

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Lanesborough** Ref: **898**
County: **Longford** Mark: **256**
Category: **B** Date(s): **18/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	35	37
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	31	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	30	32
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	26	28
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	11	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	49	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	27	28
TOTAL MARK	450	244	256

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Béal Átha Liag! Welcome Lanesborough to the Super Valu 2015 National Tidy Towns competition. We are amazed to see that you have 50 active members - an increase of 10 since last year. We assume you mean 'members' rather than 'committee members', as to manage a committee of 50 would be an impossible task. Well done on your 'Ideas for Lanesborough Workshop'. We are happy to see that you have included new non-national residents and retired people in your group. These will contribute new ideas and much local knowledge to your work. Last year's adjudicator commended you on including the people from the village who now live abroad in your deliberations. You have surveyed these people again last summer and included their ideas in your plan. Well done on this initiative. Forming fora with members with a specific interest is sensible. We are impressed with the number of agencies, bodies, local businesses and local clubs who help you. This is obviously creating a great synergy. We think that increasing your meetings as necessity arises to 'move out on-the-ground' as the New Year arrives is appropriate.

Your communication methods are both traditional and modern. This means you reach a broad audience. We hope that you also circulate minority churches in your area. You give us good detail about how you interact with all the schools and we commend you for this interaction. We are delighted to see that you benefit in many ways from the competition. Your view of these benefits shows what good outcomes entering the competition have brought to the village.

Thank you for your Entry Form and the other submissions. Photographs should not form part of your entry form - but may be attached and annotated separately to correspond with the form. The form should ONLY contain a written list/short account of projects completed THIS year, or projects of which a phase is being carried out this year. In your form it is difficult to separate previously completed projects / from this year's projects / from future projects. Future projects should only be listed in your Plan. A table of contents to all your varied submissions would also be helpful. This applies to your Map also. Your map was clear, informative, bright, professional, and had only one fault! This fault also applied to not submitting a map in compliance with the Guidelines. We would refer you to the 'How to complete your Super Valu Tidy Towns Entry Form (part 6). In the Guidelines you are asked to sequentially number each ('mappable') project undertaken for THIS year 2015 in the Entry Form and to carry this numbering system through to the village map. Please remember to read the Guidelines carefully before submitting next year's Entry Form and map. This is even more important when you have a lot of projects! In relation to the number of projects listed in the form and on your map- we noted on occasions that you were referring to past projects and to future projects, so the number of projects for this year is not actually 69 as numbered on the map.

Thank you for your plan - but we would suggest that you use the 8 competition category headings in formulating a

Tidy Towns Plan when you next draw up a plan for this competition - or even better - extract the elements from the plan which you have, and present it in such a format for next year. Your 3 headings are Heritage, Biodiversity and Sustainability Plan. It makes it quite difficult for an adjudicator not to have the projects categorised under the headings which we deal with. In your Plan you do not include the list of individual project objectives for 2014. You just state the general objectives 2014-2018 - and only list individual objectives for 2015-2018. It is important also for you to check your progress over the last year in relation to your plan for 2014. The adjudicator would be interested to see how you fared with your 2014 planned projects. Perhaps you completed them all - apart from the phased plans? We just don't know, as we do not know what projects were included for 2014 in the plan! We are trying to help you to be more focussed. We are not being critical - as we think you have achieved a tremendous amount! But in your enthusiasm to tell us everything you may have lost sight of the Guidelines to completing the Entry Form! We would also strongly recommend that you enter the relevant projects under the exact project category, as projects seem to be entered incorrectly in places. Where there is an overlap of projects between categories the adjudicator will see this and mark accordingly in each relevant category

