

# Tidy Towns Competition 2015

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Longford** Ref: **484**  
County: **Longford** Mark: **298**  
Category: **E** Date(s): **28/06/2015**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2014</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2015</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	41	40
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	42	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	37	38
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33	32
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>298</b>

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

Fáilte An Longford! Welcome Longford to the Super Valu 2015 National Tidy Towns competition. To have in excess of 60 members in the Longford Tidy Towns group is phenomenal representation. From these you have 10 on your committee. This is a manageable committee size. You hold monthly committee meetings and other on-site meetings as required. We are glad to know that you have a TÚS scheme. Your list of agencies, bodies and businesses that support your activities is extensive. Your communication methods are all-encompassing. You visit local schools bi annually and in 2013 appointed a Liaison Officer. The transition year students get involved in various programmes and you have a fledgling Junior Tidy Towns group. We wish you continued expansion and success with this very important section of the population. They are the Tidy Towns committees of the future.

We are glad to hear that your 10 years entering the competition has resulted in a clean healthier - and - significantly you mention - happier environment in which to live. The human/social aspect of the Tidy Towns network is an important one, sometimes forgotten in the race to succeed 'on-the-ground.' You also correctly say that a tidy town also attracts business and visitors.

We do not appear to have received a Tidy Towns plan from you. A plan will focus your mind on what you can realistically hope to achieve. You should consult locally in preparing such a plan. You should also consider any statutory and non-statutory plans applicable to Longford 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. Not having a plan leads to loss of marks in this category.

Your town map was minimalistic insofar as it showed only the centre of the town. This is not adequate for a town the size of Longford and the map gives no indication of the extent of the town. This is all the more surprising insofar as we received a map for another centre which also contained a much more detailed map of Longford town in the same brochure. That would be a tourist map. That is not necessarily what we require, but it would have been somewhat more helpful. Please ensure that your map in 2016 is a purpose-prepared, appropriately scaled map for a town the size of Longford, and complies with the Guidelines in relation to mapping. Show and name all approach roads. Show and name all town edge roundabouts. Name each street and housing estate. Show and name each bridge. Boundaries of your town should be shown. Show all significant landmarks etc. (You have shown less than half a dozen basic landmarks). Remember that you have to consider that the adjudicator may possibly not have visited your town before. It can be very frustrating for the adjudicator to be referencing your report in the absence of a proper map. In that case the adjudicator has to seek to find a nameplate on each street where they wish to refer to a particular issue. And not every street in Longford has a name plate! It can also cause confusion to you the reader, as the referencing in your report may not be as accurate as it might be otherwise. The lack of a useful fit-for-

purpose map also leads to marks loss. You have however numbered the mappable projects for this year sequentially in your entry form and on the map, and this is good

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

Longford town is a very fine provincial town with good main streets of varying, but complimentary buildings. Generally the buildings are distinctive, and have not been homogenised into the typical high-street streetscape one may find elsewhere. This is an achievement. A number of properties along Main Street, Bridge Street, and Ballymahon Street have become unoccupied and have suffered deterioration as a result. An example of this is the hotel on Main Street - the Annaly. We were delighted to read therefore about your new business incentive scheme. We heartily wish you every success with its operation. The replacement of the footpaths sets the scene for ongoing streetscape improvements. The entire replacement of old with new in relation to poles and light fittings is as yet unfinished. We look forward to seeing the finished product in 2016. We admired your choice of lighting. We would strongly suggest that further works would be part of an overall streetscape plan for all aspects of the streets to be carried out professionally by the architects' department of your local authority, in conjunction with the property owners and other interested parties such as yourselves and the Chamber of Commerce. Such a plan should also include laneways and alleyways. In general these laneways and alleyways were fairly tidy, but dull and uninviting. Another issue which you might look at is the proliferation of projecting sign and projecting lights along the shop fronts generally, together with the accumulation of sandwich boards, refuse bins, and other items particularly in the pedestrian out-shots. In Clós Garbheith (the English sign is damaged) we admired the mosaic. The post office which, many years ago, won an Irish Planning Institute infill award looked well. The Edward VII circular post box is a very important heritage item. It was presented well and is still in use. Well done on your success in improving the streetscape at Bridge Street. It will still be important to keep an eye on this part of the built environment, as lack of use of units can lead to neglect. A number of unoccupied and run-down properties were however still in evidence nearby. The bridge near the Town Centre cannot be seen clearly because of the cordoned-off area near the Town Centre development.

