

# Tidy Towns Competition 2016

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tubberclair** Ref: **883**  
County: **Westmeath** Mark: **281**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **05/07/2016**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2015</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2016</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	37	39
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	36	38
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	25	27
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36	38
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>281</b>

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

Welcome Tubberclair to the 2016 tidy towns competition. We are pleased to read that your dedicated committee of nine members continues to make good progress in the competition each year and this is not surprisingly given the organised approach to your work. It is great to see that you are working closely with other community groups in your village by meeting regularly with the PPN, GAA and the community games and by participating in other committees. Consider asking some of these other voluntary groups to share your workload and 'adopt' some of your projects by taking responsibility for them. We have no doubt that your approach is contributing to your success and strengthening community spirit in your village. It is noted that you enjoy good links with your neighbouring village of Glasson and that you have secured some sponsorship from businesses there. Well done also on obtaining a worker from the Westmeath Rural Development Scheme and it is assumed that you were awarded your tidy towns grant from Westmeath County Council. You are commended on working with the Green School Committee of the National School and for meeting with the School Principal several times per year. However, we would encourage you not to stop there. For 2017, we recommend that you speak to the principal about collaborating with the school children on any of the tidy towns projects that are included in your three-year plan. Schools normally like to get involved in any projects that relate to the environment, as their participation in them can be of benefit when they are working towards green flags. Your communication strategy appears to be comprehensive and well done on using both digital and traditional means of contacting people. It is heartening to read that your participation in the competition is having a positive impact locally and we urge you to continue with your good work as it is clear that significant progress is being made from year to year. Your comprehensive application form, photos and map were appreciated and thank you for your three-year tidy towns action plan as it was read with interest. However, be sure to include projects under each of the tidy towns categories as this will help you to take a balanced approach to the competition. Thank you also for copies of your correspondence with your project partners and for the church bulletins but it is not necessary to submit these each year.

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

With a total of 11 projects submitted for consideration in 2016 under this category, it was clear to the adjudicator that your tidy towns committee has been very busy! We were very impressed with the work that you have done maintaining and improving pedestrian connections to the village, specifically the public path from Auburn Cross to the Church road junction as this enables schoolchildren to walk to school. Well done also on cutting back the hedge (in November) as this also helped to improve access. We are pleased to see that you have followed the suggestion of the adjudicator in 2015 and your Community Hall looked very smart in its fresh coat of paint on adjudication day. The front boundary walls of the National School building also looked very well during our visit and we wondered if the vehicle and pedestrian entrance gates to the school are to be painted for 2017? You are commended on your work on the derelict house on Church road and for maintaining the vacant garage at the northern boundary of

Tubberclair. It is hoped that a new owner is found for this commercial property and that it returned to active use soon. The maintenance of the signage was clearly visible as all signs – particularly those that Church road junction, were clean and highly visible. It is also noted that the committee undertook improvements to the pointing of the church car park wall. We particularly liked the natural stone boundary walls that were not just found at the Church car park, but all around the village. The natural stone tower to the front of the church is interesting and it would appear that this was built at a different time than the church building, which has a render finish. The gate at the Church would benefit from paint in time for 2017 and the painted boundary wall could also do with some freshening up. The gate to the cemetery is in particularly poor condition and it is recommended that this is addressed as a priority for next year. We were also pleased to read that Westmeath County Council undertook extensive improvement roadworks to the Church road junction.

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

A number of good quality landscaping schemes could be seen in Tubberclair on adjudication day. The extensive work that has been undertaken to the landscaping beds at the Church road and the N55 junction was apparent. The recently improved natural stone-based landscaping beds on either side of the junction had a good range and diversity of plants species observed in them – and this no doubt provides for good year-round colour. The planting also helps to enhance the recently painted pump feature and the attractive stone seat that is located here. Further in, at the base of the School Ahead road sign is another natural stone faced landscaping bed which also looked quite well. We were most impressed with the large landscaping bed that could be found at the Remembrance Garden to the rear of the cemetery which had an excellent range and diversity of plant species. This mix of plants is to be commended as it is likely to make a positive contribution to the adjoining wildlife area. An attractive landscaping bed could also be seen in the car park of the Church. The bright red roses in full bloom in the planting bed beneath the village nameplate on the approach road from Lough Ree also helps to provide a positive first impression for visitors to your village. In addition to your work to the planting beds throughout the village, you are commended on planting the 20 m of native hedge along the N55 and maintaining the green verge from Tubberclair to Glasson and from Auburn Cross in the National School.