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

Lanesborough is a village in a beautiful location. Although the undergrounding of cables is listed as your first project under this category heading (Project 56) it appears that possibly few cables were undergrounded in this past year, as last year's adjudicator stated "No overground wires it gives a great tidy look to the town." We feel however that project number 56 on the Longford Road was this year's undergrounding project as this is the only photograph of 'before' undergrounding provided. As already stated it is important in your Entry Form only to list projects undertaken this year 2014/2015. Well done on the project at the old Post Office building which now displays proudly details of both your churches - which will encourage the visitor to visit each. Both churches were extremely well presented on adjudication day. A similar project involved the tree mural at the unoccupied retail premises. The boundary wall around the tree mural needs repainting. Whereas you mention the installation of bollards under this category heading on Lower Main Street we credit this under the last category - Roads etc. This is a functional project rather than an aesthetic street furniture project. The same is true of project number 53 (new cycle way and pathway) and the project in relation to the new car park barrier, which you list under this category also. It was pleasing to find both churches open and welcoming. In the Church of Ireland we picked up a newsletter which contained reference to Tidy Towns work, and you yourselves have submitted a copy of the Catholic Church's parish newsletter - also detailing some of your Tidy Towns work. Rathcline church appears to be off your map, and the project is to commence in May 2015, which means it is a project for next year, and not for this year. This project therefore should be entered only in your plan and not in your Entry Form. We look forward to hearing about this next year (and don't forget to show it on your map).

Well done on the new Fire Station. Using local limestone in the Memorial to the ferry boat tragedy was appropriate. We are unsure as to when the development of a shop front and signage policy was launched. You give us no date. In any event it is planned to restore a traditional shop front next year, so once again the latter part of this project should be confined to your plan and not entered into the Entry Form as a project for this year. Well done on addressing your 3 derelict sites. When the adjudicator had arrived the phone box - which had been disused and a black spot for fly posting - had been removed. We look forward to seeing it as part of a public art piece as planned. The new litter segregation bins were noted. The Garda Station boundary wall requires painting, otherwise it is well presented. It is a pity to see the timber windows replaced by uPVC windows in part of this structure.

The national school has a well landscaped site, but the boundary wall needs repainting, as does the round wall near the garden. We observed three flagpoles, but only so one Green Flag flying. The base of the wall at the Health Centre needs painting, and the tin galvanised roof on the approach beside the Medical Centre also needs paint, as does the two-storey Farrell's Agri supply corrugated roof. The Lanesborough Community Co-Op sign is part faded, despite the general good presentation of the building. Some hanging basket brackets on the building were redundant and should be removed. It is a pity that uPVC Windows have replaced the original timber windows. The childcare/old national school shelter is in need of paint. Otherwise this is well presented. Supervalu was well presented apart from the Christmas lights on the gable - which look very out-of-place in June. The adjoining Sisters' Bistro looked well. Clarke's Bar and Lounge - with its timber sash windows looked extremely well maintained. Farrell's on a corner site had signs on its gable which detracted from the main nice Swan Tavern painting. The footpath outside O' Brien's was cluttered, as was also the case at the Gala premises.

Well done on your use of Irish - such as at the bring banks sign, the playground sign, in housing estates names, on individual houses - such as 'Cois Abhann,' and particularly on your heritage trail signage. We admired the stone with the old Irish script lettering on the old fire station (?) now the Sub Aqua/Lough Ree Rescue building. Is the single storey search and rescue building funded by the Lottery still in use? It looks a bit forbidding with its shuttered opes. On its gable the transmitter holder is rusting.

We were very impressed with the interest you have in your built heritage which you have brought to public attention through the heritage trail informative signs. We realise that most are from an earlier phased project, but you are maintaining them in an excellent condition. Some 'for sale' or 'to let buildings' - such as the cream/green building on Main Street - will hopefully find new owners or tenants, as they need painting renewal. We admired a good traditional red gate in the recessed rectangle on Main Street. The 'Barber Shop' looked very well. External projecting lighting - as at Pings - looks obtrusive. Discrete flush with the wall down-lighting looks better on shop fronts. The 'Surgery' building is part of your traditional streetscape and should be conserved. The Library is bright and in scale with its surroundings, but the low wall outside the Library needs repainting, and notices in the Library window (facing inwards) might be removed as they looked untidy viewed from the footpath. The 'book return' sign w at the letterbox

