

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: Leixlip	Ref: 376
County: Kildare	Mark: 321
Category: G	Date(s): 26/06/2018

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	53	54
Streetscape & Public Places	50	38	39
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	39	40
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	36	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	21	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	38
TOTAL MARK	450	312	321

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Leixlip Léim an Bhradáin chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Leixlip Tidy Town Association is very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2018, your 56th year entering the competition. Congratulations on your Gold Medal win in 2017. It is good to see you are making great progress in the competition. Thank you for your very comprehensive application and submission prepared for this year's entry to the Competition. The map and legend included with your submission was very clear and easy to read and assisted greatly in navigating around the village area. The front cover of your submission was enjoyed, especially the couple of verses of Tidy Towns themed poetry and image of the Collector's House. There is no doubt a budding poet laureate is in your midst. Your logo 'Meitheal' is a fitting tribute to the memory your former long serving member Mr. Conor O'Brien who no doubt has left a lasting legacy and ethos with your Association of 'coming together to help each other'. You have an active Committee of 12 members and 80 volunteers on your text alert scheme who can be called upon to undertake tasks as part of your work schedule, as and when required. You hold monthly committee meetings and gather to undertake works on Mondays and Saturdays between Spring and Autumn during the year. You are supported by a range of local organisations and businesses and the support you receive from the citizens of Leixlip is rightly cherished. You are to be commended for your showing in the 2017 IBAL survey. There is no doubt that the activities undertaken by Leixlip Tidy Towns Association over the year has helped to secure your status of 'Cleaner than European Norms'. You utilise the Text Alert Scheme to keep in touch with volunteers – this is an easy and very effective means of communication. Your engagement with social media and local papers and radio allows you to reach a wider audience. You are wished every success in the 'Ireland's Best Kept' competition and no doubt you will work hard to achieve success here. You employ a variety of means to recruit new members and publicise your activities such as the National Spring Clean, Community Noticeboard, issuing Hi-Viz jackets with Tidy Towns Logo to cyclists and walkers, running a Leixlip Festival Stand and entry in the St Patrick's Day Parade. The locally based company Intel are to be congratulated for their ongoing support and engagement with your activities – the recent factory tour provided a great opportunity for members to see the complex world of silicon technology at first hand. Social events are important to foster engagement with the local community and your Gold Medal Celebrations night appears to have been a great success with large numbers attending. The Church and Parish Centre also assist greatly with your fund-raising activities. You have established strong links with young people and local schools and your dedicated school liaison officer assists you with this important work. Your flagship project this year is the painting of a mural on the façade of the Collector's House along the Canal. It is evident that the leadership role that Leixlip Tidy Towns Association has played over the years has made Leixlip a better and more pleasant place to live.

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

It has been a number of year since Leixlip was visited and it was good to see that the historic core of this important

heritage village remains largely unchanged. Leixlip Main Street is presented to a good standard with many of the building and shopfront facades appropriately displayed. The section of the Main Street set back from the road known as the Mall with residential properties was particularly admired. St. Mary's Church is a highlight as is the Salmon Leap Inn. Heritage signs provided wonderful information for the visitor and were generally very clean and well presented. The many floral displays on shopfronts and on the bridges etc. add vibrancy and colour to the streetscape. Murphy's of Leixlip is well presented however, it would be good to remove the Christmas lighting and advertising window stickers here. You are making good progress with the Shopfront Improvement Campaign with a number of premises taking the lead and others to follow. The works undertaken at the newly painted Old ESB premises was admired although the banner sign attached to the façade for Leixlip Manor Hotel here is too large and intrusive. The new Aldi store fits in very well in its surrounding streetscape and is a prime example of successful integration of architectural styles in a heritage context. It is good to note a Conservation Management Plan has been carried out on the boathouse at Leixlip Castle and the securing and repair of this important heritage structure is near at hand. The footpaths in places along the Main Street are very narrow and with the high traffic volumes, noise and air pollution this can be disconcerting and uncomfortable for pedestrians. This can detract from the visitor experience and it was wondered whether there were plans in the future to build an Inner Relief Road to deal with this or are there any other possible solutions? It is noted that there are a number of unoccupied premises in the village which is a shame and no doubt you are making great efforts to improve the situation which is largely outside of your control. This is an issue causing blight in many villages and it is hoped that these wonderful heritage properties can be brought back into use in the near future. It was noted that the roof of one of the properties on Main Street has now been breached so urgent action is now required. The work of the improvement of Confey Library and Confey Cemetery walls was noted- well done to all involved here.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The many welcome beds and brightly painted commemorative seats and features such as the colourful cart at the Garda Station were enjoyed. The 'Judges are coming' signs were quite amusing and no doubt are very effective in keeping residents on their toes. The landscaping scheme at Captain's Hill with the brightly coloured seat has enhanced the corner site here. The Kilmacredock Roundabout and the large planting bed nearby at Easton Road as you state require ongoing maintenance and the horse, made from recycled horseshoes, is an interesting feature on the approach to the Town. The Church car park was visited and the mulching of the perimeter margin to clean up the edge, here has been effective and the car park and environs looked neat and tidy. The planters behind the bollards along the main road at the Church also enhanced the presentation of this area.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

