

# Tidy Towns Competition 2019

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Carrick-on-Shannon - Cora Droma Rúisc** Ref: **543**  
County: **Leitrim** Mark: **336**  
Category: **D** Date(s): **13/06/2019**  
**20/08/2019**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2018</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2019</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	51	51
Streetscape & Public Places	60	48	49
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	48	49
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	33	33
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	24	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	40	41
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>336</b>

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

Cuireann an moltoir seo faille roim Carrick on Shannon (Cora Droma Ruisc) chuig Comortas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 2019.

Thank you for the excellent entry form and the supplementary material, which was substantial, in support of your application.

Your map was excellent and allowed the adjudicator to traverse all parts of the town with ease and to identify both areas of interest and those that were highlighted as project points.

Last year's adjudication was very positive about the work and effort of the people and this year the adjudicator would have the same sentiments but expressed in a far shorter narrative.

At this juncture the adjudicator would like to point out that it's not possible to comment on all the information supplied in both entry form proper and the support material and have it reflected in a 3 page report covering 8 sections

Feel assured that the adjudication was done in a fair and objective manner and within the official guidelines of the Competition.

This adjudicator has been to Carrick on Shannon on a few occasions over the last 10 years and has witnessed the hugely positive changes that have occurred during this period.

The Tidy Towns Committee has been one of the main drivers of this change and progression.

Your committee structure is one that works effectively and it is very obvious that you have the support of Leitrim County Council as the main County Town and indeed Roscommon County Council as the bridge straddles both counties.

Other support agencies and local development companies are accessible to you when you need them and it's heartening to note your recognition of the personnel that are part of the CE Scheme.

The schedule of tasks completed as part of this scheme over the last year just shows how valuable it is to you the committee in helping achieve the work targets that you have set

Most importantly you have the support of both the businesses and the wider community organisations of the town.

There is no point in relaying back to you the list of all of those organisations that you are involved with, suffice to say that the practical support that these organisations give is reflected in the present well being of the town and how it appeals to the visitor as a tourist destination.

Your engagement with the schools of the town is noted and indeed the adjudicator observed some of these educational establishments during his fairly long traverse up Summerhill and down the Dublin Road and out Castlecarra Road where Gaelscoil Liatroma has its state of the art new school and grounds.

Methods of communication are a mix of old such as notices in local papers combined with the various strands of social media that are part and parcel of communication in the era that we live in.

Carrick on Shannon Tidy Towns Facebook Page is excellent so well done to whoever is responsible for keeping

content up to date.

Funding allocation under the Public Realm Improvement Scheme is substantial at €8.67m and will help upgrade and enhance the areas around Main Street and Georges Terrace over the next 3 years.

A comment was made in last year's report on the boundaries and the omission of certain areas that are part of the extremities of town.

Reference to this will be made in the next section.

Your presentation to the Chamber of Commerce outlined very clearly your needs and the need for additional volunteers willing to take on and manage specific tasks

It also clearly stated the buy in that was required from the Business people of the town.

As the adjudicator noted under a few category headings that buy in was forthcoming so well done for your timely intervention.

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

The title of has changed somewhat but the principles of this category remain the same.

The Public Realm Improvement Scheme planned for the town is the most significant development that Carrick on Shannon has experienced for a number of decades.

The planning notice observed shows that significant changes are planned to enhance street scapes of Main Street and Bridge Street and aligned junction.

The movement of a protected structure 2 metres is pretty daunting as that structure is the Town Clock !

The provision of additional car parking and the replacing of the existing board walk on the Shannon are pretty ambitious measures as well.

All of this will cause major disruption to vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the short term but will provide an unprecedented transformation in the town after the works are completed.

Carrick on Shannon is an inviting and quite cosmopolitan town and rightly deemed a tourist destination of high repute.

On the day in question many visitors of different nationalities were visiting the town and being particularly engaged by its heritage and historical buildings.

The adjudicator visited all the places that were indicated on your entry and on the map.

The following is a cross section of comments on these as well as personal observations made during the walk about all done in line with adjudication guidelines and of the short narrative variety.

Having entered the town via the Cootehall Road the adjudicator was not too sure where the boundaries were and decided to start his adjudication here as it was within the speed limits.

