

# Tidy Towns Competition 2015

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Lauragh** Ref: **344**  
County: **Kerry** Mark: **257**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **19/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	42	42
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	30	30
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	31	31
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	25	25
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	26	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	30
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>257</b>

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

Congratulations to Lauragh TidyTowns for taking part in the 2015 SuperValu TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your entry form, the map which was of great assistance and made the visit all the more enjoyable, the 3 Year Plan. With regard to that Plan one would expect that your own committee would have now picked up the expertise to complete your own Plan for the next number of years. For one thing you are the residents, you have a feel for the heritage of the area and you know first hand what the issues are that face your community. The adjudicator gleans from your submission that you now have the local agencies and local business interests on board to assist in your ambitions for Lauragh. You seem to get assistance from the school also. You are obviously proud of your achievements since the group was formed. But possibly the greatest achievement is the improved pride in the area and the improved community spirit.

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

Your submission gave the adjudicator the impression that there is little to talk about in the built environment of Lauragh. The visit told a different story. Yes this is essentially a rural village but you have substantial buildings throughout the village starting with your fine Church and parking area. One hopes that the Sibín is open for business as it too is a grand building and looks well in its white. Along the road we met the school, an exceptional building from 1862 with traditional dressed limestone window surrounds, a rare feature in today's school buildings. So your school is a special gem. Here in this rustic setting one does not expect that the post office has survived but it looks majestic in this setting. The Community Centre also is well presented. The bridges are an important element of your built environment, without which life in the past Lauragh would certainly be a rural area. The capping on the bridge walls on the road to the Sibín are a work of art. Notice was taken of the two arches in the case of one of the bridges. The adjudicator was delighted to visit the Lime Kiln, an important part of your heritage but just like the village pump its appearance needs a hand. Do not let it deteriorate further in your watch. The information page is most interesting but it too needs upgrading. Thank you for mentioning the forge. Again there is an opportunity to improve its appearance by painting the red door and the green metal door.

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

Your group is fortunate that nature has done most of your landscaping work for you. It is your task to compliment what happens naturally. Groups in the past have created the garden at the Church car park and it is great to see the tree and shrub planting here. The sleepers are a most attractive kerbing but these need to be painted. Then there are three hanging baskets stands but their effect is largely lost in the mass of foliage that surrounds them. Well done on your work in filling these baskets with summer bedding but one would be forgiven for not noticing them. Credit is due to the green fingered people at the Community Centre for creating lovely beds of summer colour. There seems

to have been a lovely landscaped area opposite the Sibín at some stage. But now, sadly, it looks neglected. The old petrol pump could be a lovely feature, a blast from the past with a little imaginative landscaping. The temptation would be to get rid of it. Doll it up and see what happens. Just like what the bike people have done at the post office. Another great opportunity for complimenting nature is at the school. It is clear that the front was once planted. There is space there and landscaping could enhance the lovely school wall with the decorative mosaics. The school front should vie with the post office front for appearance and attention. Whatever happens do not be tempted to bore hanging baskets into the bridges. You have a raised bed at the Cross but it is in need of renewal. The adjudicator is certain that you have had the rhododendron mentioned to you in hushed tones. You also have the problem of the Japanese Knotweed, right beside the lime kiln, for instance and along the roads also.

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

The environs of Lauragh have to be alive with habitats, with birdlife and mammal life, not to mention sea life. But there is little noticeable evidence of awareness of your local biodiversity nor is there any evidence of your group making the community aware of that biodiversity. Next year include the information card on the white tailed eagles with your entry. Also with next year's submission give an estimate of how long the Geata Bán Walk takes to walk and takes to drive. After spending time on a delightful hilly winding road in the most beautiful surroundings the adjudicator gave up on finding this walk but believes he was on it. Let us know what we should look out for on such a walk. Let us know what a person, local or visitor, might expect to experience on the Geata Bán. The area calls out for marked walks. A style was spotted over the wall at one point. Does it have a purpose. Well done to the school on their work but this section belongs to the grown ups also.

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

The adjudicator feels that you have not yet come to terms with the demands of this category of the competition. Do not lose heart. There are many groups find this the most challenging section. But that comment is not meant to shield you from your responsibility. The adjudicator urges you to study the latest contribution from the Tidy Towns unit on sustainability. Set about the task over the winter. The adjudicator is certain that the Kerry Environmental Area Officer would be delighted to visit you and steer you. At present you are confusing litter with waste, for instance. Keep references to litter for the litter section. I read the content of your 3 Year Plan. It would put anyone off. Take a look around the area. What would be appropriate and suitable for Lauragh in the reduction of waste? Think in terms of the home and the main business of the area. For the moment you are at a stand still. Well done on the Bring Centre and on its appearance.

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

Well done on the work you have undertaken during the year, your involvement in the Spring Clean, your litter patrols which must be a challenge on those winding roads. What did you mean by your 'adopt a bank scheme'? There is litter which is a shame but not a lot. It is tidiness that is the major issue for the adjudicator. All of the landscaping opportunities that have been mentioned are also tidiness issues and in all cases the appearance of their respective areas could be improved. Improving tidiness in a place makes people aware of your work and lifts morale. So prioritise the issues that have been raised in this report. All of the buildings, with the exception of the lime kiln, present tidily. The signs for the river name on the bridges need to be either cleaned or upgraded.

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

Thankfully you were spared the excesses of the Celtic Tiger. When it comes to the residential stock of Lauragh one then understands how rural this area of your is. Many of the dwellings are farm houses. Others are more modern and all scattered. All enhance their surroundings and add colour to the forty shades of green. A few of the timber gates at the entrances really add to the picture. Mourlin Lodge is perched beautifully on the hillside and its landscaping sweeps down delightfully to the road. One did not know if the fine buildings at Derreen Gardens were occupied but they too are a delight.

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

It is along the roads that the rural nature of Lauragh is emphasised. The tunnel of trees and the accompanying gush of the river as it splashes along are enough company for a person. No wonder there is demand for bicycles in this village. For the most part the adjudicator agrees that the natural growth should be left express itself. But along the base of walls get rid of the weed and let the fine walls that run through the area express themselves also.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

What a delightful area to visit. The adjudicator feels that you as a group sell yourselves a little short on ambition at present. Let the ambition that financed an expensive 3 Year Plan drive you now with your own agenda.