

# Tidy Towns Competition 2016

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **O'Callaghan's Mills** Ref: **1044**  
County: **Clare** Mark: **246**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **13/06/2016**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	33	34
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	30	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	36	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	22	22
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9	11
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	49	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	25	25
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	33
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>246</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

O'Callaghan's Mills is most welcome to the 2016 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your entry form with multi-year plan and map. Your map was a little hard to follow for this first-time visitor to O'Callaghan's Mills. For next year it would be useful to indicate which direction is north while perhaps showing more graphic detail. However it successfully highlights the locations where projects have been undertaken. It has clearly been a busy year for O'Callaghan's Mills and your volunteers. Your use of photos is most welcome, especially before and after photos which highlight the impact of work done (although some of the 'after' shots seem to be missing). Your plan was read with interest and contains many useful actions. It is considered that for the purposes of the contest this would be best arranged under the various competition headings. This would allow you to progress in a more even fashion. You seem to have good local participation in your activities while you have made useful connections with relevant support agencies. Your liaison with the local school this year is a very important step and well done for this. They are wished every success in the green flag application.

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

Well done on the quantity of painting and renovating that has been undertaken since last year. The effect of these works is seen clearly in your photos. The village has a spread out built environment. The Mills pub was decked out with colourful bunting for the football championships. The old blue-walled shed across the road has its roof held down with breeze blocks of concrete, which doesn't look great. Could a job be done on this building for 2017? The sign for the Mill Tavern is a part of your heritage and it would be great to see it renovated. The school is a fine building with well-kept surrounds. Repainting the entrance gates would refresh this area. The church was also well presented on adjudication day. Mature trees are a nice feature of its grounds. The Mills area seemed to be under construction at the time of adjudication, is this normally open to visitors? The little white cottage with red trim nearby is delightful. New paintwork here has enormously enhanced the streetscape. Doyle's bar has character and it is unfortunate to see it closed.

### Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The village is adorned with lush native hedges that add so much to the rural character. While pots of flowers add colour, these are best kept for windows or points of interest. Boxes of flowers on roadsides tends to have little impact. Your new flowerbeds were admired but you will see how the rose bushes are much more effective than the individual tulips in providing a more lasting effect. The vintage area adds a point of interest in this location. Baskets over the bridge add a nice dash of colour.

### Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fíadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádurtha:

From your description it would appear that you have a wide range of natural amenities on your doorstep. The adjudicator wants to see how you can raise awareness of these assets among local people so that they are cherished and appreciated. Initiating projects with the local school is a great way to start, for example by holding a nature art competition and then displaying the entries around the town. Well done on the signage at the well. You got good advice from the heritage officer to minimise intervention but then cleared away areas which (in this adjudicator's view) detracts from the appearance. The well was visited and it is a haven of birdsong and wildflowers. What a great resource were this area to be used as an outdoor classroom. Encouraging garden planting of pollinator friendly plants is a great way to encourage bees. Using your Facebook page to promote these ideas is also excellent.

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

Your school's participation in the green schools programme is an essential element of this category so do keep us updated on their progress. The installation of rainwater harvesting is an excellent way to conserve this precious resource. It is important that confusion over water charging does not dampen enthusiasm for these initiatives. Recycling is considered standard practice these days so the focus should be firmly on the 'up-cycling', reuse and minimisation aspects. You provide several good examples of this and these show how you are incorporating the waste reduction mentality into your everyday activities, keep it up! Your tale of the hens shows how one person's waste is another's resource. For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Your regular rota of litter collection and spring cleans are great ways of getting people out. A nice project, at low-cost, would be to paint field gates a uniform colour. The town was generally tidy on adjudication day while litter control was to a high standard. Some dumping was noted at the recycling station so extra vigilance is needed here. The renovation of derelict buildings has done much to create a tidy appearance in these locations.

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

Your offers of help to those who need it in maintaining their properties is central to the Tidy Towns ethos. Well done for this strong community spirit. The Doonaille estate is a fine enclave of homes with attractive shrub planting. The Tim Smythe monument is an interesting feature but the surrounds are neglected. Attractive gardens and boundary walls were admired within the estate. The Campbell Court estate does not appear to have a name at the entrance. The area was very tidily maintained on adjudication day.

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

Approach roads are generally well maintained. Do encourage people to avoid the use of chemical sprays on road verges as this is so bad for wildlife as well as human health. Some examples of this were seen en route to O'Callaghan's Mills but outside your adjudication area. New road surfacing through the town has enhanced the appearance.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

O'Callaghan's Mills is a charming rural village with a rich history. Your work in recent years has done much to enhance not only the appearance but the social fabric. Best of luck and keep up the good work.