

# Tidy Towns Competition 2015

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Legan** Ref: **479**  
County: **Longford** Mark: **265**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **19/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	34	34
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	34	36
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	39	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	23	24
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	11	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	34
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>265</b>

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

Ta Fáilte Romhat An Liagán (as per your village sign –or Lena Mór according to your topiary display in the village. In any event welcome Legan to the Super Valu 2015 National Tidy Towns competition. You have five people on your committee. Whereas this is a small number, you are a small village. Housing Estates bolster your committee through their own committees. You list only Longford County Council as a body that support your activities, (apart from Lotto, and the housing estates which self fund). Perhaps before next year you would investigate the possibility of looking for more advice, sponsorship and funding from other agencies and local businesses. Your communications are traditional methods of communication. We suggest that you look at some modern means - such as Facebook - which will engage with the younger population. We hope that you circulate minority churches where relevant in your area as - well as circulating news to the Mass newsletter. You attend the school to give talks to the students. They in turn help you with clean-up evenings.

We do not appear to have received any plan from you this year, although last year's adjudicator asked you to "consider putting together a plan for the village setting realistic and achievable goals". We would strongly encourage you to submit a Tidy Towns plan which will focus your mind on what you can hope to achieve - no matter how simple a plan it is. A plan need not be prepared professionally, but you should consult locally in preparing such a plan. You should also consider any statutory and non-statutory plans applicable to Legan in drawing up your work programme. Please refer to the Tidy Towns Handbook for advice in relation to the preparation of a plan. It is essential to progress in the competition and to gain extra marks under this particular category that you submit such a plan in 2016. Additionally not submitting a plan causes loss of marks in this category. Thank you for your map on which you carefully showed the location of this year's projects as requested - relating to the sequential numbering of projects in your entry form. Your sequence however crossed categories in the entry form itself as you numbered the projects by columns on the page rather than by categories. This however is relatively unimportant. We very much liked your summary of how your groups work contributes to the community - "a place you are proud to call your own - where litter will become unacceptable and cleanliness be the norm."

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

Well done on the repair of the thatched cottage roof. We admired both thatched houses -but particularly the traditional house with its cream/yellow timber windows and half door You indicate that the shop is about to upgrade its premises. Whytes is a neat local supplies shop, although the two pumps need cleaning. Have you looked at the planning application, and are you happy with the design proposals? Some of the projects you list under this category heading such as 'extra floral baskets' more correctly belong to the landscaping category and 'estate signage' belongs to the Residential category. We credit them under the appropriate categories.

Kiernan's is a lovely vernacular building facing directly to one's entrance to the village from Abbeyshrule. It is a pity that the original timber sash windows have been replaced by uPVC insertions. Otherwise it is a great introduction to your village. The church was painted freshly and looked very well. The school was well presented with nice red gates. Well done on Green Flag achievements! One of the two flags at the school was a little frayed. Corners of walls at Mitchell's Bar would benefit from paintwork touching up before 2016. The bar had hanging baskets brackets which were not in use. The striking red village pump was sited unusually and interestingly, and contrasted well with its stone surrounds. The old water use sign adjacent was also admired. The 'Aurora' building was poor, but had a nice gate. Well done on your use of Irish in your hedge 'Fáilte' sign.

You have repaired walls and introduced bog oak features. You have taken on board the advice to paint field gates in certain cases. We admired excellent red field gates on the Abbeyshrule approach. You have some lovely traditional forged gates. We also particularly admired the lovely red decorative older gate to the new cemetery and the traditional hooped farm gate in the same area - the car park area where the bring banks are located. Well done on their maintenance and presentation. But elsewhere we observed unpainted gates. We drove as far as the well at Legan Rock and admired the lovely hedged pathway and good gate at this site.

