

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Monaghan** Ref: **611**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **316**
Category: **E** Date(s): **26/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	45	46
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	46	47
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	38	38
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	18	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	39
TOTAL MARK	450	309	316

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Monaghan is most welcome to the 2017 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your comprehensive application form with additional information. This is a phenomenal effort on the part of the committee and the wider community, you certainly have had a busy year. Well done for this impressive entry. It is especially impressive how you are succeeding in including younger people and giving a hand to older people when required. Some points for improvement however are available. The map had a lettering code but it wasn't immediately obvious where the key to this lay. As the map is an important tool in adjudication, and is carried around the town, it is useful to have the key on the sheet itself for ease of interpretation. We didn't get a copy of your development plan so do make sure to include it in your application for next year. The way in which you have presented projects is good, especially the use of photos and headings. Aim to be succinct with descriptions and clear captions about what work was done in the current judging period. These are relatively minor points all the same and should not detract from the overwhelmingly positive groundswell of energy which emanates from the application. Do keep up the good work.

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

The repainting of Alma House is a wonderful enhancement, as is the refurbished iron works at St Mary's gates. Your approach to general painting and upkeep of buildings in the town is excellent and you have provided some fine examples. The railway station is an interesting and worthwhile endeavour, an important part of the town's history and heritage. The fine Presbyterian Church is a handsome heritage building of historic significance. The rear is somewhat poorly presented with the green palisade fence and tarmac car park not in keeping with the surrounds. A number of businesses impressed on adjudication day including S McKenna's pub which successfully retains its traditional frontage. The Diamond is an impressive public space which is enhanced by a lack of wire clutter, trees and inviting street furniture. Try to set standards for shop presentation. Blacking out windows with large advertising or images seriously detracts from the streetscape, for example at Totu, Inga Hair Salon and Lituania. Open shop window displays are more attractive and inviting. Elsewhere poor quality or inappropriate signage can take away from the traditional character of streets, for example gaudy plastic signs, or poor quality signage protruding at first floor level. The Court House and small plaza in front of it are excellent. Bank of Ireland is another highlight heritage building. Market House has been sensitively reused but retains its prominence.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Well done for promoting native tree planting, we can never have too many! Your new 1916 commemoration garden and Lock House and garden are wonderful additions. The Ulster canal, with new Patrick Kavanagh installation will no doubt develop into an important amenity for the county and not only the town. The lovely Ulster Canal Park is a valuable amenity and natural area. Landscaping should aim to be less formal, more natural in keeping with this

character, for example more native trees and shrubs. Having said that this area is being well maintained and is successfully screening the factory buildings to the rear. It's encouraging to see Japanese knotweed is being treated in this area. Peter's Lake is an attractive amenity in the town centre fringed with weeping Willows and reeds. The large containers of flowers may be over the top in this location as the nature really speaks for itself. Beech hedging at the Supervalu car park is over-growing onto the path, forcing pedestrians on the road.

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

You are applauded for your emphasis on biodiversity and your plan was perused with great interest. This is an important area and one which is always rewarding. The expansion of fruit trees is a great example. The bio blitz at the Rossmore sounded fascinating, what will become of the results? Do note that ragwort is a native species of plant which is important for pollinators and a wide range of insects. It is not recommended to remove it unless it is on grazing land. Unlike Japanese knotweed it is not an alien invasive species. The sign at the Shambles River (or what can be seen of it) was admired.

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

You have a great variety of projects under this heading and it is not necessary to give them all a mention suffice to say that this broad approach is what is required as reducing resource use applies to all sectors of the competition. Is there an overarching strategy? Is there a committee member who oversees the area? You are recommended to research the circular economy to see how you can tie all the various threads together. Do also provide details here of the different schools in your area and their achievements under the green flag banner. This is an important aspect of the contest. For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have an energetic approach to maintaining litter control in your area and this is essential for maintaining high standards. Well done to all the volunteers who get involved. Your many tidiness related projects were admired, especially where a long-standing or stubborn problem has been resolved, for example the billboard on Park Street. On adjudication day some litter had gathered in the Tesco car park as well as plastic road work debris. The recycling bay in this area was in good shape although the base is needed to be swept of small items. Generally the town was very tidy on adjudication day and litter control was to a very high standard. Exceptions seem to be confined to the many large car parking spaces and their margins.

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

A large number of attractive residential areas were visited on adjudication day and all were presented to a very high standard. At Tully attractive homes and green spaces were admired. One dead tree needs to be removed but otherwise the trees here are doing well. At Manor Wood an impressive line of beech trees was admired. Try to ensure that name stones for estates include the Irish as well as the English.

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

On approach from Castleblaney it was felt that an attractive, and appropriately positioned welcome sign was lacking. At this junction, of the R162 and the R188 there is a profusion of signage and ad hoc advertising. This creates a bad impression and is an issue that can easily get out of hand. The Fáilte sign at Killygoan is more or less obscured by vegetation and is faded. Further on an amazing corridor of tall trees creates a fine entrance to the town. The roundabout on the Dublin Road has a good display of roses. Another fine display is on show at the Margaret Skinnider roundabout.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit Monaghan and admire its many attractions. Your energy and enthusiasm are paying off so do keep up the good work!