

# Tidy Towns Competition 2011

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Old Leighlin** Ref: **774**  
County: **Carlow** Mark: **228**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **08/07/2011**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2010</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	28	31
The Built Environment	50	29	31
Landscaping	50	30	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	16	17
Litter Control	50	24	25
Waste Minimisation	20	9	10
Tidiness	30	12	13
Residential Areas	40	31	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30	31
General Impression	10	6	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>228</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the excellent application which was accompanied by supplementary documentation in support. Both the ordinary map and the Google earth version were very much appreciated by the adjudicator as it was my first visit to Old Leighlin even though I had been to neighbouring Leighlinbridge on a few occasions. There seems to have been a revitalised interest in TidyTowns in the village over the last year judging by the content of your application form and you are to be congratulated on this. You are in the process of developing stronger links with Carlow County Council and the local community organisations which can only be good for the development of the village in the years ahead. I would also link up with Carlow Tourism as there is potential to promote the monastic history of the village to a niche market and you need to have good partnership with the aforementioned and with SE Tourism to do this. It was also positive to note that a residents association has been set up and this should assist the TidyTowns committee in a number of categories. Will the Old World Festival become an annual event and what does it entail? One presumes that there will be another flower festival. The sustained links with the primary school is to be commended and it is noted that you are working with them under a number of categories to help it acquire green flag status. The idea of a walking bus to school is novel and a great initiative. The Committee is also fortunate to have a number of local businesses that will support its work. As stated it was my first visit to the village and one can see that a lot is being done to move the village forward not alone in the TidyTowns rankings but in general terms also. One feels that the marks attained in the competition over the last few years do not reflect the work being done on the ground. An increase of 2 marks is granted in this category and one looks forward to the revised work plan next year.

### The Built Environment:

Old Leighlin has an old world charm and sits snugly between small drumlins and the Modlin River. There are some fine buildings in the village with St Lazarian's Cathedral forming the focal point. Work carried out by the Cathedral Church Body with co-operation from the Heritage Society was seen to good effect and the

Cathedral graveyard provides a valuable insight into the history of the parish and it is good to report that a section of it has been restored. On the day of adjudication there was a very helpful lady guide providing information on the heritage of Old Leighlan and the significance of St Lazarians Cathedral in the ecclesiastical history of the Island. St Molaises National School was admired for the manner in which it was presented and credit is due to the teachers, pupils and caretaker for having it in such good condition. The residence across the road was flying three county flags (Carlow, Kilkenny and Laois) on adjudication day which was a nice local touch. The Community Centre is an orderly and tidy building if a little cold in appearance a discreet sign above the entrance to identify the building is a suggestion. The adjoining car park was in acceptable condition but the resurfacing needs to be completed. It is good to report that your engagement with the owners of the old school has proved successful and it looked well on the day, so well done every improvement helps the built environment. The picnic area in front of the GAA grounds is a very suitable use of this green space. The three concrete barrier blocks are no doubt necessary even if they detract a little from the overall appearance of the area. Is there an alternative, flower barrels perhaps?

Fordes Fitted Furniture, the parking area was a little rough, Leighlinbridge PO, Glendons Bar and the public house further up the road I cannot recall the name were admired for the quality of buildings and the manner in which they were presented to the public. Lynch's Stop and Shop forms part of a new development that fits in with the older character of the village. There were a number of fine private residences in the village centre that deserve mention: the two storey residence with adjoining annex next to the village post office, the traditional low roofed cottage and impressively refurbished two storey premises beside it on the road to Castlecomer opposite Cathedral graveyard. The road surface and footpaths were very good and the core area is softened and by the copper beech that occupies such a prominent position in front of the Cathedral entrance. An increase of two marks is merited.

