

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Lisacul** Ref: **795**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **300**
Category: **A** Date(s): **11/06/2017**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2016 | Mark Awarded 2017 |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Community Involvement & Planning | 60 | 42 | 43 |
| Built Environment and Streetscape | 50 | 35 | 36 |
| Landscaping and Open Spaces | 50 | 41 | 41 |
| Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities | 50 | 37 | 38 |
| Sustainable Waste and Resource Management | 50 | 18 | 20 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 61 | 63 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 50 | 26 | 26 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 50 | 33 | 33 |
| TOTAL MARK | 450 | 293 | 300 |

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2017. You have participated for approximately 27 years and feel that Lisacul has improved immensely over that period because of the various projects as well as the social benefits of working together. Your committee of ten members have the support of another seven volunteers and approximately four more from other groups such as the GAA. You are most active from March to August having a weekly clean-up. Apart from the AGM you hold approximately four meetings per year. Roscommon County Council, Leader Partnership and the Rural Social Scheme have all been helpful in assisting with your projects. You have attended various workshops about environmental improvements. For communications, you use the parish bulletin, newspapers and public meetings as well as a Facebook page which now has 303 likes. A representative of your committee sits on the Board of Management of the national school and many young people help with clean-ups and fundraising events. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention. May we suggest that next year, please make the project numbers larger and in a sequence, that makes them easier to find. Thank you for the 3-year plan which is a revision of a plan done in 2011. While the plan sets out suggested projects for each criterion it is short on targets; it is not possible to achieve everything in one year and it is good to aim for targets over a period of years. We also noted the Biodiversity Action Plan which describes the various habitats in and around Lisacul and lists appropriate actions to take in conservation and promotion of biodiversity and that document has a timescale.

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

This section deals with public buildings and structures which usually mean the local church and school. We were surprised therefore to see that the largest building in Lisacul is an indoor ball alley. We have never seen a building like this before; it was a complete surprise, especially in such a rural location. We understand that it is a covering of an outdoor handball alley but it was not open for us to explore. The building looks very well and despite its size, it is not so prominent, perhaps because it is off the main road. We saw the cladding work underway during our visit. The most significant building in your community is the lovely well-painted church at the crossroads set in delightfully landscaped grounds. Further out the road is the well-painted Community Centre which resembles the style of old parochial halls in many parts of the country. We noted the area for the creche/playschool to the side and the steel container on the other side which was mentioned by last year's adjudicator. We note you plan to clad the sides with timber. An alternative would be to paint murals of your local folk history or some environmental theme. On the way we liked the colourful treatment of the uninhabited building. Creator's Pub is a long distance from the village; it is in good condition. The school looks very new but we didn't see a date beside the name, something which was familiar to us on old school buildings, especially those built in the 19th century. It seems devoid of any tree or shrub planting or even window boxes, but perhaps they would be a problem to have watered during the school holidays. However, we advise that a tree planting scheme be devised, especially for the front section. Has any consideration been given

to providing an area for a school garden. The small island in the turnaround at the gate is ideal for an attractive planting scheme that would give year-round interest. We were surprised that no other shops were to be seen in the village. The new cemetery on the hill seems to have many graves already. It is surrounded by a concrete block wall. May we suggest that you plant climbing plants such as ivy against the wall to soften its hard appearance. The old cemetery was visited and it seems quite interesting; it is well-maintained and we enjoyed the wildflowers.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Your emphasis under this section is to continue providing more flower beds and plant containers. While you have mentioned planting hawthorn in certain places, we feel that you should focus more on tree planting and climbing plants and reduce the amount of flower beds. The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and they should be the priority. There are trees in some gardens, the tall poplars behind the church, some hawthorn trees in the hedgerows and a few specimens in the grass margins near the village centre and the school. But the trees in the grass margins from the school to the village are mixed species, some are ornamental and for those reasons, they are not making sufficient impact. In planting new trees, it is best to use a single species on a road or street for uniformity and in your case, oak trees would be the first choice if the soil is suitable. Alternatively, ash trees would look well but because of disease, we cannot plant them anymore. Other alternatives would have been, maple, lime or birch. We suggest that this line of trees be evaluated by a horticulturist to determine what species is performing the best and then set about planting more of those species. The existing trees can remain until the new ones establish. The grass margins provide an opportunity to encourage wildflowers by leaving strips uncut. Some communities even place signs explaining why they do that. It would have significant savings in terms of time spent on grass cutting. The boundary on both sides of the road from the cemetery to the village is a concrete block wall. To stone face it would be very expensive and time consuming. A simpler and inexpensive alternative is to plant climbing plants such as ivy in front of the wall and in a few years' time the wall will be green and contribute significantly to environmental improvement by providing food and shelter for wildlife. Your proposals to plant hawthorn hedges are very worthy. You can buy these as 'Quicks' at little cost and some growers in Co. Meath have thousands of quicks for sale each year. The box with flowers under the 80kph sign does not add any improvement and if removed, would not be missed.

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

The updated biodiversity plan sets out actions under this heading many of which you are already pursuing. Well done on receiving the 'Best Pollinator Cemetery' in the county a few months ago. The Kilroon Golden Mile is a valuable route for health actions and environmental studies. We admired the sign/poster at Kilroon old graveyard on its history, the Golden Mile, some facts about hedgerows and the pictures of birds in the area. We also admired the sign/poster on Bats and pollination. It is good that these signs are not being damaged as can sometimes happen in isolated areas. With 18 actions listed under this heading you have demonstrated a good knowledge of the aims of this criterion so well done on this effort. Nature is all around you in Lisacul. We were thrilled with the wildflowers in the field beside the Community Centre. Being right beside the creche, it can be enjoyed by the children. Last year's adjudicator mentioned the school having a greater involvement in some of these actions, especially the surveys. We would like to reinforce that advice; it would be particularly helpful for achieving the biodiversity green flag.

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. The ten actions listed in your application include many recycling projects such as clothes, unwanted items, junk art etc. as well as encouraging people to make better use of the rural link route, promotion of energy efficiency (such as upgrading heating systems and insulating the hand ball alley) and some other ideas. Other measures for you to consider include the following.... 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, (we note the collection of paper bags for donating to charity shops), 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:

You undertake regular clean-ups, weeding, removal of fly posters, tidying the graveyard, cleaning signs and painting posts and the collected waste is sorted and disposed of by Roscommon County Council. Well, this programme is working well and we are pleased to state that we did not find any litter or untidiness during our visit so well done.

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

Your comments on Lisacul Manor estate are noted and it is great to see some improvements taking place on this fine estate although the grass in the garden of the first house was uncut, perhaps it is not yet occupied. An

unfinished estate is located at the crossroads and we hope it is completed soon. The Larches is a nice little estate. Most of the private houses in Lisacul are looking very well and the residents take pride in the way they maintain their garden.

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

All approaches to the village conveyed an impression of a caring society and one that has great pride in their community. The signs were clean, the roads looked well, the grass was well maintained. The view of the surroundings was delightful. We have already suggested some means of 'greening' the concrete block wall which we hope you will consider.

Concluding Remarks:

It was our first visit to Lisacul and it was great to see such a clean and tidy village. Well done on your achievements and we hope this report provides some guidance for your future projects.