

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Old Leighlin** Ref: **774**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **187**
Category: **B** Date(s): **31/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	25
Landscaping	50	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	14
Litter Control	50	20
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	10
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27
General Impression	10	5
TOTAL MARK	400	187

Overall Development Approach:

Old Leighlin was entered as part of the drive by SuperValu to work with communities to approve the environmental standards of their areas through participation in the National TidyTowns Competition. Areas were entered on the basis that they fall within the catchment area of the nearest SuperValu store and this 'baseline assessment' is intended to provide a basis on which progress could be made over the coming years through partnership with residents, businesses and local agencies. As such it should not be interpreted as a critique of the area but rather an opportunity for everybody to work together to make their hometown a better place to work, live and visit. As part of SuperValu's strategic approach to sustainable development in the area, a nominal mark has been given to reflect this. Further marks will be awarded in future years where more tangible TidyTowns structures are developed and local environmental plans prepared and implemented. This is particularly relevant to Old Leighlin which was active in TidyTowns up to 2003, when it was not only scoring well, but more importantly, making steady progress in line with many other centres throughout Ireland. It would therefore be great for Old Leighlin to take this opportunity to reform its committee and involve the whole community in Tidy Towns as it once did.

The Built Environment:

The Cathedral, its cemetery and the surrounding walls are the flagship of this ecclesiastical village. All elements are beautiful, the cemetery a fitting tribute to those passed away. The bridge and walls on the school road continue the heritage theme. It is encouraging to see the scaffolding, preservation is high on the agenda. The school also looks well, is tastefully landscaped and its Green Flag proclaiming the younger generation's commitment to a cleaner environment. Many of the buildings in the centre of the village need renewal. The Post Office is jaded and the telephone box must be removed or maintained as a museum piece. The sign over Lynch's has an enchanting appearance of times past but it too is in need of renewal. The Community Centre is a fine building with a well surfaced car park. The entrance to the GAA ground

detracts from the tidiness that surrounds it. One building to stand out is Glendons. Lovely. The village pump: a lot of work done by someone but it now cries out for assistance. The Millenium Memorial area is another lovely feature of the village centre but has to be maintained.

Landscaping:

The present generation has inherited some tasteful landscaping from previous generations. Everywhere on looks there is evidence of planning, design, work done, flower tubs put in place. But the energy seems to have run out, Molaise Estate and Tobar Molaise being the shining exceptions. Both are spectacular in the design of the landscaping and in the maintenance. The memorial to 1798, a proud, fitting tribute, but now somewhat jaded. The landscaping and sculpture behind this is also a sorry sight. The beautiful landscaping work down school road must be tended though it is not neglected but needs more TLC. A little maintenance would bring these areas up to the standards of Tobar Molaise and the estate. The village tree is outstanding.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Old Leighlin is situated in a picturesque, wooded landscape. The sound of the gushing stream is constant and adds a romantic rustic element to the ecclesiastical aura. Woods, walls, hedges, trees and stream all combine to create a natural wildlife habitat of Old Leighlin. The challenge is to exploit this potential. The laneway down to Tobar Molaise is an example of how signposted walks in the village could be truly attractive.

Litter Control:

This is an area that could be tackled and would produce instant improvement to the appearance of the village. There is no evidence of dumping, very good. There is a lot of litter, most of it is young peoples' litter. The cemetery is desecrated with it and while there are litter bins, the one at Tobar Molaise was full. The appearance of the school suggests that there is potential for co-operation from that quarter, particularly with regular litter patrols which would help immensely.

Waste Minimisation:

Without details of ongoing community projects, it is not possible to ascertain the true extent of progress being made under this category and I would look forward to seeing whether progress has in fact been made in future assessments. However taking into account the existing council facilities and SuperValu's own commitment in this area, I believe a nominal mark is appropriate for this year. There are however plenty of ways in which local communities can assist in tackling this growing problem, such as promoting best practice in businesses and schools, encouraging household composting through local workshops and lobbying for access to appropriate recycling facilities. How this has been achieved in other areas is contained in the Race Against Waste community booklet available from the Tidy Towns Unit in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The Bring Bank was being used on the day of adjudication and appears to being kept very well maintained. It was also a delight to see that the school has attained Green Flag Status, all of which counts towards additional marks in Tidy Towns. To make further progress in this section a new formed group would need to consult a booklet 'Race Against Waste' available from the Tidy Towns Unit which assist groups to focus on projects relevant to the area. For this year a nominal mark for

Tidiness:

While the centre of the village has well defined paths, streets and buildings, the rest of Old Leighlin suffers grievously from the presence of kerbside and roadside weeds. These create a scruffy appearance of neglect. Engagement with the local authority would be needed to address this. Even the landscaped area from the school looks a little untidy. Sign posts look well and are clean. 'Old Leighlin Ecclesiastical Village' looks well proclaiming its proud message.

Residential Areas:

It seems strange that modern Ireland seems to have by passed Old Leighlin when it comes to the building boom. There is very little construction of new houses. The existing individual houses are beautifully presented and most look quaint with their roses, plants, trees and general summer colour. Molaise Estate is a credit to the residents. It would appear that there have been two housing developments here. Both exude pride. The landscaping, which has a settled appearance, is well maintained and ablaze with summer colour.

The row of houses on the by road do not look as well. The weeds outside the perimeter wall are a tell tale sign of neglect.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

When arriving from the N9 one's expectations are raised before the 50 km sign by the neat road verges, the picnic table and the general image of care. As one gets closer to the village the image changes a little. The verges are not as well maintained. Coming down the school road one is delighted with the tree planting and with the landscaping on the left. But both of these areas are in need of some tidying up. After Tobar Molaise the walls are beautiful all the way to town. Make sure that the weeds do not weaken the structure of the cemetery wall. The assistance of Carlow County Council is vital in keeping up the standards for you.

General Impression:

Old Leighlin is welcome back to the Tidy Towns Competition for 2007. It is felt that the village will benefit from participation. Much fabulous work has been done in the past but has suffered from neglect recently. Participation in the Tidy Towns Competition will galvanise support to make Old Leighlin beautiful, a state such a lovely, historical village deserves.