

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Carrigaholt** Ref: **732**
County: **Clare** Mark: **254**
Category: **A** Date(s): **18/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	37
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	36
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	35
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	20
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32
TOTAL MARK	450	254

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Carraig an Chabhaltaigh- Welcome Carigaholt to the Super Valu 2014 National Tidy Towns competition. You hold monthly meetings from February to September which are open to all. You do not say if you have any autumn or winter meetings. It is important to retain the momentum in September after the national awards have been announced. Therefore we suggest that you continue having some meetings during the winter period. This also helps you to plan for the entire year.

The only agency, body or business which you list as having supported your activities is Carigaholt Development Association. Have you received assistance from the local authority? We are sure that you deserve more support from other groups – go after it!

You use newsletters and the local newspaper to communicate with the community. Would you consider some more modern communication methods such as e-mailing, texting, web page or Facebook? These latter methods are instant, sustainable, and engage with the younger population. We hope that your meetings notices are circulated to any minority churches in your area.

We are glad to see that you are in contact with the Green Schools coordinator. We note that you feel that the competition helps you to focus on key projects, to plan and to enjoy a sense of pride and achievement. Interestingly you also say that you learn new ways of improving your village through reading about other like villages efforts in the competition. This is a good sign of lateral and open thinking. We wish you all the best with your two festivals later this summer. You also impressed us with your poster which points out that everybody has at least one skill that will be of benefit to Carigaholt Tidy Towns. Does having the details 'behind the bar' make 'signing up' more attractive?!

Thank you for your comments in relation to the feedback you receive from the adjudication of the competition. We are delighted to hear that has it has helped you to devise a more strategic plan. Your three-year plan consists of seven bullet points on one page. This is rather minimalist! The aims listed are generic rather than specific. We would encourage you to draw up a Tidy Towns plan – a three or five-year plan will focus your mind on what you can hope to achieve. A plan need not be prepared professionally, but you should consult locally in preparing such a plan. You should also consider any statutory and non-statutory plans applicable to Carigaholt in drawing up your work programme. Please refer to the Tidy Towns Handbook for advice in relation to the preparation of a three or five-year 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 2015. Thank you for your map which clearly named streets and approach roads.

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

Your village has conserved its lovely traditional streetscapes in Church Street, Bridge Street and particularly in West Street. This is a resource many villages would envy. You have dealt well with the derelict property on Church Street, and it enhances rather than detracts from the streetscape, ensuring that the street building line is retained, and the colourful treatment you have given this building is uplifting. Just downhill of this property we noted a good traditional gate. Grass could be trimmed at this gateway.

You have tidied up a derelict house and wall on West Street. You also have tidied up a property on Bridge Street. It is not really clear from your submission as to exactly how much of this work was carried out during this year's adjudication year. Last year's adjudicator also referred to work on derelict properties completed last year, so we think that this was an on-going project. Well done on doing your best with regard to absentee owners. We note that you are committed to contacting as many as possible.

Stone walls generally were admired as a feature of your built environment. They do not need wooden planter troughs located on top of the stone walls. They are excellent in themselves and the planters are not in sympathy with their character. You have repaired stone walls at the Pier and around the Green area in The Square.

The Health Centre would benefit from the parking area being surfaced and the grounds being weeded. A wall in front of the adjacent dwelling would benefit from painting.

The area above the parapet at St Mary's Hall (above the sign) needs painting.

At the Garda Station the gate and boundary wall capping and piers need painting. Trimming of the grass inside the boundary would also be beneficial. There is a wonderfully conserved green gate at Fleet house.

The school is very clean. The door of the old shed opposite the Post Office might be repainted. The church is very well maintained and its grounds were admired.

One village (maroon coloured) pump was surrounded by a broken concrete base and empty (on adjudication day) half-barrel planters. This combined to make the pump look rather desolate, although it was well painted. The second village pump which is painted silver was surrounded by a rather unkempt area which had not been swept, and included a traffic cone thrown on its side. The enclosing walls needed repainting.

The Blake property on the square is a lovely feature of your built environment. However it appears to be unused. Have you been in contact with the Architectural Conservation Officer of your local authority in relation to the built heritage of your village? The simple lettering and intact shop front on this property is something that should not be lost.

The paving with the rusty anchor and buoy needs attention.