was peeling. Nearby the village pump was beautifully displayed at the Green area. On a larger scale it is to the credit of the Power Station authorities as to how well the Station looks on all approaches - from whence it is seen clearly as a Lanesborough landmark.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Well done on the planting of the riverbank which we very much admired on adjudication day. This gives added interest and context to the riverside walk and seating areas. Well done also on the year-round interest in the choice of plants. The planting on the Longford approach road is of good native species, and will give a good first impression on arriving in your village, as well as enhancing the new cycleway and walkway. Whereas the creation of the butterfly garden and the biodiversity garden at the school involves landscaping - it more rightly belongs to the next category where we credit them. The innovative approach to hedge planting with the farming community is very worthwhile. Your planter boxes create all year round colours. Hanging baskets have their place - but do not overuse hanging baskets. They are not sustainable - as in-soil planting is - and are non-conservative of water. Even though you harvest water it would be better put to use in sustainable planting areas. Hanging baskets also take a lot of your precious time that would be better put to sustainable planting and maintenance use. They look best in an area that needs some uplifting visually. Although the red colour of the flowers in the tree planters looked good visually, we are afraid that they will detract from the sustenance requirements of the trees in the planters - particularly as the planters are relatively small. Some tree trunks are getting too big for their grilles/enclosures trees on Main Street. Your long list of additional planting shows your interest and commitment to the landscaping of your environment. Whereas it is not necessary to show each planting project individually on the map because of their small scale - do please ensure that you only include that which was carried out for this year. The entire mature landscaped area around the duck compound/playground is extremely well maintained, and was being mowed on adjudication day. The bilingual playground sign is particularly attractive. Similar uniform signage throughout the village - such as that at the entrance to Commons North Walk is superb.

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

The Tree Trail project is an excellent initiative. We congratulate the schoolchildren and the local scouts on their great work. Thank you for the Tree Trail information panel copy. We are delighted that all the work that the children put into this has been made permanently available to us all. Well done to them! It is a good example of the good work being carried out under Agenda 21. The sign on Main Street is full of information about all the wonderful trees to be found around your village. It is a well-designed, bright, and well located sign - across from the car park. Well done on using the trilingual names - English, Irish and Latin/Botanical. We also admired the individual slim elegant vertical signs for each tree location which included Celtic mythological references and a 'Did you know' Section. We note that the Tourism Co-Op was involved in providing this signage, and we also note that the Tourism Co-Op is listed as the organisation name providing your entry. Well done to them!

The installation of additional information panels in the Commons North Walk adds to its recreational and educational attributes. We noted your bird boxes and bug hotels, and are glad that you have established a good working relationship with the NPWS which brings expertise to your community on - inter alia - birdlife. We also commend the NPWS and yourselves for the Callow Grazing Project. We look forward to hearing about the butterflies which you will attract to the garden and to hearing more about the school biodiversity garden in 2016. It appeared that the butterfly gardens on both sides of the bridge abutments were in a very embryonic stage on adjudication day. It appeared to this adjudicator on adjudication day that the biodiversity garden was also just being got ready for planting (?) The Bog Trail opens up another great area of natural wonder to us, and well done on that also. Will your guided walk there be an annual event? The Wild Flower field project shows how you are held in regard by your land owners. Well done to the landowner in question. The rapeseed crop is in a temporary home for the summer.

We observed what appeared to be fairly recent hedge trimming around on the Ballymahon approach. Remember that it is permissible to trim hedging along cultivated ground (e.g. gardens) throughout the year. However with regard to hedge trimming bordering non cultivated land - you are reminded that it is an offence under the Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2006 to cut vegetation in a hedge or ditch on lands not cultivated between 1st March and 31st August annually - this is for the protection of nesting birds. Before trimming any such hedges please consult with your local authority who will deal with this issue if there is a safety aspect involved. We noticed the large duck compound near the riverside where you have planted some native flowers. On adjudication day we admired the oxeye daisies which were in abundant supply. Pinning an advertising notice to a tree is bad practice. One such sign for a local eatery was observed in the parkland area en route to the Woodland Walk from the river.

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

It is good to see that you are working with Lough Ree Power (ESB) on a water management programme. Thank you for the survey report attached separately. We read your rainwater harvesting explanatory sign on St Mary's Hall with interest. We also note that you are harvesting rainwater at the Fire Station. We congratulate the student from the Community College who won an award at the Young Scientists Exhibition, studying a very useful topic to you on Lough Ree - in relation to invasive species. It is doubly rewarding when research has a local good outcome. Well done to the school and teacher also for facilitating this research and obviously providing encouragement! Up cycling of children's books and the vegetable larder at the school are commended. We are a little less sure about the suitability of recycling tyres for planting purposes. Well done on your WEE day and your transport resource pedal power project!

