

# Tidy Towns Competition 2014

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Quin** Ref: **85**  
County: **Clare** Mark: **298**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **09/06/2014**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2014</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	42
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	46
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	27
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>298</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Cuince. Welcome Quin to the Super Valu 2014 National Tidy Towns competition. Your committee is divided into subcommittees concentrating on particular areas of the competition. Your AGM is held every October. You hold monthly meetings between March and October. We wonder if you meet during the winter season. It is important to keep the momentum going and to plan for the following years. This can happen when the weather is not suitable for working out-of-doors.

You have the assistance of a lot of agencies, bodies, and businesses who support you. This shows that you are held in good regard as hard workers. The list includes statutory and non statutory agencies as well as local businesses.

We are glad to see that you are about to create a Webpage, and to join Twitter and Facebook, as these methods are sustainable and appeal to the younger generation. You also use traditional methods of communication. We hope that you circulate your news to minority churches in your area. You have a strong relationship with the national school. You have a school liaison officer on your committee. The school is involved in the Green Flag project. You have Junior Tidy Towns members.

You list many benefits from your involvement in the competition.

Your map does not extend out to the outer limits of your village. Neither does the map name approach roads nor does it show and name all housing estates. In the guidelines to this year's Entry Form you were asked to sequentially number each ('mappable') project undertaken for this year 2013/2014 and to carry this numbering system through to the village map. This has not been done. Please remember to read the guidelines carefully before submitting next year's Entry Form and map. Thank you for your Tidy Towns plan appropriately updated. We will be looking forward to seeing your new plan in 2015

The fourteenth century Abbey is the main built feature of your village and is its raison d'être. We are sure that you, as we, would wish to complement the OPW staff who maintain the Abbey structure and grounds in such a magnificent way. It is a wonderful asset for your village - from a built environment, landscaping and wildlife/habitats point -of-view. They, in turn are lucky to have such an enthusiastic group of people who 'show off' the Abbey to best advantage by attending to its setting – which is your village.

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

The Community Centre has been painted in classic black and white. There is a plan to put in place a fence at the

side of the building. We would be loath to attach any more hanging baskets to the building, as we feel that it is a very good piece of traditional village vernacular architecture – and can ‘stand alone’.

The Catholic Church is very well maintained and landscaped. We would take some issue also with ‘hiding’ the lovely stone pillars at the entrance with the hanging basket poles. It seems a pity when you have something of intrinsic value (two lovely stone pillars) that you feel a need to ‘improve’ the entrance.

The stone-faced Abbey Tavern with its lovely vernacular sash windows was admired. The red elevation was clean, and the entire premises had discreet and restrained signage on its Abbey facing elevation.

The Credit Union is well maintained, but, we feel, has too many attachments on a limited frontage. These include two hanging baskets, four projecting lights, a credit union plaque, a ‘welcome’ projecting sign, and an empty flagpole at the railings, a satellite dish on the corner - as well as the projecting clock. The result is a cluttered appearance.

You have told us that Abbey Stores has been completely refitted. Abbey Stores is bright, but it would look tidier if many notices on the door - and just inside the door were located to a notice board, and if the on-footpath storage were removed or at least rationalised. We would remove the evergreen tree in the barrel outside the railings at Abbey Stores because this also is obstructive to footpath users. Mungovan’s gable needs paint. Storage outside this premises on a narrow footpath is obstructive to footpath users. The woodwork at Quin Kebabs needs paint. A cream-coloured wall to their rear of Malachy’s pub might be repainted. Quin Meats is an attractive building. We noted that it is for sale.

The out-of-village centre Health Centre boundary walls and fascia need painting

Iron gates to the Abbey/Church need conservation. These are an intrinsic part of your village, and should be conserved for the future in an appropriate best practice way. The gates to St. Finghin’s Church site should also be included. There are many lovely traditional iron gates throughout the village, and these are very much a feature of your village.

The Kalgoorlie Gold Rush plaque is interesting.

The out-of-village centre Health Centre boundary walls and fascia need painting.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

The jewel in the crown of course with regard to your landscaping is Quin Abbey. It is a very large area of beautiful parkland with excellent stone boundary walls. On adjudication day despite the rain the OPW staff were carefully mowing the very extensive grass areas. Of course the planting in the village of semi mature trees outside the Abbey walls adds to the entire effect. The hard landscaping areas, together with appropriate seating etc. all add up to a wonderful centre village environment. It is no wonder so many people have come to live amongst you. The area around the village pump was landscaped with lovely red blooms in a stone edged bed. We think you are taking from the excellent natural landscaping by erecting hanging basket poles at the perimeter of the Abbey boundary in the village. There is no need for additional planting out of the soil. Planting in the soil is more sustainable and visually much more attractive and appropriate in the circumstances.