The Post Office and adjoining building looked somewhat cluttered as seen from the square – with signage, parking, seating etc. Nonetheless we very much admired the copper map showing the Loop Head area. Around the corner at its gable there was further clutter in the form of a trailer, old barrel etc

The Teach Cheoil at the end of West Street looked well. We noted construction work ongoing in the same Street, and we hope that the character of the Street has been considered in this development.

The Fennel property and shop front on West Street was much admired. Its classical simplicity appealed. The stonework and bright red timber work on the Long Door looked cheerful. A pair of blue painted cottages set back along West Street is enhanced by the well-kept green space in front. The takeaway on West Street would benefit from renewal.

The derelict shed on the green space between The Square and the Quay with its falling-in roof looks poorly in this prominent position. Can you ameliorate the situation?

Your bridge is an important feature of your built environment, as is your quay. We recommend that the hanging basket holders on the bridge be removed with advice from the County Architectural Conservation Officer as to what method is best to avoid damage to the fabric of the bridge. The bridge 'stands alone' and does not need ornamentation.

We were very encouraged to see such an excellent conservation project carried out on the lovely two-storey three bay traditional house facing the Strand area. This is an excellent example to follow. The light blue walls are highlighted by the darker blue timber treatment. The entire effect is charming. We note that the curtilage on the bridge side has yet to be tidied.

We would encourage you to increase the use of Irish in the village's built environment – after all you host an Irish College. We did appreciate the naming of the new estates in Irish.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

You maintain your hard landscaping project on the approach from Kilkee. You introduce permanent shrubs in The Green in the Square.

You maintain green verges and planters. Nonetheless on adjudication day in mid-June we observed a number of planters with nothing but soil. We encourage you to think about sustainable planting instead of container planting. Planting in the soil is more sustainable and is also more in keeping with a rural village.

You introduced a selection of spring bulbs in spring 2014.

We do not consider tyres to be suitable planters, and we noticed such planting on the Loop head approach. But most noticeably tyres were used as planters in your lovely landscaped small park on Church Street. They are unsuitable and looked very poorly. Added to that - they contained nothing but soil. We hope we will see no tyres in Carrigaholt in future other than on cars! Last year's adjudicator also referred to tyres as planters negatively. We particularly admired this little shaded gravelled recessed park, although the boundary wall at The Square end would greatly benefit from painting/whitewashing.

On Castle Street we greatly admired the roses on Hy Brassil, together with the window displays at Moyarta and adjoining cottages. The appropriate names appealed!

On a paved island in The Square we observed a tree which appeared to have no grille or place to grow - beside a black plant container. Beside these lay a concrete block.

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

When you start to think about your Tidy Towns plan, you can concentrate your mind on feasible ideas to enhance the understanding and awareness of the wonderful natural amenities of sea and shore in your area, as well as managing and providing access to such areas. You have the potential to enjoy and learn more about your natural surrounds as well as increasing your marks in this category very readily. We suggest that you consult the Heritage Office and the Biodiversity Officer of your local authority in relation to how to move forward with plans along these lines. You should also read the Tidy Towns Handbook which is quite detailed on this category. The Heritage Council's 'Wildlife in Towns and Villages' booklet is also a useful resource. Engaging with the schools on even elementary nature study surveys can lead in time to the further analysis and interpretation/presentation of the findings. You have swallow/swift nests in the eaves of a building across from the Long Door. Perhaps you could encourage the school children to study these birds. We understand that Clare County Council has launched a biodiversity plan for the county. We suggest that you look into this plan and see how you can be part of the overall future of Clare's bio diversity.

Some of the projects which you have listed in this category are future plans – not ones achieved for this year's adjudication. The new bird nesting boxes will be an encouragement to local wildlife to settle in your village. The bat box is a planned project, as is 'the birds of Carigaholt' information board at the pier. We wish the schoolchildren good luck with the bug hotel.

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

Well done to the Carigaholt Junior Tidy Towns who were very active in the waste minimisation efforts. You do not describe in detail what exactly the students achieved.

You use rainwater as reservoirs for watering flowers. We are glad to see that two more reservoirs will be included. You continue to use munches.