Leixlip is fortunate to have so many amazing natural amenities on it's door step such as the River Liffey Valley, the Rye Water walkway and the Royal Canal corridor. You have made good use of these amenities and the Linear Park and riverside walk at the back of the Courtyard Hotel provides stunning views over the Liffey and it's confluence with the Rye water. The Rye River Walk from Distillery Lane to the Main Street was visited and the newly planted borders and new railway sleeper edging installed here were admired. The tranquillity of this amenity pathway as it passes through wooded areas and natural vegetation teaming with wildlife so close to the village, is a magnificent heritage asset to be protected. The designation of this area as a Biodiversity Park is appropriate. The Wildlife Information signage here was particularly well presented. It was good to see that repair works have now been carried out at the Commemorative Garden along the walk and this area was neat and tidy. You are dealing with invasive species and are also reserving areas for wildflower meadows. The Leixlip Wildflower Bed under the trees at Greenlane opposite the Garda Station has established very well and is a real asset to this area. The meadow area adjoining the Mass Steps is also establishing well. The lavender bed planted for bees at the Confey Church was admired both for it's visual impact and pollinator value. The preparation of a North Kildare Trail Map and the holding of guided tours of the Royal Canal are worthwhile projects which fit in well with this category

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

It was great to read about the new 'Solar for Schools Initiative' which aims to reduce energy consumption in schools through the use of solar panels. This type of initiative is important as it helps to reduce fossil fuel dependence and CO2 emissions and can be extended and replicated throughout the country. The support of Leixlip Tidy Towns Association for this initiative is applauded. Your hosting of the Voice recycling workshop creates awareness of the do's and don't's of recycling thereby reducing the level of contamination of waste. The recycled Children's Benches were a welcome colourful addition to the Greenlane open space. The Roadside Library idea is a very creative re-use of an office cabinet and it will be interesting to see how well it is used. Well done on the 'little treasure' project to convert an antique litter bin into a floral display. Waste plastic as an environmental contaminant is a major problem and your involvement with the Sick of Plastic Day helps to raise awareness of this issue. For next year you could consider further initiatives under this category such as promoting the use of low carbon vehicles, pursuing the installation of additional electric car charge point(s) in the village and extending cycle parking facilities. The possible development of greenways and cycle routes in the area could be investigated, where this is feasible. The further promotion of grant aid for the installation of wall and attic insulation on older building stock, the greater use of solar panels on roofs and heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by households/businesses is a worthwhile initiative to consider. The greater use of water butts for the watering of private gardens and public floral displays during the Summer period might also be further encouraged. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website has good information in relation to the development of Better Energy Communities.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your adjudicator had the opportunity to visit your flagship project this year which was the artistic renewal of the

facade of an important heritage building located on the banks of the Canal - called the Collector's House. In recent years there was a major problem with graffiti and vandalism here and the building no doubt was attracting anti-social behaviour and had become an eyesore. However, the work carried out by Leixlip Tidy Towns in this regard has been transformative and the building has got a new lease of life and hopefully it will be secured for the future. In time it may be possible to arrange for its full restoration perhaps as a Visitor Centre and tearooms along the Canal blueway. Well done to all concerned with this project. Picnic benches have been installed in the vicinity of the House which are a welcome addition. Well done to the Intel volunteers who painted the fence at the Louisa Apartments and the Matt Goff Bridge. In general, there was an absence of litter in Leixlip and road signs were clean and well maintained. Utility cabinets are a particular feature of Leixlip as so many of them are well camouflaged with artistic murals which enhance their appearance. The utility cabinets at Accommodation Road and at Forest Park were admired. It is good to note that the litter problem in Leixlip is diminishing over time due in part to ongoing awareness campaigns.

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

It is good to note that all the main housing estates in Leixlip have their own Residents Associations and are in a position to engage contractors to maintain their estates. In general, the housing estates in Leixlip are presented to a high standard with well presented entrances, good roads surfaces, closely cut open spaces and well-tended street trees, margins and footpaths. Congratulations to the residents of Avondale Estate for winning the best kept estate in Kildare. Avondale Estate was superbly presented with flowers providing colour around the base of street trees and utility cabinets painted. At Glendale estate the well maintained open space along the stream was admired as was the artistically painted junction box. At Easton Meadows an attractive piece of sculpture at the entrance could be enhanced with a good quality planting scheme at its base. Loughnamona Park is generally well maintained although it was not readily clear why the car park entrances were closed off. At Castletown estate the namestone and planting at the entrance were admired. At Ryevale Abbey/ Lawns there are a number of dead young trees along Main road. At River Forest and Woodside estate there is an opportunity to create an extensive wildflower meadow along the boundary of the open space which stretches towards the entrance to Confey College.

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

You have made great efforts in recent years to improve the appearance of the approaches to Leixlip along its main approach roads, particularly those sections not regularly maintained by TII. This work is bearing fruit and the presentation of all the main approach roads is to a very high standard. Roundabouts are well landscaped and margins are appropriately maintained and road surfaces and markings are generally good. The new Leixlip name signs are high quality and reflect the heritage importance of the Town. Some inappropriate advertising signage was noted at Ralph Square, presumably this can be dealt with as part of your 3 - Year Plan. There is a dead mature tree overhanging the road at Captains Hill near the Leixlip House Hotel. The daisy flower bed along the base of the wall at Easton Road was greatly admired.

Concluding Remarks:

Leixlip has much to offer the visitor and there is great potential to further develop and improve access to its wonderful natural amenities. You are wished well in your future endeavours.