It was only after looking at the map again that he realised that the boundaries were further in.

Maybe it was fitting that they were! as there is an area of "Celtic tiger" apartment developments behind the business centre that are quite disgraceful.

Traversing the Leitrim Road first off there were some well kept private street houses and both Intreo and the HSE buildings were well presented with ample accessibility for all.

The unoccupied houses with murals need to be given a little face lift but then that may be outside the control of the committee

The entry area to Carrick Karting was a little untidy and even a coat of paint on the low walls of the gate and railings would actually create a better impression.

The fence opposite the service station was noted and it was then that the adjudicator realised that Carrick was a gold medal winner on no less than 7 successive occasions – some achievement.

On the way into town special mention of Pats Carpets and its menagerie of figurines on the footpath but not affecting pedestrian traffic.

Andelise Curtains and Countryside Properties had nice well presented shop fronts of different styles.

Michael Masterson Barber Shop and its quaint add "96 Nissan Micra for sale contact Paddy" just brilliant.

Some fine examples of finger post signs depicting places of interest in the town were observed.

Kelly's at the junction of Summerhill and Dublin Road deserve mention for nice bright colour scheme.

The relatively newish devolvement at the beginning of Summerhill has some vacant properties.

Credit Union across the road was well presented as was Scoil Mhuire further up the Hill.

The reconstruction of the stand alone town house was a stand out for this adjudicator.

Some fine private properties were observed in this part of town and on down to the old Dublin Road.

The Community School and grounds were in good condition, exams were taking place but main body of students were on holiday.

In the centre of town the following business premises appealed to the adjudicator for different reasons The Reading Room which had a lovely and appropriate shop front, Douglas Boyd Victualler, Coffeys Pastry Cafe synonymous with Carrick, Carrig Angling with its floral display, McHugh's Bar, The Swan Bar, Paddys and BR Cafe and Bistro.

Both the Landmark and Bush Hotels are hotels with different styles but equally well presented,

The town has a number of large retail park developments on the immediate outskirts of the town.

Whilst they were very busy it was quite noticeable that they were very well managed and accessible.

The standard of road surfaces, footpaths and street lighting especially in the core area was very good and these are basic infrastructure elements that are often forgotten in assessing this category.

Street name signs are of attractive design and directional signs within and on the outskirts were visible and clean.

Public buildings such as the Market area and the Leitrim County Building as one would expect were presented to a high standard.

St Marys RC Church is as fine an example of an ecclesiastical building as one will find in the country.

You have addressed the derelict and vacant properties issue in your survey.

The new tourist sign on the Quay is a welcome addition in a focal part of the town as it offers the visitor pertinent information on what there is to do in the County.

One observed that the new medical centre was well on the way to being completed within the guideline time.

Overall the standard was very good and warrants an increase in marks.

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

This is a category that Carrick on Shannon has done well in over the last number of years and this year is a continuation of that trend.

The new linear planting arrangement at the amenity park was very much admired for its design and selection of shrubs,

It's a perfect example of replacing what was, if I recall on my last visit, an over populated shrub bed.

Well done on your efforts to promote the wild meadow concept by upgrading the existing site near Government Buildings.

The wonderful new statue of St Eidin was admired and what a wonderful example of workmanship by Will Fogarty of Fear na Coillte Chainsaw Sculptures.

It is also refreshing to see native trees of the Hornbeam variety being planted by residents out Castlecarrá way and sponsored by Vistamed a multinational company with long association with the town.

Quite a lot of ongoing maintenance work has taken place over the last year and it's important to look after the basics on a continuing basis.

The adjudicator observed more than few outstanding public plantings arrangements during the adjudication walkabout

The shrub beds at the County Buildings populated by heathers were a sight to behold.

The Longboat Rose Display was another attraction and credit to the local volunteer who dedicates his/her free time to keep this feature looking so attractive.

Both the Bush and Landmark Hotels had different but equally attractive floral arrangements.

One of the stone bed shrub beds near the Our Happy Place was a little over crowded and probably needs to be refreshed.

Consideration might be given to re planting this prior to next year if feasible.

There are one or two others that the adjudicator observed around the town that might require similar attention.

