

# Tidy Towns Competition 2013

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Lawrencetown** Ref: **199**  
County: **Galway** Mark: **238**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **20/06/2013**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2013</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	32	33
The Built Environment	50	37	38
Landscaping	50	29	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	14	16
Litter Control	50	31	32
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	9	9
Tidiness	30	15	16
Residential Areas	40	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32	33
General Impression	10	6	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>238</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

We are pleased to welcome Lawrencetown to the 2013 Tidy Towns competition and it is heartening to see that there is such a high level of interest in improving your village with a total of 20 directors and members involved in your projects. We are delighted to read that you have a good working relationship with Galway County Council, the Community Employment Scheme and Fas and that assistance is also provided by the VEC, Respond and the Health Board. Consider also contacting Galway Rural Development as they have been very supportive of other tidy towns groups in County Galway. No reference is made in your entry form to other voluntary groups or sports clubs in Lawrencetown. Are they involved in your efforts? Your communication strategy may also benefit from the development of a website as this can be an effective means of informing people about your projects and activities as well as capturing feedback. We are pleased to see that you encourage the school to get involved but we would strongly recommend that joint projects should be considered, particularly in the areas of landscaping, wildlife and waste minimisation as the schools can be an excellent source of ideas and enthusiastic young helpers. Thank you for your completed application form and map, which were useful during adjudication. Your tidy towns plan was read with interest and while the projects identified are commended, we suggest that projects are grouped under the tidy towns headings (as they appear in the entry form) and that start and finish dates are included where possible.

### The Built Environment:

Lawrencetown is a very attractive planned village with a rich built heritage and many fascinating buildings and monuments to observe and explore. The adjudicator particularly liked the Lodge House on the Portumna approach and the consistent stone name signs are very impressive. Has a heritage trail with map and information plaques been considered for Lawrencetown? This matter should be discussed with the Heritage Officer of Galway County Council and Galway Rural Development as there appears to be lots of potential for one. The derelict site was also spotted on the Somerset Road (opposite the housing estate with the fenced off area) and it appears untidy looking. Would it be possible to get this boarded up? Like the adjudicator in 2012, we recommend that the Council are contacted for assistance on dealing with problem sites and derelict buildings. The lovely space that accommodates the statue of Diarmuid and Grainne was admired with its pleasant seating and well maintained green areas. It is disappointing to read that the rate of vacancy has risen in the village and this has made it more difficult to maintain properties. However, it was pleasing to see that the majority of the buildings are in good condition and achieve a good standard of presentation including Paddys and the Beautiful

Bird. The central space here was a little disappointing as weed growth was observed and the pump was in need of a fresh coat of paint. The Community Hall and the Church also looked quite well, while the school achieved a very high standard of presentation. We were pleased to see that the committee has also secured permission to repair the eyecatcher at Bellevue. It is further noted that your projects for 2013 included the extension of the footpath on Eyrecourt Road (which was ongoing during adjudication), the welcome demolition of the derelict houses at the west end of the village and the rebuilding of the natural stone wall on the Ballinasloe Road.

### **Landscaping:**

Some attractive landscaping schemes were observed in Lawrencetown during adjudication. The landscaped bed at the seating area (close to the Diarmuid and Grainne statue) is most attractive as it adds colour and significantly enhances the appearance of this lovely public space. The public space at the Beautiful Bird did not reach the same standard and it is recommended that additional landscaping and maintenance is considered in order to improve it. Some additional landscaping should also be considered for the approach road into Lawrencetown. The landscaped beds at the Community Hall car park also looked very well. You are commended on the other projects you undertook for 2013 which included the maintenance of all grassed areas in the village and approach roads (all of which looked very well) in addition to the fencing off of the problem area in the residential area on Somerset Road.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

You are commended on your community garden project, which involves developing a community garden on a previously overgrown and underused area. However, we would love to hear more details about this project. Is the purpose of this community garden to grow plants and shrubs for tidy towns projects and landscaping schemes? Or is it intended to grow fruit and vegetables? Please let us know in 2014. It is also stated on your entry form that the main heritage area in the village is the tree lined entrance to the village from Portumna and we were wondering if this is included on the nature trail to the cemetery referred to in the 2012 adjudicators report? Has any further consideration been given to carrying out a wildlife survey of your main heritage area or your heritage and wildlife walk? Perhaps the school would be interested in getting involved in this project?

### **Litter Control:**

We note from your application form that weekly litter collections take place in Lawrencetown and these are clearly effective as the standard of litter control observed was very good. Do the school help out with your litter picking activities? Well done also on monitoring the bring centre on a more regular basis as the closer attention given to it is working – it was spotless during adjudication.

### **Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:**

This emphasis in this tidy towns category is on waste minimisation and elimination. The onus is on Tidy towns groups to come up with innovative ways to raise awareness of the need to minimise and eliminate waste in their communities and to come up with actions that can help to achieve this. In order to raise awareness, a waste minimisation seminar or composting workshop should be organised with the aid of Galway County Council. Alternatively, waste minimisation tips can be made available by the tidy towns group – although it is best if this is done through websites as this approach will reduce paper wastage. Actions that could be considered by the group to minimise waste include growing your plants, making your compost and harvesting your own rain water. Recycled materials (such as wood, stone, paint, etc) should also be used where possible in your tidy towns projects.

### **Tidiness:**

We note from your entry form, that your projects under this category include; maintaining road signs on a regular basis, removing weed from roadsides and kerbs and taking down advertising signage. The committee are to be commended on this work as most areas in the village were free from weeds and the signage generally looked very well. However, weed persisted in some highly visible locations such as the central space in front of the Beautiful Bird while the pavement in front of the house that is under construction was also very weedy and untidy looking.

### **Residential Areas:**

The standard of presentation for individual houses and gardens in Lawrencetown was generally good on adjudication. While individual houses and gardens in the Castlawn estate looked well, it was let down somewhat by an untidy landscaping bed at the entrance with weedblocker showing.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The approach to Lawrencetown from Portumna is a delight with lovely arching mature trees lining the road and giving a good first impression to the visitor. The attractive bilingual name stone and carefully maintained road verges and footpath help to reinforce this positive view. The Ballinasloe approach was also impressive and the rebuilt natural stone wall was admired. The verges on the Somerset Road and the Eyrecourt road did not achieve this high standard as the verges needed to be trimmed.

### **General Impression:**

We are delighted to see that, despite the challenges that it faces, Lawrencestown continues to improve in the tidy towns competition and we look forward to visiting you again in 2014.