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

A number of the projects which you mention under this category heading more rightly belong to the Residential category where we credit them. Whereas you have provided extra flower baskets, we would encourage you to concentrate on planting in the soil which is more sustainable and more suitable visually to a rural village. We found the number of planted pots, hanging baskets standards, and hanging baskets to be extremely high, and we felt that this gave a very urban feel to the village as well as portraying a cluttered look. Planting in the soil is renewable and is conservative of water. It is also much more traditional in a village such as yours. Try to landscape as you have done at the river/ball alley – simply and generally maintaining natural vegetation and using native trees, shrubs and hedges. In some places the number of hanging baskets was a little overpowering. The seats and walls beside the river at the ball alley were admired. This area is a lovely tranquil amenity area for your residents and visitors. The crèche is well landscaped, and the nearby public playground was admired. Your name sign in hedging must require an expert's attention and we admired their work! The lupin display at the newer thatched house garden looked very well inside the stone walls. We liked the much simpler and good landscaping of semi-mature trees, grass and hedging between Foxhall Crescent and Coll Choill. Thank you for your photographs of your delightful spring daffodils. They looked amazing!

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

You have renewed the insect hotel at the bridge and left the field beside the ball alley idle. We presume this is with a view to it developing as a wild flower/wild planted area?

Although you mention it under Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes category - we note that you cut your local hedges in advance of the nesting season. The local farming community cooperate on with you on this. Well done to all. However we observed some fairly recent hedge trimming on the Ballymahon approach. Before considering trimming any such hedges please consult with your local authority who will deal with this issue if there is a safety aspect involved.

We would urge you to try to desist from chemical weeding methods. This is not beneficial to the environment. You could talk to your County Heritage Officer in relation to non-chemical weed control methods, and of course manual weeding is always an option in a smaller centre. We notice that you have a sign 'Bird Sanctuary' at the riverside on the Ballymahon road. However there is no indication as to what species of birds have been observed here. Have you any plans to survey the birdlife? We suggest you speak to the County Heritage Officer who will give you advice and encouragement on all aspects of wildlife and natural amenities. You should also read the Tidy Towns Handbook which is quite detailed on this category. The Heritage Council's 'Wildlife in Towns and Villages' booklet is also a useful resource. Engaging with the schools on even elementary nature study surveys can lead in time to the further analysis and interpretation/presentation of the findings. As you live in such a rich environmental area you have the potential to enjoy it and learn more about as well as increase your marks in this category very readily.

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

Some of the projects you mention here belong to the Tidiness category. We congratulate the National School on their Green Flag award. The Bring Bank and Clothes Bank are recycling projects, and, as such are part of sustainable waste and resource management but it is important to remember that this topic involves a lot more than recycling. Sustainable waste and resource management really means that as a community you endeavour to prevent the creation of waste - or at least to lessen this considerably at source. In recycling one is dealing with waste already created. Have you looked at the Tidy Towns publication in relation to Sustainable Waste and Resource Management - the updated version sent to you as updated Handbook extract. We strongly suggest that you choose some simple starting point from the project examples given in that publication, and let us have details for 2016 as to how you have raised awareness, and also as to how you have completed any practical steps to prevent or reduce waste produced across your community. Perhaps endeavour to involve the schoolchildren in this effort, as they become more knowledgeable in this area through the Green Schools programme. We also strongly suggest that you contact your County Environmental Awareness Officer to ask for help and advice. It is also a category within which you can increase your marks.

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

Although you mention cleaning the walkway at the bridge under the Wildlife category we credit you here with this project as it more readily belongs to this category. The care taken with litter by the chip van proprietor also belongs

to this category, although you mention it under Sustainable Waste and Resource Management -likewise with the annual cleanups. Your weekly Wednesday litter cleanup is having effect. You have removed redundant posters and encouraged local businesses to be tidy and litter-free. The overgrown flower beds in the church were cut back and removed. You endeavour to ensure that the litter bins are not used for household waste, and you keep an eye on having the bins emptied where necessary. You regularly monitor the crèche area for litter. There was no directional signage at the bring bank. However the banks themselves and the area immediately around the banks were clean and neat. A litter bin near the school was a little worn. It would be good if the sewage works on site could be softened through landscaping. The boat presented to you by the anglers at the ball alley/riverside looked rather 'sad' and in need of maintenance. It appears (from your entry form) that its location here is a project completed this year. The ball alley would also benefit from some freshening of the paint work.