Seek the advice of the Horticultural Section of Leitrim County Council as part of your ongoing relationship with the County Council.

Carrick Angling Centre had a very colourful display of annuals against a background of a green wicket fence.

The mix of annuals at the stone bed near the Chamber Building were admired and it's good to see the likes of Woodies sponsoring work in this category – "keeping things pretty"

It would be remiss of me not to mention the quality of some of the private gardens that were seen during the adjudication.

Credit to the owners for putting such an effort into presenting their properties to a very high standard.

Whilst it's good to see a move towards sustainable all year round planning a little colour is pleasant to view especially on a fine summer day.

Many businesses had window boxes, hanging baskets and tubs all with a mix of annuals and perennials.

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

The key overall issues in respect of this adjudication category are Education – knowledge of local species and habitats and knowledge of local designated areas (SACs, SPAs, NHAs) and Conservation – maintaining of important wildlife areas and implementation of survey results and Wildlife interpretation that is sustainable.

The adjudicator feels that as a Committee you have embraced these concepts and principles fully.

Good work is being done in the area of wildlife preservation and promotion in an overall context.

The projects that you have listed are varied and more importantly are practical and certainly fall within the ethos of the previous statement.

All were visited by the adjudicator who was most impressed with the information panel on swifts in Tearmann Park. It certainly makes you aware of what an amazing bird the swift is and how the swift population has been decimated in the last 15 years declining by over 40%

Has Leitrim become involved in a Swift Survey project similar to counties like Longford and Westmeath?

Producing conditions for the survival of the bee population is critical as the decline in the bee population is primarily due to the use of bee killing pesticides.

All information available through [www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie) where one can access the National Pollinator Plan and information on pollinator friendly planting code [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)

Good initiative to start a Bee Kind Campaign with children from both primary and secondary schools and well done to the students of transition year who have been involved in the production of a new product for bird feeders.

Well done on the creation of a 3 tiered bed with plants that attracts bees and insects and the planting of a community orchard something that the adjudicator has noticed in other centres in the county.

The Green Communities Project under the auspices of An Taisce is a source that can be tapped into for idea generation information on various biodiversity projects

Biodiversity Ireland has already been mentioned.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie) is another source of exceptional information on bio diversity matters.

Overall the standard was very good.

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

Without overtly preaching to the converted it is still important to outline the main objective in this category which is the reduction of the production of waste at source.

"Doing more with less" is a very apt slogan

You have listed 18+ measures that you are involved with in the entry form and whilst all fall within the objectives of this category many are not new as such and are replicated around the country in many villages and towns. That said your list is impressive and most are of a very practical nature. The key is to make sure that the resources are available to manage these on an ongoing basis and in a sustainable manner.

One would hope that as a result of your plea for new members via your presentation to the Chamber that people with interest and some knowledge of the subject will become available to you. It would be worthwhile to consider getting a transition group from the Community School next year to take a specific part of the category and work on a related project that would be beneficial to the community i.e. stop food waste for instance

To get more out of this sector in terms of creating even a greater awareness of all things that contribute to a more sustainable environment consider looking at the following websites for idea generation

[www.localprevention.ie](http://www.localprevention.ie) ,[www.greenhomes.ie](http://www.greenhomes.ie) and [www.sustainableprocessing.ie](http://www.sustainableprocessing.ie)

Also something that this adjudicator became aware of is the circular economy.

The concept is explained in detail in the following [www.dccae.gov.ie](http://www.dccae.gov.ie) and [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie) where you will get a pretty good idea of what it's all about.

The idea of what is called a linear economy of "take, make and waste" is now being seen as not sustainable and alternatives need to be found.

You have received relatively high marks compared to other centres of similar standing in the competition and the adjudicator did not feel that an increase in marks were warranted

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

The loss of a mark in this category has certainly created a need to react in a positive manner and this you have done very effectively.

The town is a large town that has seen extensive expansion over the last 10 years with the addition of new housing developments and the building of additional retail parks on the outskirts.

What is impressive about your submission under this category is the manner in which you have engaged with all stakeholders and in that I include the County Council, local businesses, residents associations and members of all sectors of the community.