Tally Wejil was resplendent with its shining white paint. We liked the gold lettering on Kenny's next-door. The hood mouldings on the upper floor windows at Tally Wejil and on the windows next-door at the Green Apple restaurant are intact and attractive. The gleaming white presentation was echoed across the road at the unoccupied building beside the Annaly Hotel. It is a pity that uPVC has in many cases replaced original timber sash windows in so many of the fine buildings along the main streets. What is the architectural conservation policy in this regard in your local plan? The Courthouse is a very fine building, and is set off well on either side by such buildings as its own 'shop front' extension, Longford Mortgage Centre, and the Longford Arms hotel. The gable of the Longford Arms hotel (facing Richmond Street) is in need of repainting. The bank buildings are very fine traditional examples of commercial architecture of the 19th century. We particularly admired the River God -type carvings on the Ulster bank, and the 1922 plasterwork emblem on the AIB bank. The brightly coloured orange shop frontage with the excellent original orange coloured shop front gate (containing symbols like the Manx emblem) is a nice piece of the built environment and very well maintained. We admired the old Irish script on the school on St Mel's Road - Scoil Micil Naofa. It would be good to see a greater use of the Irish language in the town in general, and remember that this is a consideration for marking under this category heading. There are some very fine buildings on the road between Bridge Street and St John's Church which appear to be in professional office use. It appears a pity to this adjudicator that the area in front of these buildings has been designated as an off-street parking area.

We are not surprised that you have listed St Mel's Cathedral as project number one in your submission. Having heard about all the architectural awards the Cathedral has received, we were most anxious to visit it. Whereas Tidy Towns adjudicators do not adjudicate on interiors, we nonetheless spent quite an amount of time enjoying a visit inside the cathedral – on which we shall not comment as it is not part of our brief! However we do comment on externalities. Firstly we would like to congratulate the people of Longford and the diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise on the tremendous achievement in 'raising the phoenix from the ashes.' The vast paving area outside sets off the Cathedral to good purpose. The semi-mature trees planted along the perimeter looked really well. However, we were a little saddened to see considerable weed growth throughout these beds. We were impressed with the mobility impaired accesses. The Church of Ireland was very well presented, as was the Garda Station nearby. Templemichael College is nicely landscaped, but a lot of signage on the gate detracted. (We did not observe any flags flying at the school). . Seirbís Doitéan an Longfort looked well with its adjacent wooden bollards. St. Joseph's Road's stone wall and good railings were admired. Approaching the Market Square from St. Josephs Road/New Street we noticed many kegs, and a dirty wall on the left-hand side. The Square is a fine public space in itself. However, we felt it was cluttered with advertising, pots, and signage.

We visited the railway station, admired the whitewashed wall and hedging across from the station building. We felt that there were too many small signs on the station house facing the public road. The signal cabin would benefit from conservation of the woodwork, as this is a lovely feature of the station. The railway bridge is an example of the excellent iron work of the railway construction period, and is quite well maintained. The railway station is cared for, and we were glad to see that it also had a disability-friendly lift system.

We discuss the M5 approach road under the Approach Road category, and we credit estate landscaping under the Residential category (You list them under this category heading.)

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

We have already referred to the attractive landscaping at St Mel's Cathedral, but also to the weed growth noted in the tree beds on adjudication day. The salvaged pillars are interesting features, including the pillar included in the sculpture to recognise the fire services at the Fire Station. It must be rewarding for the local Fire Station staff to have battled so hard and to be appreciated thus. We also noted the colourful Cruthú Art Festival work which greatly brightens up the side entrance to the Midland Court car park. However, its surrounds also need upgrading to be worthy of such a lovely piece.

We are sorry to hear that you have had to replace trees as a result of vandalism. Well done on all the work that goes into maintaining such a considerable area of landscaping in and around the town. In relation to streetscape plantings we would recommend the engagement of a landscape architect as well as a horticulturalist. Planting in baskets and planters have their place, but we would not like to see the very fine streets 'festooned' with hanging baskets. The architecture should be generally sufficient - with space for native trees and judiciously sited pots where appropriate. In this regard we were glad to hear that you intend to use large planter boxes with trees which will be more in scale with the architecture. The sustainability of soil planting should also be considered viv-a-vis contained planting and also in relation to water conservation issues. Where hanging basket brackets are attached to buildings but unused, they should be removed. An example of this was noted at the Tír na nÓg building near Annaly Gardens. Hanging baskets should never be attached to Protected Structures as they can damage the fabric of the building.

