

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Leixlip** Ref: **376**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **291**
Category: **G** Date(s): **11/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	52
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	36
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	33
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35
TOTAL MARK	450	291

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014 and congratulations on your 52 years of unbroken participation. We have noted that your committee of fourteen people hold monthly meetings throughout the year and have weekly work task forces between Spring and Autumn. It is obvious that you are well organised and have strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools. You receive support from local businesses and public bodies and it appears that your work is well recognised and highly appreciated by all within your community, so well done on your efforts to date. The trailer advertisement is a novel idea which I am sure works well and could be taken up by other communities. Congratulations on winning the best float in the St. Patrick's Day parade. The active involvement with local schools is commendable and it is great to see children involved in planting schemes and to learn of the school's support for your activities by raising funds. Compliments are also due for involvement of youth in your works. The special needs project is an interesting initiative. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention and for including photographs in your submission. It is a well prepared document. We have noted in the plan the projects listed for implementation in 2014, 2015 and 2016 and wish you well with these ventures. We noted your signs at the church car park encouraging people to join your work group; it is a good promotion. Many thanks for your very positive comments on the benefits gained from participation in the competition. We are pleased to note that your work has contributed to raising awareness of historical and heritage buildings and their preservation.

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

We have noted the 15 actions listed under this heading and comments on some of these are included throughout this report. There was an overall impression of neatness throughout Leixlip. The cemetery was neat and tidy and the provision of recycling bins is a good idea. We noted the nice boundary wall and the painted capping. We also noted the painted junction boxes throughout Leixlip and the litter bins painted to resemble pints of Guinness. The mural on the fine library building was also admired. The Confey railway station looked well. Tree planting at the Council offices and around other buildings on Captain's Hill is impressive. It would be good to have a similar effect on the adjacent shopping complex and car park to soften the hard appearance here. St. Charles Junior School in Confey is looking well and the trees are well established. St. Charles Borromeo church was well planted. Tuthills and the entire surrounding area looked very well. We admired the lovely terrace of stone houses at The Mall. St. Mary's (Col) looks very well; the gates and railings are well maintained. French estate building needs painting and there were some weeds on the roof. Containers on poles and the bridge were to a high standard and adjacent buildings in this area looked well. We noted the ongoing restoration work on the stone wall at Pound Street. The car park at the rear of the Loft Restaurant is unusual because of the several terraces. There were good planting schemes, some litter noted and the area at the clothes bank was fine. The Old Hill steps had established wildflowers. The Church of Our Lady of Nativity was looking fine. Scoil Cearbhal ÓDalaigh had three Green Flags

flying. The car park was nice and clean and there was no litter to be seen. Maxol service station was fine. The Garda Station looked well and had good planting. Colaiste Chiaráin is a special needs school and had a Green Flag as did Scoil Mhuire and Scoil Bhríde. Leixlip GAA complex was fine. We noted the ongoing improvement works on the Salmon Leap Inn. The Fire Station is impressive and there is lovely planting on Mill lane beside the station. The attractive terraced stone and brick cottages had window boxes galore. Springfield Hotel looked very well and we admired the display outside the ESB site.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Under this heading you have listed 15 actions, some of which will receive comment here and in other headings of this report. The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and you have some great examples in Leixlip on the approach roads especially at Hewlett Packard (HP) and in some residential estates. In planting new trees it is best to use a single species on a road or street such as the line of lime trees at HP for uniformity. Also, it is important to ensure that the base of new trees is maintained free of weeds and grass and also flower beds to ensure early establishment. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the tree stems can get damaged from the ties or stake. This is something that is particularly noticeable in some residential estates. We admired the mature trees and the hanging baskets on the stone wall boundary of the church site. Guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible. Otherwise, we encourage you to plant directly into the ground to save on the task of watering. Efforts at reducing watering tasks can help you gain marks under sustainability. It is better to have fewer well planted containers than a large number in which the quality of plants is inferior. There is a perception that more and more plant containers will gain additional marks and that is not the case. In fact we feel that you have at this stage perhaps too much emphasis on plant container displays which each year is adding more work for you with little extra benefit in terms of marks. For example, containers on the lower pedestrian access of river bank at Rye Bridge are unnecessary and inappropriate. The emphasis here should be on the natural environment of the river; rusty railings here are more important for your attention. On the hard surfaced island adjacent to the church, plant containers are being used as bollards. If planting is desired here can the planting be made directly into the ground? Similarly, at Gallivans on the Celbridge Road junction, the plant containers make little impact as tarmac dominates. A permanent border would be better and easier to maintain. A dead tree nearby should be removed. If considering more seasonal flowers the use of permanent planting including herbaceous perennials for floral displays is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming. The plant containers on the wall outside the church are to a high standard and window boxes were admired adjacent to the Barber Shop

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

You have a rich natural area surrounding your community and it is important to promote an awareness of its many traits and to map these habitats. From your list of 10 actions under this heading it is clear that you have a good understanding of what is required. You are fortunate to have the River Liffey flowing through the town and to have St. Catherine's Park (Liffey Valley) on the eastern boundary. We admired the attractive entrance near the Fire Station.

