

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Leighlinbridge** Ref: **41**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **289**
Category: **C** Date(s): **17/07/2007**
09/08/2007

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	47
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	289

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome again Leighlinbridge to Tidy Towns 2007 Competition. Also well done on your excellent colourful and informative application with clear maps and photographs which make it easy for us to understand. Your committee is obviously busy given growing success over recent years. We are also impressed with a list of prizes and awards "as long as your arm", and congratulations on last year's score which was excellent.

We note for the record that your committee has 20 members with 13 volunteer helpers. We also pay tribute to the group of agencies and your school which looks after the school itself. The building was spotless on the day. The schoolchildren have been involved in Junior Tidy Towns committee. Your three year plan was also noted.

We were well treated with a friendly welcome when we stayed in the Lord Bagenal Inn (anonymously). It represents a special example of a successful combination of the unity which can be achieved between old and new

The Built Environment:

The old bridge crosses the Barrow and is flanked on the Carlow side by an old tower castle. Both bridge and castle are beautiful and well looked after.

The river is flanked by old stone mills on the Kilkenny Road side which have been saved but require new uses and restoration. There is a second mill in Church Street. Both are on each side of the River's winding streets which have been beautifully conserved and are very well presented. They contain by and large stores and traditional buildings of small scale, being a mix of single and two storey houses and business premises.

The Catholic Church and its railings look fresh after repainting and are well presented.

The new Parish Hall is a lovely well landscaped addition to the town and surroundings.

The school and grounds on the Carlow side of the river were also maintained very satisfactorily.

The Lord Bagenal Hotel is well named and attractive, with good landscaping. Kelly's bar front was much admired.

The interesting vernacular building and shopfront facing the approach by the hotel, at the T junction into the town centre -Siopa Úi h-Uiginn, needs attention.

Use of Irish signage is good.

Landscaping:

This continues to be carried out to a very high standard throughout the town. We agree with you that the planting in the village is sufficient. It is also uncomplicated and unfussy in nature, apart perhaps from the half tubs along the footpath in the vicinity of the Parish Centre. It is welcoming to see a seasonal approach is being retained, and this requires more maintenance. We were particularly impressed by the beauty of Millennium Garden which was full of imagination and of great quality. Planting in the car park and Catholic Church grounds, including the fuchsia and lavender is excellent.

We also admired the restoration of the memorial sculpture garden area. The steps and landscaping in that park come down through a beautiful dry stone granite wall to the towpath on the river. The towpath itself is simple in grass, worn tracks and trees, and perhaps this simplicity is very suitable.

Marvellous planting exists at the site of the proposed new Medical Centre. Ensure it remains !

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You undertook a wildlife survey in 2005. You have taken note of all the areas where wildlife and flowers flourish. Your wildlife board in the park conveys lots of this information. We noted the area on the Carlow Road where grass has been allowed to seed in a natural way.

The river Barrow is a great resource for wild life and natural landscape and great for walking and water sports. The Slí na Sláinte walks are good and we welcome the new amenity of a marina on the river side at the front of the Lord Bagenal Hotel. This was admired and is very impressive.

Litter Control:

Litter on adjudication day was almost absent. Unfortunately, though, someone had left take-away litter at the picnic table in the riverside Park. Well done particularly to the national school children who undertake litter patrols along with other volunteers. Well done too to the school on the use of the school to bring literature home.

The bring banks and skip outside the school were clean and free of all litter, and were well maintained on the day. There were attractively planted containers beside the bank.

Waste Minimisation:

We note your efforts in conjunction with Green Zone 2006 project that means a lot of households and businesses compost their waste and that mowers in town are mulch mowers. Well done on your segregation of waste at clean-ups, and we note that schoolchildren shed paper to make fire logs.

Your future proposals to reduce waste going to landfill are praiseworthy.

Tidiness:

There is a definite lack of litter in the town centre and environs. There is no clutter in the town.

Utilities/poles and wires appear to be a problem. This is a pity in a "Tidy Town" environment such as Leighlinbridge.

The wall of the Garda barracks still requires some painting. Meaney's pub surrounds needs upgrading, located as it is in such a strategic place facing the bridge.

Road signage is in places in need of upgrading e.g. in the area of St. Laserian's Terrace, and the Waterford directional sign was falling down near the bridge. Some rubbish bins e.g. near the stone seating at the tow path beside the bridge need renewal.

One tree in the church car park was broken. Opposite the church and Parish Hall a few items (walls and house) could do with a repaint.

Residential Areas:

We welcome the fact that residential committees and indeed the residents themselves take responsibility for their own area. This is vital to your success. It is a fact that all the developments were extremely well presented with hedgerows, boundary walls and fences generally very well maintained. Gardens were also of a high standard and open space area attractively landscaped.

Local authority estates such as Seskin Road, Tyndall Avenue, and Concare were exemplary for the most part.

Estate signage is also well kept.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads and footpaths are all good with some excellent plantings such as the lovely ash and copper beech trees on the Old Leighlin Road approach. At the main road junction near the Maxol garage, the triangular open space with its picnic table, litter bin (Maxol) and pink roses created a good first impression.

There were good improvements to the footpath on the Kilkenny Road and dry stone walling has been upgraded with fine landscaping. The Carlow Road has also been upgraded with beautiful granite seats alongside. All roads now have attractive dual language signs.

The Rathvinden Road, a nice rural approach by Rathvinden House, the convent and nursing home, is well treed.

The river with its bridge and towpaths are of a high standard, clean and very attractive and form lovely tranquil approaches to the fine new marina.

General Impression:

The town has expanded rapidly on both sides of the river, and new development appears in general to be in scale. The whole area has natural vegetation, so new developments including residential areas are assimilated well.

Despite this rapid expansion the town appears to have maintained itself as an integrated whole.

Thanks for the invitation to walk your suggested route. However, being curious and obstinate we wended our own way!

Second Round Adjudication:

It is some years since this adjudicator had been in Loughlinbridge, and the changes seen were conspicuous

and impressive. The village is insulated from the worst of the passing traffic and so village life has been reaffirmed and enhanced by the new developments - the most remarkable being the rehabilitation of the old warehouses, which are Leighlinbridge's most characteristic - and indeed characterful - buildings. It was interesting to see how new residential accommodation had taken its inspiration from the older buildings in terms of height and profile. The influx of new residents must have helped to revitalise the village considerably. Two projects might be considered, and quite likely have been: the restoration of the Church of Ireland tower, which is a landmark but a sadly neglected one; and the renovation of the fine tower house by the bridge - an impossible task without a very wealthy private donor! Residents are now benefiting from the foresight of the committee of a dozen or more years ago who were instrumental in planting young trees and hedges - these have now come on wonderfully well, adding to the allure of the village and its approaches. The elaborate floral decorations throughout the village, and in the formal gardens on the Kilkenny and Bagenalstown roads, were looking extremely well in mid-August in spite of the bad weather of the preceding weeks. Work on the surfacing of the footpath on the Kilkenny road was in progress at the time of the second visit. Ugly poles and wires have been alluded to by the first adjudicator - the County Council has done wonderful work in this regard that needs to be extended - this and items under 'Tidiness' mentioned by the first adjudicator need to be addressed. In spite of small discrepancies, overall Loughlinbridge worthily retains its position at the head of the County, an accomplishment that redounds to the vision and hard work of the committee, the voluntary helpers, and all those organisations who supported this fine effort.