### **Landscaping:**

A large variety of projects have been completed this year under this category and ongoing maintenance mentioned in the application was evident on adjudication day. The stone table at lay by provides an attractive and useful introduction to the village. The newly installed stone chair at St Molaise Holy Well was admired. The very appealing planting and shrubbery in and around the area of St Lazarian's Holy Well also added a pleasant feel to the area. As mentioned in a previous report it would be an interesting to identify and explain the practise of leaving cloth items on the tree in front of the well. Colour and flowers used to good effect in around GAA grounds and at St Molaise Estate. Particular mention must go the green section at the end of the cul de sac where a vibrant combination of purple and white annuals have been used to great effect to brighten up the area. The younger generation have been busy making their contributions, so well done to the Beavers and Cub members who were involved in planting the very colourful tubs and other containers dotted around your lovely village. Also it is good to note that the school is actively involved in developing a garden club which will result in a wildlife and vegetable garden – an exercise in self sufficiency that will prove worthwhile in years to come. The Pump area at the Spa Road side of the village should definitely be upgraded if possible as it provides another added landscape attraction for the area. You are wished well with your planned projects in the year ahead.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The planned wildlife board/signage will be eagerly awaited and having the school children involved will bring added enthusiasm to the project. There may be a graphic artist or illustrator amongst you that might provide advice on how to design the board. You should also seek advice from a wildlife enthusiast or someone from Carlow County Council on how to record the various species of wildlife that are associated with your area. A proposed wild garden is also a positive development and a contributor to the promotion of biodiversity of the locality. There may also be an opportunity to devise and develop a Heritage Trail given the monastic history of the village and parish.

### **Litter Control:**

Well done on distributing anti-litter leaflets to each household in the parish as it is important the Old Leighlin Tidy Towns are seen to actively promote the importance to the local area of good litter control. Co-operation with groups such as Foróige and with the local national school is to be encouraged as the youth of any village or town is its future and the more they are involved initiatives such as organised litter pick and the like the more they will have a sense of pride of place. On adjudication day there was a bin overflowing at entrance to Bring Centre and this is an area that needs ongoing monitoring. There was also a small sprinkling of litter at the side of Community Centre but no doubt the regular patrol will clean this up. Overall the standard was very good and more importantly you are giving good leadership in advocating the need for a litter free village.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The Committee has embraced the concept of waste minimisation with enthusiasm and the mini projects that you have put in place are both practical and achievable. Well done on adding the clothing bank to the recycling area. The segregation policy being implemented by the Sports Hall management is a very practical and helps in reducing costs associated with waste collection. Some other areas in this category for your

committee to consider might include: self sustained flower planting and a designated composting area.

### **Tidiness:**

The improved road markings were duly noted. The overflowing bin and broken pillar/road sign at the entrance to the Bring Centre might be a recent occurrence but were nonetheless a detracting factor from the area on adjudication day. A little further down from the marble picnic tables, a peculiar granite pipe like structure that appeared to have its top broken off was noted. It is suggested that a number of the flower basins sitting outside the school/basketball court be fixed/replaced as some were in a state of disrepair.

The Big Tree has some fibre optic lights still hanging from it. No doubt these look well in the winter or just at night but at this time of the year the cabling appeared to detract the pleasant focal position the Old Tree occupies. The speed ramps are unfortunately a necessity these days, who would have thought that a village the size of Old Leighlin would ever need these. Signage was clean and visible and the new post office sign was noted during the walkabout. The GAA Grounds at St Molaises Estate was in good condition and while it was not perfect the parking area was tidy and accessible.

### **Residential Areas:**

Individual residences on the Leighlin approach deserve mention for the condition of their well maintained entrances. St Molaise Estate was litter free and despite the intermittent showers that the Irish summer threw up on the day the floral arrangements, colour and fresh painting were all seen to good effect. The green area around the electricity/access shed is a fine example of how such installations can be improved upon to blend in with the surrounding area. Two hanging baskets and nearby landscaping arrangement made the building an attractive feature in its own right.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The approach roads very acceptable with good surfaces and verges cut back in accordance with recommendations for wildlife conservation. The entrance from Leighlinbridge is enhanced by the nice combination of the excellent lay by area and picnic table and the stone wall on in by the graveyard to the core of the village. Entrance from Lacken side is narrow but verges and the hedgerow was maintained in accordance with the recognised code of good practice. The extended footpaths on both entrances were in good condition. Overall the standard was very good.

### **General Impression:**

It was nice to visit the village of Old Leighlin for the very first time and I must say that I was impressed with the overall look of the place. The village has far more potential in this competition than it has realised to date and it is hoped that it will make good progress in the years ahead. Make the most of the ecclesiastical history of your parish and promote it to a wider audience.

You are wished well for the future.