You have good policy of planting perennials around the village. You also use self seeding flowers.

The fountain area was extremely well presented and looked very green and tranquil. The flowing river in this area is ‘landscaped’ in its natural state, and this is good.

The grotto area was a riot of colour on adjudication day. This is a delightful incidental space in the village. The excellent unspoiled naturally landscaped Abbey grounds act as a great foil to this space. The raised stone beds and footpath planters opposite the Monk’s Well (near the entrance to the Abbey) looked very well.

Opposite the Garda Station at the junction of road 3180 and the village there was a nice wooden seat and a raised square stone bed. Students from the national school plant flowers in the fountain area. Landscaping around the bright red pump on the Ennis Road was admired. Wild irises were also planted on a bank in this area, and they enrich the area. The landscaped gardens at Clover (Rose?) Cottage on that approach looked superb.

We admired a lovely seat in a recessed stone wall at the junction of road L3150 / Sixmilebridge Road, although an adjacent bollard would benefit from renewal.

The playground is now complete and you see it as a huge draw for adults and children alike. You continually review areas within the village that would benefit from landscaping.

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

You have an awareness of the importance of your hedgerows. You organised a bat walk last August during National Heritage Week. A visit was also made to the school by the leader of the Bat walk.

You have many birds feeding and breeding on the Rhine River. Furthermore you are in contact with the Inland Fisheries agency in relation to gaining advice as to how to improve river habitats. You plant with bees in mind.

You attend relevant seminars. You know that you have a wonderful environment and you describe it passionately in your introduction to the Entry Form. You say that you have been lucky in having a cottage garden donated as a wildlife sanctuary. This is located beside the bridge behind the cottage.

It appears that chemical weed killer may have been used on approach roads. This is not good for the environment. We would encourage you to consider nonchemical methods of weed control. If you speak to your County Heritage Officer, we are sure that you would be well advised in this matter.

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 to survey, interpret and manage your natural environment. 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 schools (or colleges) on even elementary nature study surveys can lead in time to the further analysis and interpretation/presentation of the findings. 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.

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

Well done on the Green Home survey. The school is working on its fourth Green Flag.

The school holds a clothes collection. You distribute 'no junk mail' stickers. All rubbish collected on the National Spring Clean day was segregated / recycled. You use texting to save paper. You use organic compost. You are aware of events that are happening which can keep you informed on best practice sustainable waste and resource management. Nonetheless there is much still to be done with an emphasis on preventing waste in the first case. We would recommend that you keep in touch with your local authority to find out about various ways in which you can advance as a community in this area.

In the meanwhile look at the Tidy Towns Handbook, and the revised guidelines on this topic - which were sent out with your Entry Form in 2013.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

The National Spring Clean day attracted a lot of volunteers and you collected a lot of waste. You conduct weekly litter picks. You are lucky that you do not appear to have a major litter problem as a weekly litter pick is not too demanding. Neither do you have a graffiti problem. Your TUS employee takes responsibility for weeding and general tidiness in the centre of the village. You also acknowledge the good fortune that you have in having a local council worker who takes great pride in his work. Both men certainly do a good job.

The recycle bins are in a large open tarmac area. The site looks bare and the bins are backed by nettles. There appears to be little effort as making the site more attractive. It was certainly clean and functional.

You request visitors to take away rubbish from the picnic tables.

You say that a member of your group cuts the grass at the Garda Station which was closed last year. However on adjudication day the grass needed cutting and the boundary walls needed painting.

You have been in touch with the ESB in relation to overhead wires in the church grounds and on the bridge. The new poles have been put in position and connected. Redundant poles should be removed.

The playground area was neat, and it is located in a nice rural setting. We admired the good stone wall and semi mature tree planting beside the parking area.

The directional sign for Quin Abbey near the bridge is on a raw metal road sign pole. Would it be possible to either paint this pole or to obtain a plastic striped sleeve for it?

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

The standard of house presentation in the village centre is good.

Maigh Dara estate does not appear on your village map. The estate has lovely shrub banks at the entrance and semi mature trees. Protruding manhole covers due to unfinished road surfaces were noted throughout the estate. The estate was weed free. We noticed two dead trees which should be replaced. The estate had a good boulder name stone.