The introduction of the electric car to the drivers of the future is a good educational exercise in resource

management. You list other projects with regard to composting, energy consumption reduction etc. A lot of these programs are ongoing.

Recycling is just part of Sustainable waste and resource management and we saw your clothes recycling bins which the GAA are organising. The imaginative Christmas Tree in the library is also a recycling program, as is the upcycling of navigation buoys. We observed one of these buoys in the rear curtilage of St. Mary's Hall on adjudication day. We look forward to the ensuing public art which is a very imaginative idea. The public awareness of litter project belongs not here but to the Tidiness and Litter category where we credit it

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Whereas the general impression of the village is one of tidiness, there are many individual areas - particularly around the Main Street where improvement is possible. The bring banks located in the car park were nicely landscaped by planters. However, the three adjacent clothing banks were not landscaped and one of them was rusty. On adjudication day the poop scoop standard had no bags in stock. Instead some litter was pushed into one of the openings. It is important to keep stocks up-to-date, as your project will not be as successful otherwise. The sign was also somewhat faded. There were a number of sandwich board signs on the footpaths around St Mary's Hall area on adjudication day; however as there was a local vegetable stall in town this was probably a once-off - as the signs related to seasonal berries. There were at least two other sandwich boards on the Main Street footpaths. These look untidy and are obstructive to people with mobility issues and to buggy users. There is a redundant pole at the end of the street. A seat in the area of The Green needs attention. Can something be done to screen the unscreened part of the utility site green security fencing near the riverbank? The bruscar/green litter bin at the Ferry Memorial/stone picnic table needs repainting. Seating at the playground could be repainted, as could the black litter bin nearby. On the ground in front of this black litter bin we noticed a carved piece of stone which surely must belong elsewhere and should be carefully saved. Would it be possible to paint the galvanised roof inside/adjoining the stone wall as one enters the riverside car park? One lamp/lantern at the riverside need straightening. The car park and recycling directional signpost was dirty. The 'Caution Deep Water' signage at the river needs repainting. There is a very ugly pole with many attachments near the clean school sign as one turns the corner onto the Longford Road. This competes in views to the St. John's Church. Can it be relocated or tidied? There was an empty concrete planter outside the St. John's Church which should be removed. Neither the planter itself nor its lack of contents was appropriate for this location. Near the church -opposite the national school - a business yard containing trailers, logs, pallets etc. badly needs screening in this area beside an important part of your Heritage Trail

The newsletter in relation to public awareness of litter is seemingly being heeded as we only saw a very few individual pieces of litter throughout the village. Well done to the FÁS personnel who conduct a daily litter patrol. This is augmented by the Tidy Towns volunteers on Saturdays, Sundays and on public holidays. On Fridays you attend to a designated area for that week. Well done on your National Clean Up day which concentrated this year on the approach roads. We have dealt with the tidying of derelict sites under Built Environment, and we credit the segregation of litter and waste under Sustainable Waste and Resource Management. You carry out other projects such as removing graffiti and weeds. How do you hope to deal with the chewing gum issue? It would have been helpful to see the survey stretches marked on the map.

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

The presentation of individual houses in the village street and on approach roads such as Rathcline Road is good. Representatives of each housing estate are members of your Tidy Towns committee. This is a good approach. You provide composting areas in some estates and The Green's housing interesting designs are matched by its excellent landscaping and maintenance. Well done to its residents who obviously appreciate their lovely architecture and trees. A large cross at The Green rear boundary needs paint. Church View estate looked excellent. We admired the beds with lupins and poppies. We also noted a solar panel here. Cnoc na Gaoithe had its name emblazoned in a well-presented floral display. There were lovely views across the countryside here. Radharc na Muileann had good bank planting but the road surface was unfinished. An estate near on the Longford approach appears to have won an award, but the name could not be read because of growth. Your map indicates that it is Curraghrua. Radharc na Sionnain is a compact in-depth small village estate. The sign is good. The planting along the side of the narrow entrance looked well. We would suggest that the business facing the entrance could remove the clutter of signage from the window, as this detracted somewhat from the overall effect of the estate as seen from the Main Street. There was one small weedy corner towards the rear of the estate. The terrace of houses along the Knock area was well presented. We credited the playground under earlier categories, as this is not part of a residential street or housing area.