The message of creating a culture of zero tolerance to indiscriminate littering and issues such as graffiti, fly posting and the new no dog fouling has been sent out to the community through all forms of communication.

The role of the Chamber and its CEO in getting so many new people on board for your annual spring clean is to be lauded.

Well done also to Leitrim County Council for giving a local artist the chance to show off his work to the public and make a contribution to revitalising a space previously spoilt by graffiti.

Having 220 people at this year Spring Clean day was a mighty achievement.

All this activity plus the involvement of the schools in pursuing their anti litter policies will hopefully fast track a change of mindset.

Some issues that impacted negatively were highlighted in last year's report and one assumes that these were addressed in a positive manner by the committee.

On the day of adjudication the basics of litter control were adhered to, bins were not overflowing and whilst there was pockets of litter at different locations one couldn't say that it was major.

Problems such as dereliction and unoccupied premises that may be falling into disrepair are often outside the control of a voluntary committee such as Tidy Towns.

All you can do is try to engage with the owners of such properties or unsightly areas and try to get them to address the problem.

Speed and directional signs were in the main visible and clean but many road markings had faded and maybe the County Council Roads Section could do an evaluation of the situation as it stands at present

Overall the standard in this category was very good due in no small measure to the efforts of the Committee to effect change over the last year.

A 2 mark increase is warranted and well done on a good start for such change - Tus Maith leath an Oibre.

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

The positive work undertaken under this heading has been noted and the adjudicator took time to visit a number of housing developments and there are many 30 in all by your submission.

The presentation of private housing in the town core was excellent and this was complemented by standard seen in the suburbs.

One feels that residents of Carrick on Shannon are doing their level best to project a good image of the town by keeping their homes, frontages and gardens in such good condition.

Very few places were seen that could be described as totally unacceptable but it goes without saying that there will always be those who won't conform irrespective of what overtures are made to them.

One has to realise that there is no onus on people to be supportive of the Tidy Towns movement but usually with a bit of neighbourly peer pressure most non conformists usually relent.

The motto is push the message of positivity at all times.

The Leitrim Road was mentioned earlier in this report and also last year as having a number of unoccupied houses that look somewhat untidy and unfortunately they are in a very visible location.

Measures are in place to address this issue, and as was suggested earlier a number of the premises with murals need to be re visited with a view to revitalising them.

The adjudicator entered the town from the Cootehall direction via Breffini Heights, Kingston Terrace and St Patricks Park and the standard was acceptable overall with the usual non conformists to good practice that one finds in

every town and village.

Summer Hill had some very fine individual homesteads with very attractive gardens.

Summerhill Grove, Mount Temple, Ard Alainn and Amber Court are a few of the established housing areas within the Summerhill catchment that stood out and appealed to this adjudicator.

Dun Na Ri, Bothar Fergus and Ard Na Si were also visited and were in a very presentable state.

There are a few problematic estates and these are being monitored by the Committee in conjunction with Leitrim County Council.

You are wished well for a satisfactory solution to these problems that are really outside your control and again all you can do is engage with the Council in the hope that matters will be solved in due course and in a satisfactory manner.

Overall the standard was very good considering the size of the town and the fact that there are many rented properties in some of the estates.

For the work done in the last year an additional mark is awarded

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

Quite a number of large towns have a problem with unwanted advertising hoardings entrances.

These often deflect away from the good elements such as effective name signs and well managed verges.

It is good to note that LCC has implemented a policy to deter this type of advertising.

The adjudicator came into the town off the Drumshanbo Leitrim entrance which was in acceptable condition with verges managed as per best practice.

The newly painted fence on the opposite side of the footpath adds to the entrance and the Gold Medal Winners sign was very visible.

The large advertising hoarding mentioned in last year's report has been removed.

The Carrick Karting area has been already mentioned in another section as have the houses on Leitrim Street.

Just one negative 6 cyclists passed on the footpath (Leitrim Road) at different stages as the adjudicator walked out to the extremities.

This road could benefit from a cycle lane so maybe the committee would examine the possibility of same in conjunction with Leitrim County Council.

This would be a suitable fix for your policy of encouraging more people to use cycling as a means of transport as outlined in appendix 6.

The Dublin Road entrance was presentable to a point but a lot of the problems that were dealt with in great detail in last year's report seem to be still there.