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

You have organised new signage for the Coll Choill estate. It seemed that a number of the houses were uninhabited but the estate was clean. And you have provided a new sign for Foxhall Crescent. Although you mention the picnic area at Foxhall Crescent under Landscaping it is credited here under Residential as it is within the housing estate. The new Foxhall stone sign was admired -likewise with the turf-based flower beds. The playground in the same estate is kept to high standards. The estate is well planted and the bog oak sculpture was admired. Furthermore you have organised for the repair of street lighting in Springfield Crescent. The renewed stones at the Fáilte sign at Smithfield Crescent Project belongs to this category also. The Corran Phairc an Ghabha sign looked well. The playground at Smithfield Crescent is also well maintained. We noted the best estate award 2014 at this location. A fine gate beside timber fencing and a cream wall was also admired. Some boundary walls need attention and Christmas lights on one property looked out of place in June. The committee members encourage their residents in each estate to take pride in their gardens. The unfinished estate remains well secured with no vandalism. At Rockview we admired the planting at the entrance, also the lovely gates to the houses. There was a well-kept green in this estate. However, we would suggest that you do not plant flowers under trees as the flowers takes sustenance from the trees. We also consider that tyres are not a suitable medium for planting visually or horticulturally. We admired the nice older Terrace of houses which was well maintained beside Kiernan's. In Crescent View the concrete planters were obstructive on footpaths.

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

You have provided extra flowers on approach roads underneath the village signs. You have kept the verges and cleaned the pedestrian way at the river. On the Abbeyshrule road we admired the boulder with the village sign (in English only) at quite a distance from the village and opposite a traffic pole with fly posting - which detracted somewhat from the setting of the boulder. The approaches have good stone walls. Verges were neatly trimmed. At the base of hedges/walls a corridor should be left for wildlife passage. This was also brought your attention by last year's adjudicator. The semi mature trees and delightful shrubs along the grass verge looked very well. We think some of the trees may require some staking for the winter months. Some of the grass edges along the roadside needed reseeding. The name sign was sited in a blue boxed flowerbed. Public lighting extends beyond the 50 K pH. The good black and white striped poles on the speed limit sign looked well. We observed that some hedging had been cut fairly recently. Please see our comments under Wildlife above. This approach is pleasant with good stone walling including brightly painted blue seating. The bridge area is a nice feature. However a recessed weedy space in the vicinity with black fencing looked poorly. It appears that chemical weed killer had been used at this location. Further use of weed killer was noted at two partly stone/brick entrances to vacant sites near the village. Please see our comments under Wildlife.

The M4 is a neat approach with well trimmed edges and neat and weed free footpaths. We observed the stone sign and blue sign for the village. Perhaps one village sign is adequate? We consider that the half barrel planters are not necessary, as there are a good trees, stone walls, and grass verges along this approach. Public lighting extends as far as Foxhall Crescent.

On the Foxhall Stone Man approach road we also spotted signs of fairly recent hedge cutting. Field gates generally were not painted on this approach. We observed some use of weed killer.

The Ballymahon approach is very well maintained with neat verges and good stone walls, trees and hedging. The GAA boundary is good with its engraved players emblem, but we felt that the signage attached to the gate detracted. Could this be free standing and more in keeping with the rest of the development at the site? Nearby stone seating inserted in raised grass beds and stone walls was attractive -but without footpath access. Cars constantly appear to park on the footpath near the shop despite the existence of an excellent car park across the road. Would a pedestrian crossing at this point assist? A pole to which a solar powered sign at the school was attached was rusty

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Legan is a nice village with an enthusiastic progressive community. We would just suggest that you should try to maintain the rural ambience of your village and well done on all your work. Go neiri libh!