees in housing estates are not thriving – the advice is not to plant solo rather plant in trios or more & leave area wild underneath.

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

The drive in to Lismore from Ballyduff Upper with stonewalls, mature trees, & pasturelands is a delight. The wide sweeping road & the bridge crossing make for a very grand entrance to Lismore.

The approach road from Tallow similarly has well maintained stonewalls & mature trees lining the roadsides.

It is a delight to see that the landowners & the municipality are abiding by the Wildlife Act.

It was great to see pedestrians using many of the footpaths leading out of Lismore on the approach roads.

Concluding Remarks:

Your adjudicator thoroughly enjoyed their visit to Lismore & as a first time visitor was charmed by the town. The amount of work in progress on adjudication day was inspiring & it is fantastic to see such civic pride in a location. You have great plans for the future & we wish you all the best.

In next year's submission, do check that your map is legible as unfortunately your map & 3-year plan was not scanned in an easily read format.