

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Millstreet** Ref: **480**
County: **Cork(North)** Mark: **302**
Category: **D** Date(s): **16/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	43	43
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	42	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	63	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	34
TOTAL MARK	450	297	302

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2015 and we note that you have been participants for 30 years. Your committee has 18 full time members and a further 25 volunteers during the summer months. You meet every two weeks in winter and weekly in summer when the pressure is greatest to have your town looking its best. Well done on that huge effort. You receive support from residents, local businesses and public bodies, too numerous to mention here. You avail of social media such as Facebook, the website and other means of communication. The involvement with local schools in the community is noted. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention and a book of photographs. In regard to the map, we appreciated the use of different shaped and different coloured stickers to highlight the various projects. Unfortunately when the map was taken on site for our visit, some of the sticker fell off necessitating us searching to find them. We also found the numbers confusing because there were similar sequences in the plan. It would be easier to attach a legend beside the map with the names of the projects/locations that apply to the map and relieve the necessity to peruse over and back through the report to identify the project. Therefore, may we suggest that you use a better system next time? We note from last year's report that the adjudicator suggested cutting back on the reports. This is because they can be cumbersome during the site visit. In that regard, we further advise that if the photographs were smaller and printed on pages back to back that would reduce the volume of paper and would be sufficient for our needs. In regard to reports on say biodiversity, a summary will suffice. We noted the forward plan that in fact brings you up to 2018.

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

The Co-operative building is clean and tidy but the fenced-in garden centre section does little to enhance this area. We realise that the fence is required for security but it could be concealed behind a hedge. The boundary wall of this rather large car park provides an opportunity to dedicate a strip on the inside for some trees and shrubs to soften this area. O'Flynn Medical is a fine building and well maintained. The plant container there has some weeds. Manley's Funeral Home was fine. The car park on the hill (not shown on the map) has good planting on the boundary. The view of the old sheds from here doesn't help. The tower of St. Anna's Church of Ireland was noted. The cemetery is well maintained. The parking sign was dirty. AIB, Clara Inn, Millstreet Motor Factors and the Tyre Centre were all neat and clean and no weeds to be seen. We noted the painted windows on a Macroom Road. The Garda Station is fine as also were H. A. Hickies and the Post Office. The house opposite the Garda Station is very well presented as are most premises in Main Street. The Republican monument in the Square is well positioned but it is a pity about the clutter of finger post signs beside it which impact on it. They look untidy and are dirty. We liked the Hornbeam trees in this area and it is good to see them growing well. However, the islands between the cars are too narrow and the flowers growing beneath the trees are hidden behind the cars. They are not needed here. The seats look well. Reen's Pharmacy and Corkery's Pub were fine. St. Patrick's R.C. Church was a delight. We

admired the plant containers against the building. The school has an attractive mural and we admired the hanging baskets and plant containers on the railings. We admired the Eurovision wall. The Community School is a fine building with a well painted entrance. The grounds are well maintained and the existing mature trees make good impact. The Green Glens Arena is an impressive complex. Some dead poplar trees near the entrance need removal. Drishane Castle has an impressive entrance and we admired the line of Hornbeam trees on the opposite side of the road. Millstreet Recycling Centre beside the Green Glens Arena has an impressive entrance; we admired the trees here. Duggans Hardware was clean and tidy; trees are planted in the grounds and plant containers with flowers are outside the gate. We admired the millrace mural on the gable wall in Mill View and the flowers planted at the base. The façade and the gable wall of the Wallis Arms building needs painting. The well planted Supervalu car park was clean.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The Town Park has fine specimen trees. While we admired the Hornbeam trees in the centre of the town, we were less pleased with the lollipop type trees in Main Street; they make little impact and are not in scale with the street. The existence of overhead wires impacts on what type of trees can be grown here. Perhaps it was for that reason that this species (*Crataegus prunifolia*?) was chosen. Plant containers in the square are fine but the quality of the plants could be better. Plant containers in St Anna's Cemetery add colour and we enjoyed the Calendulas in flower near the entrance. We noted hanging baskets on poles in the town centre. The cemetery had a lovely boundary wall and railings and was well maintained. Landscape treatment of the Industrial park was most impressive. We admired the large banks of Cotoneaster forming a ground cover on the embankment at ALPS Electrical (Ireland) Ltd. There are also trees here and the grass is well maintained. The woodland backdrop also pleased. The approach to the hospital comprises a well maintained hedgerow and grass margin which successfully framed the well painted hospital building. St. Mary's Cemetery was well kept.