Quin Gardens estate presented a mixed standard of maintenance. We noted some evidence of chemical weed killing here. The security fencing around the treatment plant could be augmented on one side. Some other security railings were painted green and had trees to camouflage. A concrete post and wire fencing needs renewal at the

access. One section of footpath also requires repair.

At Manor View we admired the good rose beds and the nice entrance. A gable facing the road would benefit from repainting. We admired the trees here including an oak tree.

Dún na Manach had a few weedy edges to the open space and footpath at the back of the estate. We liked the lavender bed at the entrance and the lovely tree stands along the grassed footpath edges. There was good bank-planting on a stone wall opposite the entrance to this estate. We noted fly posting on a pole at the entrance to the estate.

We observed an estate with no name on the Sixmilebridge Road. It was a mature estate.

Árd na Mainstreach was not shown on your map either. Trimming along the rear boundary is required. On the embankment shrubs and trees are being 'choked' by grass growth. Some incidental painting is also required. We liked the directional road sign solution to indicating house numbers. There were good semi mature trees throughout this estate.

During National Tree Week you supplied trees to the Park estate to compensate for the storm damaged trees. The Park has no name on the roadside – the sign is further in on the access road. This is an attractive area generally re design and landscaping. We admired the nice gravelled beds, but the unfinished concrete block building looked poorly. The entrance area outside the name sign had walls which were a little dirty, but the planted lupins were admired.

Another estate which was not on your map on the Tulla road was Cluain Gearráin. This was an attractive estate generally with regard to design and landscaping.

Near the bring banks we admired an adjacent single-storey white House The old school is a nice stone building with brick surrounds. Clover /Rose Cottage was also admired.

You are hoping that several residents will carry out their own cleanup sessions. Then you will supply flowers and shrubs as needed. We re impressed with the use of relevant Irish names in the naming of housing estates.

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

On the Ballykilty approach road we admired banks of ox eye daisies. The raised stone bed in front of the simple black and white village sign on this approach was admired. There was not a lot growing in the bed on adjudication day apart from one large shrub. Some cut grass had not been removed from the banks. On this approach and on all other approaches we would suggest that you paint all field gates, including field gates within the village itself. This will add to the already neat tidy appearance of the village, and give an identity to its geographical boundaries. Along this approach we noticed an earth bank which had been newly created. Some trimming was required on the village side of this earth bank. Some weedy splay areas were noted on the left-hand side. A little broken fencing was seen. We noticed that the water tower would benefit from painting, as would the structure beside it. There was a good dry stone at the water tower, but we observed evidence of weed killing here. The capping on the pillars of the gate post to the water tower required painting. An access opposite Dún na Manach was weedy. The houses on the village side of the same estate had several empty brackets for hanging baskets.

On the L 3150/ Clare Way approach at the junction we noticed an abandoned site and a very weedy frontage. This approach is leafy but has some unsurfaced setbacks.

The Sixmilebridge approach was good - except it was a little weedy around the 50 K pH speed limit sign on the left-hand side.

The Tulla Road approach / 3180 has a Quin Abbey viewing area and picnic tables. There was a redundant road sign pole opposite this area. The 'yield' sign was bashed on the 3180 junction. At the same junction two upright poles holding signs for Quin Abbey/ Mid Clare Way/ the GAA - were rusty

There was traffic chaos at the school at 3 p.m. on our visit. We hope that in the new extension plans takes account of this situation. The boundary wall and gates require painting. Nearby a community alert sign is obscured by vegetation.

The Ennis approach is a very good tree lined approach. There is no need for posts with hanging baskets. A 'headless' road sign pole was noted. Either the sign should be replaced or the pole should be removed. There are lovely weed footpaths along this approach. You say that the approach to Quin from the Ennis side is now being cared for by the owner of Rose Cottage. (Is this cottage now named Clover Cottage?) Well done to this person! The footpath from Henchy's corner to the clinic has been resurfaced.

Traffic segregation was in operation on a very temporary basis at the bridge. The segregation was formed by red and white plastic traffic long bollards. We know that you hope that this situation will be brought to conclusion in a satisfactory manner providing for pedestrian safety.

A tall pole on the footpath opposite the Monk's Well appeared to have no function and should be removed.

We noted on-footpath parking in the village. This is to be discouraged, as it creates obstacles for footpath users and also looks poorly.

In the village itself the footpath from the Cottage up to the Monks Well has been resurfaced. The new footpath from Malachy's pub to the playground is now complete.