

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Lissycasey** Ref: **1741**
County: **Clare** Mark: **282**
Category: **B** Date(s): **19/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	40	40
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	37	37
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	42	43
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30	31
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	11	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61	62
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	28	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	28	28
TOTAL MARK	450	277	282

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Thank you Lissycasey for your entry into the 2015 national competition – your 9th year of entry. You have a good number of volunteers on your committee. You also have great support from local businesses, schools, sports bodies and the people living within your lovely locality. Despite the heavy rain on adjudication day, there was a feeling of being somewhere that was cared for and where the community was proud of their area.

You have worked particularly hard since last year and taken on board the many different comments provided by last year's adjudicator. You have responded quickly which for a voluntary group is to be highly commended. It is not hard to fit all in, in our busy lifestyles. In this report this year's adjudicator has made some comments which it is hoped will help to focus and prioritise your actions in order to maintain enthusiasm for your work and to avoid burn-out.

It was great to read of the participation of the national school student, Davan, on the committee. Is there a mechanism for other young people in the village to feed in their thoughts and ideas into your long term plan? In this plan you have highlighted staff of the Local Authority who may be able to assist you in achieving your aims. Don't be slow in contacting them as the Environmental Awareness Office, Biodiversity Officer, Heritage Officer and others all give great support to local TidyTowns communities in Co Clare.

One improvement on next year would be the map. Yes you have added the details of the projects as requested previously but the scale made it difficult to find places. For example, it implied that the ecology park was on the road adjacent to the school – it took some time to find this. The inclusion of the road numbers (L20846) on your map would have helped locate this quickly. Disappointingly the website mentioned on the interpretations boards in your village www.exploreliissycasey.com was not active. Information provided on the display boards was very good and it was noted that the bounty was the same for the heads of wolfs and the heads of priests £5!

Finally your adjudicator would like to thank the secretary for their lovely submission with photographs of key projects and activities including the photograph of your carefully crafted life-sized snowman!

Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:

Many of the buildings on the main road through Lissycasey looked very well and in particular Fanny O'Sheas, the Church, the school and The Credit Union. The vintage car at O'Shea's also attracted the passer by.

The funeral home was nicely painted and looked very well. But grounds around the funeral home seemed very stark and it is suggested that some of the green-fingered community members assist here or at least a number of

potted plants could be positioned at the entrance here.

The playground and the entrance to the GAA pitch looked very well. Though, the area has not much planting and as a result the GAA walls looked a little stark. So it is suggested that some climbing plants such as honeysuckle are encouraged to grow here.

You are working on the issue of derelict properties. Some weeding is needed on the outside of the Boreen Lodge which appeared well and had some nice roses and shrubs growing by a bed here that perhaps needs just a little pruning but otherwise is faring well.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Well there are certainly some green fingers in Lissycasey. The entrances to both the graveyard and the church were good examples of where baskets and containers can enhance a place and also provide the sense of reverence that is important in such areas.

You have great displays of shrubs on large landscaped beds, such as at the school, and opposite the church which looked great and really made an impact on the passing motorist. The roses, rose of Sharon and ceanothus looked great. It is this type of planting that the Tidy Towns competition is pushing all communities towards as it saves time and money and provides year-round structure.

What also worked well in Lissycasey were the mown verges and the trees along the road side. This provides the sense of place that a linear community needs to reflect. It is suggested that the grass is mulched (some cuttings where noted under the trees at the road-side shelter with two planted litter bins at the north east end of Lissycasey, not on map so not able to name this area).

As mentioned last year do not add any more to the garden area in the centre of the village. It is a lovely amenity but the addition of different styles of containers, paving stones and fencing can distract the visitor here. As such your efforts in this area to plant a lot of other beds with low level bedding plants need some careful thought. You have grown and planted numerous geraniums or similar plants that are positioned in places where they cannot be easily seen, where they do not make an impact and where you have distributed a lot of slug pellets which can have an impact on the environment. For example, you have the lovely community garden which is used for wedding pictures. In beds here you have some lovely perennials that fit the rural nature of this area. But at the base of the concrete fence here you have planted small flowers that cannot be seen and don't work here. Likewise you have tiered planters, but the plants currently in these cannot be seen by the driver going past. You have two miles of roadside to manage and your adjudicator is worried that the numbers of planters along this route are too many for a small community to maintain and plant. Overall it is recommended you take a long, hard look at the planters and the impact of the plants that you place. You have great potential with your polytunnel to grow up shrubs and perennials. Is there a local ICA who might help with growing on cuttings or grafts of shrubs? Best of luck in your grant application to grow more perennials also.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádúrtha:

Well done on your activities to educate your community on the nature that surrounds you. You have carried out workshops, developed looked walks and erected information boards – all of which help you gain marks in this category of the competition.

It took your adjudicator some time to find the Ecology Park (see notes about the map and inclusion of the road number here L20846). Perhaps a brown amenity sign could direct the tourist here to this nice spot?

There is a line of rhododendron bushes that appeared to have been regularly planted on the main road near the entrance to the Ecology Park. Whilst a very attractive plant it is invasive and causing real problems by out-competing our native Irish wildlife. Indeed in Killarney National Park thousands of euros have been spent trying to manage it. Thus it is suggested that whilst these bushes are now still at a manageable size, that they are removed. Your adjudicator also thought that the invasive plant Japanese Knotweed was growing at the riverside at the start of the cascades walk – check either with your Biodiversity Officer and also www.invasivespeciesireland.com as cutting this can cause it to spread. In the UK you cannot get a mortgage on a property where this is growing in the garden as it causes such structural damage.

Roadside trees looked well – come of the stays and wooden support stalks could be removed. The native hedging in front of the concrete fencing is great and adds more natural habitats to support local wildlife.

Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:

Well done on using your own home-made compost in your planting schemes. Maybe another composter could be created at either end of the village? You have done a lot in this category of the competition including re-filling ink cartridges for printers and co-ordinate the collection and recycling of clothes.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You are working on the closed and derelict properties contacting owners for their help in maintaining their appearance. Some simple actions, such as the tidying of sandwich board signs and litter bins outside some would make a difference. Perhaps the owners of the closed Maxol garage would let you relocate a couple of planted

containers here to lift this area? The picnic bench was broken at the Ecology Park.

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

The complimentary colours of the homes in Cul Daire estate worked very well and the road surface was very smooth. There was a high standard of presentation of family homes through Lissycasey.

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

The Lissycasey mural works very well and is a lovely piece of work. Entrance signs were clean and bright in the village. The boxed hedging with the words 'LissyCasey' was noted. You mentioned that it is difficult to maintain as it is so steep. Unfortunately it is also difficult to read as it is side-on to the traffic when it should be in front of the traffic. You adjudicator radically suggests that it is either relocated or decommissioned. Floral displays were noted at arrival points. As mentioned before a small selection of shrubs may make a better impact. Few signs or posters were noted on adjudication day so well done on your efforts here to curtail illegal signage.

Concluding Remarks:

Lissycasey TidyTowns has worked hard to provide a real sense of place along your linear community. This should result in the passing motorist slowing down to appreciate the work you have put into enhancing the locality. It is suggested that you concentrate your landscaping efforts to specific areas and on planting that can be appreciated by passers-by more easily. You are surrounded by wonderful natural heritage and you have worked very hard in 2014/2015 to promote and enhance this appropriately. Your achievements as a voluntary group are to be commended – well done!