

# Tidy Towns Competition 2017

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Laragh & Glendalough** Ref: **260**  
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **271**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **10/07/2017**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2016</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2017</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	33	34
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	36	37
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30	30
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	29	30
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>271</b>

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

You are very welcome to the 2017 SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition and we thank you for continued participation in the competition and for all the work carried out by Laragh/Glendalough Tidy Towns over the last year. It is good to see you are well supported and have established links with a wide range of organisations to further your aims such as St. Kevin's National School, St. Kevin's Church, Wicklow County Council, Laragh Community Garden, OPW, Laragh GAA, CWNOP, Glendalough and District Development Association, Wicklow Mountains National Park, Wicklow Uplands Council, PURE, SOLAS, U.C.D., Glens of Lead and Beechwood Residents Association. The Monastic City of Glendalough has become a major tourist attraction in the Eastern Region in recent years which attracts large numbers of visitors particularly during the summer months. No doubt this can create pressures locally with regard to car parking issues, litter, overnight accommodation etc. The overall presentation of Laragh/Glendalough is therefore, important to the economic/social development of the local Community but it is also crucial in dealing with these pressures and retaining the continued attractiveness of your village area as a major Tourist hub in the Country. In this context, it is good that you continue to foster strong linkages to local businesses with the opportunity to provide for mutual supports and benefits. Your means of communication with local stakeholders is varied and it is good that you have strong links to the Senior classes in the local St. Kevin's N.S. to explain your ongoing work. It is noted that you have enclosed a 3 -Year Tidy Towns Plan with your Application Form and it would be good to develop this further with reference to projects/proposals and timelines across all the Competition categories with sustainable Tourism as a central focus. We used the sketch maps submitted with your Application Form and found them to be of some help in finding the various sites of interest. However, the maps were quite faint which made it difficult to identify specific items. It would be good to provide a clear Tidy Towns map showing those projects completed during the year clearly marked, together with a numbered legend and completion dates etc. Perhaps this could be considered for next year as it assists in the adjudication process greatly.

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

The new bus shelter constructed using natural oak timber grown in Laragh was greatly admired. Particular note was made of the use of timber dowels in its construction. It will be good when a seat is installed here for bus users. The closely clipped beech hedge along the road beside the new bus shelter was an important feature here. The Lynam's Hotel, Wicklow Heather Restaurant and Celtic Crafts premises were well presented. The planters outside Ann's Coffee shop have worsened in condition and could be replaced. The frontage at McCoy's Convenient Store was admired and we particularly liked the petrol pumps set back into the stone wall feature to the front. The Brockagh Centre was visited and the imposing building and carparks here looked well - this is a great facility. Saint Kevin's National School was visited and the tidy presentation of the school grounds was noted - the stone walls at the entrance to the school were particularly admired. The newer extensions to the school are very much in keeping with the character of the old school building. The vegetable garden beside the basketball area was growing well. The

new safe off-road path for schoolchildren was noted. However, the road leading up to the school is in poor condition and is probably due for resurfacing. The set-back bell-shaped entrance to the Parochial House and Parish Office was admired as was the access to the building flanked by an abundance of yellow flowers and tall trees - this area really was most attractive. Saint Kevin's Church in Laragh (a fine McCarthy designed building erected in the mid. 19th Century) was visited and the well-tended grounds here were particularly admired - with various impressive features notably a Labyrinth garden, Meditation gardens, stone inscribed monuments etc. We wish you well with the proposed improvement works to be carried out in the Graveyard at the Glendalough Monastic City.

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

The triangular area of open space fronting the Glendalough Green premises was visited and was well presented. The planting of fruit trees on this site was noted. The Central feature of this open space is well constructed and enhances the surrounding area. However, the inscriptions on the circular bronze plaque have faded and are now difficult to read. A section of the perimeter capping stone has also become loose – some repair work may be needed here. The signage in this area is generally good but some poles would benefit from painting as would the timber seat beside Glendalough Green premises.

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

Your Wildlife Area is progressing and the native trees planted during National Tree Week are establishing well. Unfortunately, it was not possible to find your Community Garden but it is understood that it has developed into a great local amenity. We are intrigued to note that Woodpeckers have been inhabiting the woodland south of Laragh for the last 5 years – perhaps bird-spotting visits to the area for schoolchildren and visitors could be arranged with the assistance of local ornithologists – it would be great to catch a glimpse of this very rare bird species in Ireland.

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

It is noted that recycling and composting are to the fore in Laragh/Glendalough the local National School and Churches are very active in this regard as are local shops and at the Community Garden. Your group might consider further initiatives under this category for future years such as sustainable energy and transport actions e.g. car-pooling and walk to school initiatives, cycle touring/rental facilities, possible new off-road tourist/cycle routes in the area, encouraging the development of small solar farms on appropriate secluded sites, the use of solar panels on roofs, heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by households/businesses etc. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website has good information in relation to the development of Better Energy Communities. Grant funding may also be available to provide energy efficiency upgrades for community and commercial facilities.

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

Bearing in mind the significant visitor numbers and through traffic noted in Laragh/Glendalough on the day of adjudication, the control of litter was generally very good. This is no doubt due to the involvement of individual residents who have taken responsibility for specific designated areas. We note that since the 29th May you have a SOLAS worker available who will supplement your monthly litter patrols.

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

Beechwood, Brockagh and Mountain View estates were visited and the standard of presentation of these estates and open spaces and other residential properties in the area was generally good. Granite bilingual name-stones with floral surrounds identifying individual estates were not readily visible and if not in place, perhaps these features could be considered for the future. The restriction of car parking on the open space area near McCoy's Convenience Store, would also enhance the appearance of the entrance to this estate.

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

Approach Roads to Laragh and Glendalough are presented to a high standard with roadside margins well maintained and no evidence of herbicide usage or excessive commercial signage. Vigilance is needed to ensure that the strong growth of hedgerows and trees during the summer months, does not affect the visibility of road signage. The cleanliness of road signage was generally good. It is noted that you have acquired 3 New Granite 'Welcome to Laragh' Stones for the approach roads to be installed shortly- we wish you well with this work.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It was a real pleasure to visit Laragh/Glendalough - it is such a scenic area richly steeped in history with great future potential in the Competition, which is particularly important having regard to the increasing popularity of the area for Tourists. It is great that you have an active Committee committed to presenting Laragh/Glendalough to the highest possible standard and we hope you find the comments in the report helpful and wish you well with your future endeavours.