Rye River Walk restoration project was fine and the Rye Valley wildflower scheme opposite the church was spectacular. The information boards look very well; the pathway and seating were very inviting. We noted the new steps down to the Scouts Den and admired the wildflower meadow on Green Lane.

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

This category is becoming more and more important and the available marks are now increased to 50 to highlight the need for communities to address the issues involved in tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. We note that you have attended lectures on sustainability to learn more about this matter and commend you for the effort. In regard to pruning material we are intrigued with the initiative of feeding the leafy material to the local goat herd. Goats were commonly used for hedge maintenance in the past so this is a good initiative and it helps everybody. The participation of nine schools in the Green Flag programme is impressive and we note that seven actually achieved Green Flag status, some even on their 4th flag. Well done to all pupils and teachers. Even though Leixlip is an expanding community, we note that you do not have bring bank facilities which makes it difficult to assess the extent of recycling carried out in your community. Do you have information on the amount of clothes being recycled from the three clothes banks in Leixlip and the green waste collections at the Wonderful Barn? Thank you for the information that 18 tons of material were collected in the WEEE operation at which you assisted. Well done on the success of the use of Collinstown Industrial estate for shredding and composting green waste which you use for mulching. In addition to this impressive list of actions, there are a number of other measures that your town can consider. One third of our waste is organic in nature, such as grass clippings. You can avoid collecting mown grass by more frequent cutting and using mulching mowers which shred the clippings and facilitate faster decomposition. In regard to water usage, self-watering hanging baskets are a help in reducing the amount of water used and also the task of watering. Other waste minimisation projects might include working with retailers to cut down on packaging, reminding people to re-use shopping bags, discouraging junk mail, encouraging the re-use of water bottles and coffee mugs at school and at work. In response to an over use of chemicals for weed control, many useful products of the past are no longer available and therefore communities are encouraged to use other means such as hoeing to maintain weeds. In some cases, allowing wildflowers to develop is an acceptable alternative. These activities will highlight the fact that you are focussing on this category and when you develop more projects in the future your marks will increase.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Leixlip is a very tidy community and we admired the various campaigns undertaken by you to keep it that way. The 10 actions you list are testament to your very active campaign and from our observations, they seem to be working. Some litter was noted at Confey GAA, at the railway station and at the junction with Celbridge Road, Green Lane and in some residential estates. French estates building has a large weed on the roof that needs attention. However, overall, these are minor and are proof of your vigilance. Your work on the Salmon Leap Inn is a major project that will reap rewards because of its prominent location.

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

Your actions listed under this heading focus on ways of assisting communities to improve their estates. The Tidy Estates competition is a wonderful way of motivating people to improve their houses, gardens and estates. We admired the flower beds at Sycamore View. The large Glendale Estate had fine mature trees especially at the entrance. Glendale Meadows was well maintained, a nice sign, and seating and the range of young and old trees was a delight. The pole holding the sign for the ramp needs cleaning. As mentioned under Landscaping, we advise that there is no necessity for plant containers to be placed on grass – it is better to put plants directly into the ground. The open space was well maintained and the wide roadside margin is ideal for the large trees planted there. River Forest estate had nice houses, a well screened wall and we admired the trees here. Some minor litter was also seen here. The Avondale estate is well planted and maintained which shows care and attention. We liked the name stone. There is a tendency by some communities to plant flowers under trees where in fact they require more watering and feeding and cause disturbance to tree roots. Flower beds are best located in open areas where they can more fully avail of light away from competing roots of trees. Tree ties and stakes as mentioned under Landscaping above are in need of attention in this and some other estates. Knockaulin estate entrance was fine except for the trees which were topped. We were also disappointed to see even more severe examples topped trees at the entrance to Leixlip Park estate where in fact the pruning is so severe that the trees should now be removed. The practice of topping trees is not recommended as it encourages more branching at lower levels and leads to a premature death of trees. We noted flower planting and well screened walls at Castletown estate. There were fine mature trees here as well; some that are dead should be removed. Forest Park, Elton Court, Ryevale Lawns and Cedar Park were all well presented. Rinnawade is a pleasant estate and has good specimen trees. Glen Easton has a lovely entrance and we enjoyed the wildflowers on the approach

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

A major feature of the approach to Leixlip is the roundabouts which are developed to a very high standard. The Celbridge Road was well planted and maintained especially in the vicinity of Hewlett Packard. Some dead vegetation opposite the HP entrance looks unsightly. It is assumed that this is the result of weedkiller and the intention is to replant this section. We admired the "Horse" feature on the Kilmacredock Roundabout. The circular bed with the old pump at the junction with Celbridge Road was noted. On the approach at Confey, the "Welcome" sign was very impressive. The nice stone wall of the GAA complex was well maintained. We admired the flowers outside the entrance and poplar trees on the boundary with the railway line. Some weeds were noted at the base of the wall. To the right of the cemetery, a rusty gate needs attention as does the sign for "Cycling Prohibited". The ivy and Pyracantha against the wall on captain's Hill is very effective. We noted the ongoing improvement work on the stone wall along by the Pound..