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

The fenced in wildlife area looks much sanitised. We found no information on this feature in your application, perhaps because it was a previous year's project. In our view, it is likely that areas behind it have more wildlife with less cost. It is clean and tidy and we noted the colourful plant containers. Items mentioned in your application include a river bank wildlife area at the Finnow River, a proposed biodiversity study of a woodland in the Community School grounds and the walking festival in April. We also note the Transition Year Habitat Study done by students of Millstreet Community School. You are surrounded by a rich natural area and it is important to promote an awareness of its many traits and to map these habitats. Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to achieve under this category. In this regard researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages. Habitats of value include specimen trees, hedgerows, treelines, streams, woodlands and wetlands. List the plants and animals to be found in your natural environment and recognise their significance (native, protected, or alien invasive?). This would be a very useful annual project for schools

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

You have mentioned a junior recycling area; that is a very good way of getting the next generation interested. We note the use of water butts for collecting water for the plant containers. Bird boxes being made from recycled timber. The GIY schemes are noted and the awareness days as well as recycling of batteries and other items. Other measures to consider are avoiding collecting mown grass by more frequent cutting and using mulching mowers which shred the clippings and facilitate faster decomposition. In regard to water usage, self-watering hanging baskets are a help in reducing the amount of water used and also the task of watering. Other waste minimisation projects might include working with retailers to cut down on packaging, reminding people to re-use shopping bags, discouraging junk mail, encouraging the re-use of water bottles and coffee mugs at school and at work. In response to an over use of chemicals for weed control, many useful products of the past are no longer available and therefore communities are encouraged to use other means such as hoeing to maintain weeds. We noted that too much weedkiller was used on an embankment where the hospital sign is positioned. In some cases, allowing wildflowers to develop is an acceptable alternative. These activities will highlight the fact that you are focussing on this category and when you develop more projects in the future your marks will increase.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The work done on painting perimeter walls, collecting litter and controlling weeds is noted. Your participation in County Council initiatives is also to be commended and the best frontage competition is a great way of stimulating interest in the community. We hope the dog fouling campaign has been worthwhile. Items which caught our attention include some already mentioned above and in addition, too many signs at the Co-operative building complex and weeds are establishing in the nearby planting. Bollards outside Maxol and Centra are in need of cleaning. Weeds were noted on some chimneys in the Main Street and other town centre buildings. Empty brackets for hanging baskets on some buildings should be used or removed. The area around O'Hanlon's Tyres and Centra was neat and tidy and no litter in evidence. A rusty gate opposite the Recycling Centre needs attention.

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

You are in year 2 of a 5 year project with the Dulux paint scheme initiative. Well done. The litter free roadsides Ireland competition is helping to achieve improvements in residential estates because they get separate adjudications. Such estate competitions are a great way of encouraging people to better maintain their houses and gardens. Árd an Aonaigh estate needs another sign at the entrance to replace the broken one. Planting at the entrance looks nice. The gabions made a dramatic impact. The open space was mown and some weeds were

noted. There is scope for trees in some gardens and on the open space. In Murphy's Terrace, the overhead wires are unsightly. The houses are well painted and some have good gardens. The well maintained open space has some good tree specimens and a picnic area. The Tanyard Wood estate has plenty of trees

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

We have noted the Supertine hedgerow project on the Macroom Road and compliment you on your attempts to maintain and control back street laneways. The hospital sign needs replacing and the top sign opposite the hospital entrance should be replaced. The flowers underneath look well. The picnic area on the Mallow Road looked well. We noted the wall painted on Station Road. The Mallow Road has very fine plantings of ornamental pear and Hornbeam trees and the underplanting was impressive.

Concluding Remarks:

It is clear that you are making a very big effort and are building up your marks each year. Well done on your achievements and we hope you find our comments useful for future projects.