Litter collected during the national spring clean is segregated. The national school has a composting project. You have circulated a flyer regarding best practice with composting. Remember that sustainable waste and resource management begins with endeavouring to reduce the production of waste in the first case. We would recommend that you consider attending or organising a Sustainable Waste and Resource Management seminar. Perhaps your County Environmental Awareness Officer might be able to suggest where you might attend such an event. You could increase your marks in this category as a community by taking on board some of the suggested projects in the leaflet distributed with the Entry Form in 2013. The Tidy Towns Handbook is also a good source of information in this regard. We hope that in 2015 we will hear about your efforts to progress further in this area.

The paint exchange service which you have introduced into your electrical bring day is useful.

We noticed your solar powered school road sign.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The overall impression of the village streets is one of general neatness, but there are issues – particularly around the Green and the quay front area - that need addressing. The road surfacing issue is out of your control, as is the effect the winter storms had on the coast. But there are other issues that you have within your remit to improve and some where at least you can show us how you have tried even if you fail.

We note that you were involved with the national spring clean.

The bring banks were relatively neat. However they would benefit from some planting on the wall behind the banks.

However the signage on the individual bins was torn. Seating around the Strand area would benefit from timber treatment/paint. The quay was weedy in places and rather neglected trawler detracted from the surrounds. We assume that this is the same boat as last year's adjudicator mentioned. Please let us know next year how you have tried to overcome this issue – even if you do not succeed.

We would suggest that you consider painting all field gates within the village and on the approach roads in a uniform colour. This will give a sense of identity and tidiness to the village area.

We noticed some fly posting at the Castle Road junction. We noted old petrol pumps covered in plastic. Nearby a chip and burger carton lay on the ground. There was quite a scattering of litter in the small park at the bottom of Church Street. This is a pity. There was a small amount of litter in the harbour area generally, and some at the hosing estate mentioned above. Can you tell us about your litter patrols? How regular are they? A litter management plan will help you to look to the future and to how best you can deal with this issue. The County Litter Plan will give you some ideas. We hope that your litter awareness competition has gone well. However this is a project for next year's adjudicator as it happened during June 2014. Do not forget to submit the details of the competition with your 2015 entry, remembering that the Tidy Towns year is from 1st June to 31st May annually. So next year's 'year' will be from 1st June 2014 to 31st May 2015.

We have already referred to a few areas such as the silver pump surrounds which were untidy - under other category headings.

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

We particularly applaud your Tidy Towns information day where you encourage seasonal homeowners to join residents for tea and chat. This is an approach which other communities could learn from. You encourage all residents on that day to maintain their properties. You see the value of praise and encouragement. This is good practice. You are going to try to introduce a 'best kept house' competition.

Houses in the three streets are very well maintained – some better than others as some are not permanently inhabited.

The estate off the Irish College road was well landscaped. The name of the estate was not visible from the road, and should be. Its name Suan Na Mara is a descriptive beautiful name. The open space was well maintained, and we admired the small abstract sculpture. The small sculpture would be improved by fixing the fence behind it. We observed a dirty disused wooden hoarding at the road edge which should be removed

Cluain Mhin estate is neat. Again perhaps the planting could be in the soil here rather than in pots. We noticed some use of weed killer in this area. The dead weeds had not been removed. A few pieces of litter were noticed here.

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

Sweeping around the village has been undertaken. Weed control and maintenance of landscaping and all the approach roads has been taking place.

We understand the delay in the upgrading of the road due to the proposal for a sewage scheme. The road surfaces remain poor.

On the Irish College Road dry stone wall building was in progress, but trimming and weeding was needed around the 50 K pH speed limit. Trimming was also required beyond the 50 K pH speed limit sign on the right-hand side, and weeding required on the left-hand side in a set back in front of a house. We noted a broken field gate at the Castle junction. There are is some lovely hedging on the approach to the Community Hall.

On the Loop Head approach road trimming was required around the 50 K pH speed limit and inward to the entrance to the housing estate.

Broken paving stones on a small island (with the planter with red flowers) were observed at the edge of The Square.

You do not appear to be complaining about the amount of storm damage which you must have ensured during the past winter and early spring. It is obvious that you are trying to deal with the ensuing issues which arose at the Strand/Quay area. On the coastal road which joins the Kilkee Road - inwards towards the village we observed storm damage being dealt with. Here we very much admired the fuchsia hedging, the planted bed and the 'palms' You must be one of the few places who did not loose these trees in the hard winter of 3 years ago.. The sign for the village on the Kilkee approach was being encroached upon by foliage. This sign also sits in rather rough ground.