The Mall is indeed a most pleasing part of Longford town - and one of which we were unaware until this visit - having only been a 'passing' visitor - and not an adjudicator in Longford heretofore. It fulfils a joint function of passive recreation together with an active sports recreational function. Therefore it appeals to all age groups and brings them together in a delightful setting. It has been provided with good seating, the interesting sculpture - 'Timelessness' - as well as the outdoor and indoor sporting facilities and play areas. It was being well used on a fine evening in late June. It was also presented in a tidy and almost litter-free fashion despite the late hour and the day's use behind it. Obviously it is appreciated by all. The Philo Kelly Mall Bridge is of raw metal which would look better if painted. The signage on the bridge should be removed and replaced with directional signage if required.

One issue which we found quite frustrating was in finding the out-of-centre canal walkways and cycle routes without an adequate map. You did mark the canal area in-town on your map. Indeed many of your local population could not give us directions either. We have to say that - as well as a good map - adequate signposting for these lovely amenities is needed.

We walked part of the Royal Canal Community walkway, and were impressed with the care and maintenance that we saw. We observed bird and bat boxes and admired your bird information panel on the new walkway signage. It is good to see that lighting is provided so that this walkway can be used on darker evenings.

We admired the lovely gravel shrub bed fronting the gable of large shed on the street off Richmond Street leading to the car park/Annaly Park. The landscaping at the public library is very attractive and some very colourful planters were located in different places.

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

You do not refer to wildlife habitats or natural amenities in describing the new Royal Canal track way under this category heading in your entry form. Obviously such are legion, but you have given us no indication of how you intend to survey/analyse or intend to present such habitat information to the public on the new canal amenity area (connecting to Clondra). Whereas it would be a good thing that people would use this area for exercise, it would be a pity if its biodiverse unspoiled nature went unremarked. Some people walk and cycle for health and exercise; other people meander and explore to learn more about nature. Others include both in their visits. We look forward to reading of your plans in this regard in 2016. You have some interpretation on the community canal walkway which we observed - but it is limited and not attributable to this year's projects. We realise that the opening of the Clondra connection is new and we did not really expect things to be fully in place re habitats, but we did expect reference to plans for such.

You tell us that the 'Environmental Officer' continues his programme of biodiversity workshops in local schools. You give us no indication as to their content or how often this is - or how long this has been happening. Does the 'Environmental Officer,' cover Biodiversity and Sustainable Waste Management and Awareness topics? In some local authorities there are separate officers - an Environmental Awareness Officer and a Biodiversity Officer. We are not sure what the case is in your situation.

You have the guidance of an excellent organisation in Birdwatch Ireland to 'save the swift.' Obviously this has caught the local imagination, and you have received support from schools and businesses in installing the bird boxes and identifying additional sites. Well done on your success in obtaining grant funding from the Heritage Council on this issue. With regard to spraying of verges, kerbs and footpaths we would encourage you to consider some nonchemical environmentally friendly weed control methods. Perhaps your County Heritage Officer could guide you in this area.

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

You describe the Spring Clean under this category heading - but we credit it under the Litter and Tidiness heading - to which it more rightly belongs. We are delighted to hear that so many schools are involved in the Green Flag programme, and that they continue to enter the Repak, and Alupro Can recycling awards. Please let us know more about how they are progressing in each of these ventures next year. We admired the Green flag at Scoil Eimear, (but all 3 flags displayed are frayed at the edges). Three flags on the grounds of the school at St Josephs Road

were noted, as were the flags at Scoil Micil Naofa. You mention that the School Liaison Officer and the Environmental Officer visit both primary and secondary schools biannually. Can this be increased to an annual visit? Cooperation from schools' transition years can bring great benefits to Tidy Towns groups, so we are glad that your schools' transition students are coming 'on board' on a monthly basis. Well done on the rain harvesting. We are glad to see that you have commenced a waste minimisation campaign including workshops for local businesses. Once again a little more detail about these workshops would be of interest to us. It would be a pity if the workshops confined discussion to segregation of waste only. It is important to remember that the overall aim is to try to produce zero waste. You mention a number of recycling initiatives – such as the Christmas tree shredding. The Greener Homes - in which you are involved, is a good example of waste minimisation practice. How many households are involved? Do you have any records / surveys to see how successful it is? Have you looked at the Tidy Towns publication in relation to Sustainable Waste and Resource Management - the updated version sent to you as an updated Handbook extract. We strongly suggest that you choose some project examples given in that publication, and let us have details for 2016 as to how you have completed new practical steps to prevent waste produced across your community.

