

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Shannon**

Ref: **88**

County: **Clare**

Mark: **288**

Category: **F**

Date(s): **30/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34
TOTAL MARK	450	288

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Baile na Sionna. Welcome Shannon to the Super Valu 2014 National Tidy Towns competition. You have a large population to cater for - with only four executive members and three committee members. However we see that you work with the community involving partnership with other groups, schools, and local business.

It is good to hear that you have a 'great' working relationship with your local authority. You communicate through local media. You use the local authority meetings and the circulation of your Action Plan via the Chamber of Commerce also as methods of communication. You post photographs on the intranet, as well as using your annual awards as PR. Do you use e-mailing or texting, or website/Facebook, as these are sustainable methods of communication and appeal to the younger generation.

You run a Best Kept Schools Award. You say that your work and the involvement of schools and businesses gives every resident pride in their place.

Thank you for your Tidy Towns Action Plan. We found it is a little confusing - as in the title you describe it as "Shannon Tidy Towns Plan 2014 to 2016 (final year)." But at the bottom of the 3 pages you have inserted "Tidy Towns Action Plan 2013 – 20156". As most of the projects are 'ongoing work / completed /awaiting submission result' we think that you do actually mean that this is the final year of your plan. In this case we look forward to a new three-year plan – or five-year plan in 2015. Thank you for your detailed map which was most helpful to the adjudicator. However in this year's guidelines to completing the Entry Form you were asked to number your projects sequentially through the Entry Form and to use the same numbering system on the map to show these projects. Should this be the requirement in next year's guidelines please note!

You have used the General Impression category - which has been removed from the competition this year. However including it afforded you the opportunity to give us a little more background information about your town.

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

We were very impressed with the number of signs throughout the town which are bilingual. We note that this is an ongoing process in your plans.

The Oakwood Arms Hotel was very well presented. At Knight's Bistro we admired the clean Munster flag - and other flags flying proudly!

The front elevation of Supermac's was largely covered by a big banner. This seemed out of scale and a little untidy. St Patrick's Comprehensive School looked well, but we would like to see the green security fence adjacent to Shannon Hibernians AFC and along the school's lateral boundary screened with planting. The frontage to St Patrick's looks somewhat bare and open. Additional landscaping would be good.

The Fire Station is a fine building, as is the Leisure Centre across the road. We particularly admired the nice simple lettering on the Fire Station which is also bilingual.

The modular bus stop outside Shannon Town Centre offices looked well. The security fencing near these offices could be painted/ landscaped. The number of notices might be reduced.

The Garda Station was well presented, and we admired a nice 'urban' square behind the Garda Station with buildings set around it.

The Gaelscoil looked well, but there were many weeds in its vicinity – despite the new clean footpath.

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The Library is a good building, but its woodwork needs renewal.

The Texaco garage was cleanly presented, but there were a lot of air conditioning units visible as one approaches from the Garda Station.

Mary Immaculate Catholic Church was well presented, although the tower would benefit from repainting.

Scoil Naomh Senan had nice simple lettering on its name sign. It was also nicely landscaped. The flagpoles at the school were empty. St. Tola's school was well landscaped, and had a 'furled' Green Flag.

The Ionad Athcúrsa was well presented with good boundary treatment. Grass along the site margins might be further trimmed to create a n improved roadside appearance.

There are vast expanses of cream coloured walls at the Town Centre (particularly the rear and side elevations facing Bothar Mór) which would benefit from freshening of the paintwork. Last year's adjudicator suggested that the parking areas here be broken up visually by some landscaping. Have you considered this suggestion?

The sculpture on one of the roundabouts was admired, but fly posting on the central grass area 'took from' this sculpture.

You have removed the Maze feature in Drumgeely.

We commend you most particularly for the use of Irish in place names and housing estates throughout Shannon.

We hope that this will be maintained into the future

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Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

You have applied for funding under the Public Area Enhancement Scheme. Part of your application for funding under the Public Area Enhancement Scheme involved an application for the purchase of planters to be located between the new traffic islands.

You have an onerous task in the continuous maintenance of the vast green areas in your town. You also have very extensive planted areas, and we are pleased to hear that it is a source of great enjoyment to you and you are many volunteers to look after these areas. Thank you for the photographs which indeed show the variety of landscaped areas and incidental corners in Shannon. They were all looking really well on adjudication day. You have incorporated stone surround beds into the maintenance programme along Bothar Mór. Well done to the staff from the local McDonald's restaurant who helped you look after these planted beds.

There are nice grass banks along the boundary at Bothar Mór. There were nice new trees on Bealach Buí. Shannon Hibernians (Riverside Park) AFC grounds were generally well presented.

There is a nice curved walk beside the Fire Station. The playground is nicely enclosed by trees and hedges, but yet the planting is landscaped well so that there is visibility through the landscaping for security purposes. We noticed a number of dead or broken trees on the road to the new estate Glaise Na Rinne. This road does not appear to be shown on the map. Around the various sports fields South of Bothar Sioda the security railings would benefit visually from hedge or tree boundary planting.

