



Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Phort Láirge  
Waterford City & County Council

## **Minister Ring congratulates Lismore as it is named 'Ireland's Top Small Tourism Town'**

*Lismore selected as best small tourism town while  
Ardmore is highly commended*

Minister of State for Tourism and Sport Michael Ring TD and Fáilte Ireland today (25<sup>th</sup> November 2015) congratulated Lismore, Co. Waterford as it was crowned best *National Small Tourism Town* at the fourth annual Tourism Towns Awards which took place in The Morrison Hotel, in Dublin. Tralee, Co. Kerry came out on top in the *National Large Tourism Town* category.

While Lismore picked up the top prize as Ireland's best *National Small Tourism Town*, Ardmore, Co. Waterford received a certificate of merit acknowledging their own impressive performance in reaching out to visitors and creating the best possible tourism experiences.

Congratulating Lismore Minister Ring emphasised -

***"Congratulations to Lismore on what is a wonderful achievement and worthy recognition for all that they have done to welcome visitors to their town. These awards are all about honouring the towns that put tourism at the centre of what they do and both winners really impressed, with their local communities pulling together for the greater good of their town. The people of Waterford truly understand tourism and value their visitors. Ultimately, this shows in the quality of what they have to offer and in the warmth of their welcome."***

The *Tourism Towns Award* was designed by Fáilte Ireland to promote those Irish towns and villages which are working hardest to enhance their appeal to tourists visiting their local area. As the overall winners, Lismore will receive its winning certificate along with a €5,000 grant towards further developing itself as a tourism destination.

Today's winners were chosen from a shortlist of Ten Top Tourism Towns. In the run—up to today's awards, a team of mystery shoppers visited each town to measure their tourism performance and the level of welcome to visitors.

Aside from today's two top winners, eight other high performing towns, including Ardmore, were commended for their work:

### **Best Large Towns – Highly Commended**

Cobh, Co. Cork  
Killarney, Co Kerry  
Kilkenny, Co Kilkenny

### **Best Small Town – Highly Commended**

Ardmore, Co Waterford  
Adare, Co Limerick  
Clonakilty, Co Cork  
Kenmare, Co Kerry  
Sneem, Co Kerry

Speaking today Fáilte Ireland's Director of Strategic Development, Orla Carroll, welcomed the announcement of the 2015 winners –

***"This awards scheme, now in its fourth year, is not all about recognising those towns that do the best from tourism but rather those that do their best for tourism. Today we celebrate Irish towns and villages that have really embraced tourism and where all sectors – and not just the local tourism interests – have supported the strengthening of their local welcome.***

***"All the towns involved in this year's competition have demonstrated what you can achieve when you demonstrate 'pride of place'. Their commitment to their local area not only contributes to the sustained growth of Irish tourism, it is also a central part in the 'tourism towns' spirit which ultimately turns a good holiday into an unforgettable experience."***

With regard to the overall winners, the judges' first impression of Lismore was that it had something unique to offer visitors. The judges particularly noted that –

***"They say Lismore is where the past is present and that's true. Beautifully maintained, compact, the visitor can step back in time with all the necessary modern facilities and services within easy reach."***

They also highlighted the lush and historic surroundings - all within walking distance – which are a particular selling point for visitors who can enjoy the local culture, crafts and history or just enjoy the tranquillity of the nearby parks and walks, all wrapped in the river and historical walls, monuments and churches.

Delighted to accept the Best Small Tourism Town, Mary O'Brien, Secretary - Lismore Tidy Towns, commented -

***"The people of Lismore are thrilled to have been chosen as a Top Tourism Town. It means a lot to the town of Lismore and will impact on tourism and business in the year ahead.***

***"Lismore has a great sense of community and pride of place amongst the businesses, residents and the many voluntary groups. The people of the town are constantly looking for ways to make the tourism experience as inclusive as possible and to encourage exploration of Lismore town and the general West Waterford area.***

***"Bundling and joint marketing of the town's product offering has been a major part of the focus here which highlights the diversity of the offering from heritage and festivals to food producers, craft workers, walks, outdoor activities and gardens."***

Speaking after the event, Susan Cronin, Chairperson of Lismore Tidy Towns, and Mealla Fahey, project manager of Lismore Heritage Centre added –

***"We are thrilled by the award and wish to acknowledge all of the hard work undertaken by the community, voluntary workers, businesses, tidy towns group, and the staff of the Lismore Heritage Centre, as well as Waterford City & County Council. This award will further promote Lismore and West Waterford as a visitor destination for years to come'.***

Representing the town of Ardmore, Aidan Quirke, Round Tower Hotel, said –

*“Ardmore is honoured to be selected as part of the Top 10 Tourism Towns shortlist. It has been a wonderful process for the people of Ardmore to be part of this initiative. It brings with it a sense of pride both for our residents and our thousands of holidaymakers that come back to Ardmore every year.*

*“We now have a fully manned tourist office seven days a week throughout the summer season – this is mainly done on a voluntary basis. Both the Tourism Towns competition and Tidy Towns competition go hand in hand for us – each compliments the other.*

*“Being part of the Tourism Towns awards has brought the ‘voice’ the tourist to the forefront of our little village.”*

Two short videos highlighting the appeal of all ten finalists can be accessed here [[Ireland’s Best Large Tourism Towns](#)] and [[Ireland’s Best Small Tourism Towns](#)].

You can download images of the top ten tourism towns [here](#).

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**ENDS**

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**PHOTOS WILL ISSUE FROM FENNELL PHOTOGRAPHY**

**Note for Editor**

Fáilte Ireland, the national tourism development authority, was established in 2003 to guide and promote tourism as a leading indigenous component of the Irish economy.

The tourism and hospitality industry employs an estimated 185,000 people and generates almost €5.7 billion in revenue a year.

**Tourism Town Awards – what are the judges looking for?**

The Tourism Town Award focuses on how participating towns have developed their local area in the following key tourism areas:

- **Sense of Place** – How the town tells its own unique story to visitors, what’s special about it, and what distinguishes it from other towns.
- **Local Involvement** - How the local community works together to provide an authentic visitor experience.

- **Tourism Products Available** – What the town has to offer visitors.
- **Development and promotion of the town** – How the town takes a unified approach to marketing and developing the town into a “tourism town”.

### **The Judges’ comments on Waterford Towns**

#### **Ardmore**

- The impression and reality that this is a very historical place unspoilt, where the locals are very proud of their town and what it stands for.
- There are some beautiful little houses dotted around the coast and little shops maintain their traditional fronts either occupied or not.
- The majestic Round Tower and St Declan Wells and Church overlook the town and cove as if it’s minding the people and the area which of course it is and was. This can be seen from all directions and related buildings and the cliff walk is a must, but not for the faint hearted.
- The centre has added to, and enhanced its natural beauty, with the upkeep and maintenance of the town. The town is very compact with a lovely beach and a number of small piers. There is a unique combination of seaside married with monastic dwellings.

#### **Lismore**

- They say Lismore where the past is present and that's true. Beautifully maintained, compact, stepping back in time with all facilities and services in easy reach.
- It has the ability to cater for a variety of visitor needs and interests in a small compact way, all in easy reach. Its picture perfect and has a feel of arriving in medieval times.
- The lush and historic surroundings all in walking distance allow the young and old to capture its magic, tranquillity, culture, crafts, history or just enjoy the parks and walks all wrapped in the river and historical walls, monuments, churches etc.
- The impression and reality that this is a very historical place unspoilt, where the locals are very proud of their town and what it stands for.
- There are the beautiful houses and shops maintain their traditional fronts, the majestic castle which can be seen from all directions and related buildings.