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

Well done on your commitment to the Spring Clean. You seem to have your clean-up evenings very well organised. You are having considerable success in relation to awareness raising with regard to litter and other maintenance issues within the town centre. Some litter was noted along grass edges on the Strokestown Road approach. Generally little graffiti or fly posting was noted - nor were weeds a problem except on some approaches and minimally in residential areas. Chewing gum unfortunately still remains a problem in many towns including Longford, but it was not excessive. Still, it is frustrating for you to see the attractive new pavements marked with gum. Perhaps you can see if you can improve on this gum situation for 2016. We are sure that the local authority is delighted to have you carry out four litter picks to augment their - probably much reduced - staff efforts. You acknowledge the diligence of the TÚS workers in this regard. We credit the 'Adopt a Road' scheme under Residential Streets and Housing Areas (and on Approach Roads categories also). The removal of unnecessary poles and wires is very welcome. Congratulations on your standing in the IBAL league. You provide many awards to the community under various category headings to do with tidiness - which is an incentive that has proven successful.

Off the Strokestown Road approach we visited an industrial estate (Newtownparks?) There were very overgrown edges to the local Wanderers Park (Michael Neary Park?) grounds. There are some very ugly stained concrete bollards along an overgrown path edge. Some litter and black plastic 'flying' from a tree were also observed. A broken weedy footpath and unsurfaced forecourt to a grey/red business unit looked poorly. The entrance area to Willow Park halting site was very poor. In this area further discoloured concrete bollards and weeds - as well as a rusty barrier - were ameliorated by the well presented Longford Car Parts premises. This entire area requires tidying and landscaping, sign rationalisation etc. The new grey (seemingly unused) large building at the far corner site (junction of Athlone Road) looks well. We found a lot of untidiness and unfinished and vacant sites also in the business estate (Mastertech Business Park?) en route from the Athlone Road to Royal Canal Avenue and Park areas. Whereas such areas are not visited by tourists, they are certainly visited by business people - perhaps potential investors in Longford, and creating a better impression visually is important.

Too many notices in windows or doorways can look untidy such as observed at the Tír na nÓg/Harmony House building. Some premises such as a furniture factory on the street linking Richmond St. and Annaly Park would benefit from repainting. A very rundown closed garage was noted on Richmond Street. Little Water Street needs brightening, but its furniture shop was cleanly presented. The Town Centre development looks vacant, and we noted some very weedy edges in this area. The car park to the Town Centre development is unfinished and looks very poorly - especially as one arrives back towards the town from the dog shelter area. Broken glass was noted around the Town Centre development ground floor. Across the road on Little Water St. some pallets were left out over the double yellow line on this street. Planters near the Netwatch signs/security fencing/candle-style lights near the bridge only draw attention to the situation in this area.

The barrier at Scoil Eimear needs straightening and painting, and it would be also beneficial to paint the gate. Weeds were noted along Blind Man's Walk - outside the college boundary wall. Near Radharc Naomh Mel a dirty ochre coloured two-storey building with broken windows looked badly. An overgrown site on Great Water Street near the local government buildings also looked badly. The yard adjacent to the local authority buildings might be screened and the security fencing planted. The car park near the same buildings was nicely landscaped. The grey security fencing could be landscaped and the stained wall cleaned. The shopping centre area off Main Street could do with a general overhaul. Road markings here need renewal - especially pedestrian crossing markings. Quite a number of the buildings bordering the car park area would benefit from better maintenance. The connecting link between Main Street and the shopping centre precincts is neglected. Shuttered premises look forbidding. Would it be possible to place the shutters behind the window displays? This alleyway has cracked pavement areas, and on adjudication day had some litter. The signage on Main Street for this centre is complicated and cluttered. The access area to the Town Centre car park from St Mel's Road is quite rundown. The Bring Centre here looked tidy from the front, but in views from the rear looked much neglected, with weeds and a paint-peeling wall. A cardboard box and a plastic bag were left near the bins. A litter bin near the Library needs fixing, and some of the circular turquoise pillars to the side need painting. We would strongly suggest that you include a plan for an upgrade to this Shopping Centre area in next year's entry. On a very strategic corner across from the Longford Arms hotel (at the builders' providers' corner), the pedestrian security railings were bent, and the tall metal pillar at this strategic corner was very rusty. The security pedestrian railings on the hotel corner also needed to be repainted. There was some litter in evidence along the footpath in Main Street, but this was limited and not a major problem.