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

The 60kph on the right hand side of the Ballymahon approach was totally leaning and bent. We observed fairly recent hedge cutting between the 60kph to 50 kph speed limit signs. Please refer to our comments above under Wildlife etc. This was on the opposite side of the road to the new hedging. There was a redundant pole beside the Newtowncashel sign opposite the new stone planter. Could the Irish sign and the village sign further in towards the village be combined? At the Community College the gable facing the approach road needs repainting. We noted three empty flagpoles here. The boundary wall would also benefit from a repaint before next year. The gates of an abandoned house and garden nearby need painting. The garage needs surfacing and tidying of the canopy ceiling eaves. Could the adjacent fuel/ animal feed area be screened more effectively?

On the Longford Road approach the stone town designation sign was admired - but the village name is repeated in signage 3 times. Can this be rationalised? There is a long broad clean sweep into the town on a fast approach. We appreciate how difficult it must be to carry out trimming here. Do you get assistance from the local authority? We admired the semi-mature trees along the roadside. Well done on the planting on the Longford approach as a joint project with Bornacor Residents' Association. There was a redundant sign on a pole at the GAA site. The GAA grounds are well kept, but had empty flag poles. Some rubble was noted across from the cemetery. There is a good traditional hooped gate at exit to the cemetery. We note that you have painted gates - both on approaches and in the village. This looks well. A site/plant that would benefit from screening was observed at the 60 K pH coming back for the graveyard behind Cullen's. A forecourt nearer the cemetery would benefit from tidying. A proper individual sign for the GAA should be provided rather than attached to the 'stop' sign. At the cut-off road the security fencing to the rear of the garage plant with untidy collection of tyres on site looked poorly. The nearby substation building would benefit from painting.

On the Rathcline approach there are some lovely leafy stone wall areas - with some being rebuilt. This approach benefits from the woodlands on the riverside. The road is primarily suburban with clean well ordered typical suburban housing. The odd boundary wall requires painting. The loose chippings sign near the village was upside down and worn on adjudication day, but we assume this is a temporary sign. The 80 K pH sign as one exits the village on the left-hand side was overgrown. The 50 K pH on the way in was somewhat obscured by vegetation also. The road surface near the village and approaching Main Street needs resurfacing (nearer the funeral parlour). We admired the dry stone walls along this approach, as well as the new hedging.

The installation of bollards on Lower Main Street does restrict on-pavement parking, but we still noticed further on-footpath parking. The insertion of black bollards (the most difficult colour for a person with limited vision to see) is not to be recommended for the rest of the street, for this, and for aesthetic reasons. Can you conduct an incentive campaign for the increased use of the vast (but empty on adjudication day) car park? The building of two walk and cycle ways on two of your approach roads is lauded. The road surface outside the church of Ireland is poor.

The signs for the Disabled Angling are missing a link - because when a disabled angler parks in the car park there is no indication as to where the ramp is located leading them to the riverbank. Once one arrives at the riverbank the second ramp is marked clearly. We commend you highly for having this facility, but it needs to be highlighted by an additional sign in the corner of the car park near the Sub Aqua large shed - where the first ramp leads from. In relation to disabled parking spaces - it appears that the spaces originally provide at the forecourt of Supervalu have been encroached upon by the trolley park and are therefore reduced in size. These need to be remarked so as to provide for full parking disability requirements. Near the pedestrian crossing some kerbing was damaged and nearby a small circular hole in the footpath was noted - possibly the location of an old traffic pole. Some kerbing and footpaths at the Catholic Church corner need repair.

Concluding Remarks:

Lanesborough made its mark in Rome over a hundred years ago with the excavation of the 3 levels of San Clemente - a most wondrous site to visit. And this was due to your native son Fr. Mullooly O.P. You celebrate this in your sculpture and heritage trail, and it is therefore fitting that you should be interested in your built heritage! Many years ago this adjudicator attended your Environmental Weekend and it was obvious then that your village had a great interest in the natural world also - before it became as fashionable or popular to do so. We are not therefore surprised that you are so interested, enthusiastic and hard working in your endeavours. We wish you well into the future! Go n-éirí libh!