The graveyard was very well maintained, although there were weeds around the entrance. The timber fencing on the approach road needs upgrading. The large parking area on the graveyard approach is very bare and requires surfacing.

Great credit is due to you for your floral planting/displays throughout the town. Examples are those at Tullyglass Court and stone beds such as at the entrance to St Tola's school junction.

The removal of poplar trees after the winter storms has been ongoing. These areas will be now used for grass. In the meantime you are planting new native hardwood trees, starting to the rear of the Gaelscoil.

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

We are glad to hear that spraying is kept to a minimum as chemical weeding killing is injurious to the environment. It would be a good idea perhaps if you could discuss alternative organic methods with your County Heritage Officer/Biodiversity officer. There is always the traditional manual weed removal method (hoe!) - also although we understand how difficult this might be for you, given the extent of your territory.

We were interested to hear of the programme in which a School of Architecture are involved. You do not say which school, but we think it is likely to be the University of Limerick School. Water and wildlife are themes in this project. We will be looking forward to reading about the outcome of this innovative work.

At Tullyvaraga the County Heritage Officer is providing guidance in relation to relevant work underway at that location.

You referred to the Shannon Town Green Infrastructure Plan recently published. This should be of some benefit to you in your management of the natural environment.

You give us a few photographs and a map which referred to 'data collected by students in conjunction with the Tidy Towns - Study of estuary floodplains'. Unfortunately you do not give us any more information about this project which sounds quite interesting. We do not know which students these were, but we assume they are students from one of your own schools. Nor do we know when this study was undertaken or published. Perhaps next year you might let us know more about this project.

Well done on having Irish included in your Shannon Wetlands sign. On entering this area we found a forest of nettles/cuttings from grass and a little litter. It was a rather disappointing 'find'! However your many riverside and wooded walks are a tremendous resource! We agree with last year's adjudicator who said that we would like to see some directional signage from the housing/road areas to the Shannon banks. A stranger might not know that this area even existed, and signage gives a certain sense of security to lone walkers who may otherwise be afraid to penetrate the quiet walkways.

Although we only saw one incidence of fairly recent hedge trimming -remember that it is permissible to trim hedging along cultivated ground (e.g. gardens) throughout the year. However with regard to hedge trimming, you are reminded that it is an offence under the Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2006 to cut vegetation in a hedge or ditch on lands not cultivated between 1st March and 31st August annually - this is for the protection of nesting birds.

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

You have been involved in compost training annually. This includes food waste prevention techniques. You continue to liaise with the Environment Section of your local authority. As a result you have been doing well in this category to date. The Environmental Awareness Officer works with the Chamber of Commerce in relation to literature and awareness of waste in business. Have you conducted an audit of the business community? You segregate litter and use the local recycling centre. We would like to hear more about the waste minimisation projects in which you are involved.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have been involved in compost training annually. This includes food waste prevention techniques. You continue to liaise with the Environment Section of your local authority. As a result you have been doing well in this category to date. The Environmental Awareness Officer works with the Chamber of Commerce in relation to literature and awareness of waste in business. Have you conducted an audit of the business community? You segregate litter and use the local recycling centre. We would like to hear more about the waste minimisation projects in which you are involved.

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

You support residents' groups, and do your best to act on their observations.

You actively work to promote litter free residential areas. You yourselves organise a Best Kept Estate competition. Well done on this! We note that the Lisheen were the winners in 2013. We were not surprised when we visited this area. We admired some lovely rose displays at a garden in Lisheen.

You mention Glas na Rinne estate under Built Environment, we consider it here under Residential.

The grass at Tradaree Court Square - facing St. Patrick's Comprehensive School - had well mown grass in its open space.

At Cluain Airne we observed some on-footpath parking. This is both obstructive to footpath users and also looks untidy. A sign beside Nos. 149.154 was missing. There were some weedy paths opposite this sign. The back areas of this estate would benefit from planting

We admired the gold letters on stone at Halla an Bhaile.
Fearnóg has nice hedging around its name sign.

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

We note that you applied this year for funding under the Public Area Enhancement Scheme in relation to the roundabout at Lidl. You plan to address the Shannon town roundabout in conjunction with the local authority.

A new traffic island was installed at the Town Centre Road in order to prevent illegal and dangerous parking and to aid pedestrians at the pedestrian crossing. The Bothar Linne cycle path and other cycle paths are a great addition to your town.

Although you include the ongoing removal of many redundant signs under Built Environment, we consider it here under this category heading. We note that you are aware of the fact that there are still some outstanding signs to be removed. Some examples of these were noted as follow. We noted some 'headless' poles at the Town Park area. There were double 'headless' poles at the Choill Mhara/Bothar Linne junction Around the multi-storey car park building we noted a rusty 'headless' pole.

You have consulted with your local authority in relation to the road works programme for 2014.

The road surfaces in the minor roads behind the Oakwood hotel/Topaz would benefit from upgrading.

We observed a lot of on-road parking outside St Patrick's Comprehensive School as there was a match in progress. Is there adequate on-site parking?

We came across a roundabout which is not shown on your map which was quite weedy. The road to the new estate Glaise Na Rinne does not appear to be shown on the map.

The road to the graveyard was in need of resurfacing.