The car park off Anbally Road/Street was clean and neat apart from one corner - which had a blue tattered wall. There was some graffiti on a block wall at the entrance and on two grey bins. The area around the Bring Bank was clean apart from a plastic bottle and two pieces of plastic, but the bins themselves were battered and dirty and the signage needs improvement. We consider that the raw security fencing at the former Army Barracks entrance at the top of Bridge Street look poorly in relation to the surrounds. You obviously have got the message across about posters and poster ties, as there were none! Well done!

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

The competitions which you organise create competitiveness between various residential areas. This results in increasing standards of presentation. We hope that your time and effort - together with your local authority input also in helping to set up residents' associations is appreciated. You acknowledge your very active and supportive Garda Liaison and Community Officers. Your 'Saturday' targeting of problem areas brings people together as well as solving some black spot areas. The 'Adopt a Road' initiative has been taken on board by local residents for their own areas. In a town the size of Longford we cannot visit all housing estates, but the following estates were visited:-

Annally Gardens was identified to us on our arrival from St. Michael's Road only by the name on the ESB sub station - which also had some graffiti attached. We admired the good semi-mature tree planting around the open space, although some trees needed replacing. The unusual dog sculpture looked very well, although a litter bin nearby required painting. Some wooden planting boxes were empty, and we observed a few pieces of litter. Nonetheless this housing estate is a tranquil oasis, and a credit to its owners. Although we know it is not new for this year the new residential street developed in 2013 at St Michael's Road is a good example of residential urban regeneration. We admired the gardens fronting the single storey part of this development. A derelict property beside the community centre Harmony House/Tír na nÓg building looked badly in the context of this newly upgraded area.

Lanna Aobhinn has a good stone boulder name sign. Some remains of graffiti on the ESB substation adjacent were noted. This estate is generally well presented and landscaped. The seating area was being well used on a sunny Sunday afternoon. Nice trees and shrubs were admired. Some parking on the footpaths was noted.

Ward Terrace is an interesting terrace with many original porches, but some boundary walls require paint. A few derelict houses near the plumbing suppliers end looked poorly. Litter and weeds in gardens near the junction detracted from this end of the road. Congress Terrace was generally neat. At the junction of St Michael's Road and the Strokestown Road - one corner is paved, but the other corner still has a rough surface.

Royal Canal Avenue and Royal Canal Park both looked neat, but would benefit from more landscaping in the open spaces. In Railway Meadows grass was collected against a wall, and we observed a number of weedy areas.

Battery Road has lovely villa-style houses with magnificent trees and gardens.

St. Emer's was mature and well presented, but a 'headless' traffic pole at the exit from the school should have its traffic sign reattached or the pole should be removed. A one-way sign here was also obscured by vegetation and some directional arrows were also faded - as were some road markings. We were not surprised to see that this estate was a runner-up in the estates competition.

Oaklands is secluded and treed. The 'stop' sign as one emerges from the estate requires repainting. Árd Michael needs trimming inside the entrance. St. Mary's Terrace on the Ardagh approach was well presented. The standard of individual houses in town streets, in the residential suburbs of the town, and on approach roads was generally very good. Some derelict houses (with slipping slates) in an otherwise nice two-storey terrace were noted at Great Water Street. Some houses on Chapel Lane require painting, as do some boundary walls. This residential street has become more important due to the number of people visiting St Mel's Cathedral and possibly accessing it from the Chapel Lane area. A good terrace of houses on St Mel's Road was spoiled to some extent by the number of satellite dishes on the front elevations of the houses.

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

Your 'Adopt a Road' has proven successful on approaches also. The planting along the N5 approach to the town is as you say 'maturing nicely but requires constant care and attention.' The approach to Richmond Street has got a facelift with the new fencing. We noted a gap in the footpath between the timber fencing and the hedge closer to the town. Grass is cut regularly at roundabouts and on all approach roads and it is obvious that volunteers spend many hours weeding and cleaning the paving. Washing poles, signage, and litter bins keeps your volunteers very busy. At the first roundabout on the Tarmonbarry /L1175 approach there was some advertising with regard to local events, some flowers and weeds. The second roundabout on this approach looked better. The green and white Longford sign was bent at the edges. Otherwise the approach was well trimmed and treed. As already mentioned under 'Litter' litter was noted along the cut edges on the Strokestown Road approach and the area around the stone bridge was a little weedy. An untidy metal gate entrance near the 50 K pH speed limit sign with a plastic container inside looked poorly. Security railings around the motor works looked rather ugly, and would benefit from some landscaping, and, as this is the first premises on this approach it creates a first impression. We noticed a little graffiti in this area. Closer to the town an open area with much concrete was tidy but needs planters. On-footpath parking was observed along this approach in places. The rusty unused advertising hoarding opposite Stewart's should be removed. This was located inside a weedy field entrance with a rusty black gate. A very rough hard shoulder area outside Town and Country was noted. The galvanised car wash sheds near Stewart's need paint. A planning notice