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

Well done to the committee for identifying a number of projects under this category and we are pleased to see that you followed the suggestion of the adjudicator in 2015 by carrying out a bat survey in your village. We note that these results were disappointing but this information is particularly valuable. First of all, you need to retain these results for monitoring purposes going forward. Secondly, we recommend that you speak to the representative from bat conservation and ask for his / her advice on how to attract bats to your village. For example, can you identify an area in your village (e.g. such as wood land with an abundance of mature trees) that they are most likely to inhabit? Then, you need to identify what needs to be done to help you attract bats and grow your bat population. This could involve planting vegetation that provides a food source for them or providing bat boxes that they might live in. Once these projects are identified and complete, allow some time to pass for the bat population to grow and then undertake the survey again – this will reveal whether your wildlife projects have been successful or not. It would be great if you could also involve the school children in this project as it would be a very effective way of raising environmental awareness and educating the schoolchildren about bats and their habitats. Well done also on establishing a tree trail on the Church Road (complete with names and information plaques) and we look forward to seeing these mature and expand in the years ahead. It is noted that Lough Ullord is your wildlife area and you are commended on providing an information sign about wildlife that can be seen from the community centre car park. However, it is noted that this is private land and we wondered if another survey is planned for your wildlife area that seems to be located beside the Remembrance garden? We were interested to read that the road verge on the N55 from the School to the GAA ground is considered to be an ecologically friendly zone and we wondered about what wildlife and birdlife can be found here? Please let us know in 2017. Well done also on planting the native hedgerow along the N55.

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

It is great to see that the new committee is coming to grips with this category as a total of 15 projects are presented in your application for 2016. Well done on engaging with the environmental awareness Officer in Westmeath County Council and the public survey on sustainable waste and resource management is an excellent idea – we look forward to seeing the results in 2017. Forming a network with the other tidy towns groups to exchange ideas is also a very positive approach. You are commended on the many practical actions that you identify which will help you to minimise waste and use resources more effectively. They include sharing bins with other groups and segregating waste, using your own tools for tidy towns projects, growing your own plants and sourcing materials such as mulch locally and sharing resources such as the Hall. Don't forget that other options are possible such as harvesting rainwater for watering your plants, making your own compost from grass and plant cuttings and reusing timber or waste materials for your landscaping or wildlife projects (e.g. for making plant / window boxes or bird / bat boxes). It is very encouraging to see that the School is also undertaking very worthwhile projects such as using water-saving devices in the toilets, using local bus services to access schools, collecting and segregating litter and providing bicycle racks. Given these actions are now underway, we encourage you now to consider monitoring what impact they are having on local behaviour. For example, how much water (per week, month or year) are the devices in the school and the hall saving? How many children are walking or cycling to school on a regular basis (and hence avoiding car trips and associated fuel use)? By recording this information, you can demonstrate that these actions are having the desired effect and behaviour towards resource use is changing for the better. Please keep us updated in 2017.

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

The standard of litter control observed in Tubberclair was very high and your committee is congratulated on this excellent performance. Apart from a single discarded drink can be spotted on the church road, no litter could be found anywhere. It is noted that you undertake litter patrols along the N55 from Auburn Cross. These patrols are clearly proving to be very effective. Given that the N55 is a particularly busy road, it is quite an achievement to keep the section of it that runs through your village litter free. Well done on taking part in the annual spring clean up and for sharing resources with the Kilkenny West group. There was no reference in your application to the projects that you undertake to raise awareness of litter control but it is assumed that the school is involved in these efforts - particularly as they conduct their own litter collections of the school grounds and on the church road. We note from your application that you are continually maintain roadsides, footpaths and verges by spraying and removing weeds. This work was evident during adjudication as weed could not be seen.

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

The standard of presentation of individual houses in the village was exceptionally good during adjudication day and we heartily commend all property owners and residents for a job well done. It was clear to the adjudicator that everyone takes great pride in the neat and tidy appearance of Tubberclair and that they are willing to work hard to achieve this. Well done and keep up the good work.

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

The adjudicator would like to heartily congratulate the tidy towns committee on the excellent work that has undertaken to establish a grass verge pedestrian route from the northern extremity of your village to Glasson along the N55. This is an excellent project as it demonstrates that the tidy towns competition is not simply about improving the appearance of villages but it also involves making them better and safer places to live. Well done and we would strongly encourage you to continue to identify projects that can make a real difference to the lives of local people as this will help to boost local support and convince everyone that your work is essential. The standard of presentation of approach roads in the village was noticeably high on adjudication day due to neatly trimmed verges, clean and visible signage and weed free roadsides.

**Concluding Remarks:**

Your committee is commended on another great performance and tidy towns competition for 2016. We look forward to seeing further progress when we return next year.