One appreciates that it is hard to effect change in a short period of time but a note reacting to comments on the problems pertaining to this particular entrance would have allowed the adjudicator to assess the situation in a more informed manner.

The kerbing in Cortober on the Roscommon side was noted and well done to the scouts for the practical help that they provided in painting the fence up to the up beyond the traffic sign.

The Casstlecarra road was well presented and the Gaelscoil Liatoma is very fine new development with plenty of parking facilities.

The long established IDA Estate was well presented as one would expect from a state agency with the responsibility for attracting foreign direct investment into the town.

Pairc McDiarmada was presented to a high standard and has a huge car park facility, yes it would benefit from resurfacing with tarmac but that is a major project that may require funding from GAA head quarters.

Would the main sponsor of the GAA in the County who are New York based be in a position to offer some support.

The Roscommon approach was well presented but the erratic parking is still in vogue and won't change unless preclusion measures are put in place.-That's a topic for another forum.

The Sligo entrance was the most appealing in this adjudicator's opinion and one concurs with the elegantly put comments in last year's report.

The boat features on this entrance add that little extra.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It was good to re visit Carrick on Shannon and be in position to traverse the town and its surrounding area at length.

The town has some very fine heritage buildings as well as an array of shops, cafes and pubs of distinction.

Some very positive changes have happened over the years and the town is now considered a tourism destination of note because of its facilities and its location on the banks of the Shannon River.

The business owners are friendly and welcoming and know how to show hospitality to the visitor.

You are wished well in the competition in the years ahead.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

It is a long while since this adjudicator has visited Carrick on Shannon and was not sure what to expect, but it was with pleasure that I discovered it was full of treasures both natural and manmade. The 1877 Costello Memorial Chapel was an unexpected find, a tiny little chapel that would be so easy to walk past, and is apparently the smallest church in Ireland. This has some beautiful features such as iron doors with crosses punched out so that these appear lit up when the sun is shining through them, as well as lovely patterned tiles on the lovely floor and a lovely ornate white altar. I spotted another attractive old building, the Victoria Hall building with some beautiful stonework set off by a green paint trim, and which is now a restaurant. In fact, so many lovely period buildings and features that are part of the history and heritage of the town. These include the Famine Graveyard, the Marist Convent, the town clock, not to mention St. Mary's Church and St. George's Heritage and Visitor Centre to name a few.

The Riverfront Linear Park is a wonderful facility and many people seemed to be enjoying it on the day that I was there. The butterfly and bird garden is delightful, and full of information as to which plants these creatures are most attractive to these creatures, there is the perennial bed with Crab Apple trees, the wildflower areas, bird sanctuary as well as benches and picnic areas to rest and take it all in. There were people taking a rest to sit for a while as well as families and children looking at the bees, butterflies and other insects that drawn there by the riot of colour, particularly the poppies that planted to support diversity and pollination. There are some lovely signs, obviously created by schoolchildren with cute drawings of bees and how to help them, sustainability and bio-diversity is something that is taken very seriously in Carrick on Shannon. Beside this, there was a very quaint 'Free Small Library', which was set in an old-fashioned cabinet painted the traditional green colour associated with the old post boxes. The nearby sculpture of St. Éidín is very striking and adds a focal point to this area, and there is some good information provided as well.

The issue of litter and tidiness is taken very seriously and the town was predominantly litter free.

The residents of Carrick on Shannon obviously take great pride in where they live and the housing estates visited were maintained to a high standard, and this has probably been increased by the Tidy Estates competition that encourages a bit of healthy rivalry between neighbouring residential areas.

The approach roads into the town are all extremely attractive, with the roundabouts being a feature that Carrick on Shannon does especially well, often boasting centrepieces of floral displays and planting. The boat on the N4 road is eye-catching, as are the multitude of planters, tubs, baskets, and barrels that are to be seen around the town, with nearly all of them containing exceptionally good quality planting, and the use of perennials and pollinators is being increased. Overall, I found Carrick on Shannon a delightful place to visit whether you want to wander around the town and take in its fine buildings and heritage or enjoy being beside the banks of the Shannon taking in the fresh air and I agree with the comments and marking of the first adjudicator.