was hanging off a wall beside Kate's Kitchen. There was a certain amount of litter hereabouts. A derelict flat roof on an ochre coloured building - with broken windows and rusty metal railings - adjacent to the new apartment block on Richmond Street looked poorly.

The Roscommon/Athlone Road approach was quite a disappointment to this adjudicator. We appreciate the fact that you have made some effort to ameliorate this situation. But the general impression approaching in this direction is poor, and does no justice to the rest of the town. We would very much recommend that you work together to create a plan to improve this approach road. At the canal walk/ bridge area there is a lovely shrub bed area, but unfortunately this is fronted by a weedy footpath and very weedy footpaths edge. Uncut high grass surrounds the green and white Longford town sign just before the 50 K pH speed limit sign. A weedy footpath was noted on the right-hand side approaching the town. The Royal Canal Business Park landscaping and stone wall looked attractive, as did the GEM premises which were also nicely landscaped. However, opposite this there were weedy unsurfaced areas in front of various businesses premises/overgrown sites etc. and a lot of varied signage. Cartronageeragh Business Park had a very overgrown entrance on the left-hand side. The Toyota premises were well presented, but a wide hard shoulder was unsurfaced nearby. There was a very weedy footpath near Mega Bowl. A 'for sale' premises was overgrown. The footpath was very weedy in front of the West Link Business Park and inwards. We noticed some broken signs in this area but also a bright building (Connacht Gold?) which looked unoccupied. Once again weedy footpaths detracted. There are some broken walls and fences on this approach road also. Christmas lights which looked poorly in June were noted near where road surfacing material was also stored - and further detracted from this approach. The railway bridge area was the final disappointment on this approach, and one which the visitor can observe closely due to the traffic lights allowing stopping time at this point. The raw security railings, hoardings, and untidy surrounds give a bad impression on finally entering the town proper.

By contrast the Dublin Road approach is a delight, with its treed/landscaped perimeter boundaries - apart from some unsurfaced area inside the hard shoulder near the Red Cow roundabout. The Red Cow roundabout is nicely planted as is the mini roundabout at Homebase. However advertising might be removed from the former. and the arrow sign which has slipped should be straightened. The Leo Casey roundabout is beautifully landscaped, but has some advertising thereon which should be removed.

The Ballinalee/Granard approach has no 80 K pH sign/(only 60 K pH coming in) – and this very far out from the town. The residences along this rural road are well matured and presented. The roundabout here is poorly maintained beyond the 80 K pH speed limit sign, and we observed a derelict entrance to an estate nearby. The Abbott and Green Isle premises beyond the inner roundabout is extremely well landscaped. Bothar Tobar an Mhaoir / Mayor's Well Road looked well.

On the Ardagh approach there is some nice banked planting, which leads inwards towards suburban type development, and there are nice views to St Mel's from this road. A few 'headless' traffic sign poles were noted around the area of the hospital.

There is a very poor road surface and surrounds on the road to the dog shelter area. There appeared to be no marked space outside the Adult Education Centre on Church Road for the electric car installation located there on the footpath. Road surfaces and road markings on Chapel Lane are poor in general in proximity to the newly reconstructed Cathedral. Directional Signage across the road on St. Mel's Road needs renewal. A 'slow school patrol' ahead sign on the same road was very dirty.

The violin is a really beautiful piece of public art. This adjudicator was most impressed with this exciting piece. The unfortunate thing is – as with much roadside art - that it is difficult to fully appreciate it - as it is too dangerous as a driver to take its beauty in.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Thank you for the note at the end of your entry form thanking the adjudicator for taking the time to visit your town. We enjoyed nine hours looking around your town and we learnt a lot about a community who are committed to making Longford a special place. We wish you every success in your work in the future. We did thank you arrive 'Slan Abhaile!'