

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: Sixmilebridge	Ref: 89
County: Clare	Mark: 291
Category: D	Date(s): 02/07/2014

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	43
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31
TOTAL MARK	450	291

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Sixmilebridge - Welcome Sixmilebridge you are a to the Super Valu 2014 National Tidy Towns competition. Your committee is quite small with only seven members for such a busy town. However you do say that you are supported by many volunteers. You hold 10 meetings during the year and you have work nights during the summer.

You list official agencies and the local business association as agencies that have supported your activities.

You have many methods of communication both traditional and modern. This is good. We hope that you include minority churches in your church newsletter circulation.

You have a representative on the Green Schools committee.

Your map is quite basic and non informative for a town the size of yours. It does not indicate any of the major public buildings. It does not indicate the various approach roads. And it does not indicate your projects for this year. We note that last year's adjudicator appeared to have some issues with the 2013 map also. The guidelines to filling in the Entry Form required that you number each project for this year's adjudication sequentially in the Entry Form accompanied by the same numbering to identify these projects on your map. You have not done this. You have some problems with the Entry Form also. You will see this under our comments at Built Environment category. You also seem to get a little mixed up in relation to which particular category projects belong to. Please note that you have a very good map base on your information board in the square. This will probably need updating, but it could be a good basis to start with. In the meantime if there are errors in references to street names or estate names in this report - you have to accept the fact that the adjudicator was at a distinct disadvantage in not having a proper map. This makes it obviously more difficult for you also to follow the report.

We do not seem to have received a Tidy Towns plan from you. You seem to have a lot of good material to choose from in the Sixmilebridge Tidy Towns/Environmental Improvement Strategy Study and Report - (You have only included a 4 page extract/summary with your entry). 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. The plan should be laid out under the category headings of the competition. You should also consider any statutory and non-statutory plans applicable to Sixmilebridge 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.

You say that you have established close links with Clare County Council during the course of development of the village.

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

The only project which you have listed under this category heading for this year is that you submitted a proposal under the Public Area Enhancement Scheme. But you do not give us any idea as to what the project for which you submitted funding was.

You gave us a four-page typed document in relation to the Sixmilebridge Tidy Towns/Environmental Improvement Strategy Study and Report - which 4 pages included one drawing of a proposed Slí na Sláinte route. However there were six other action plan details included in this four-page document. Under the Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes category you refer to some funding secured for the development of Frederick Square. If this funding has been received to date (which you convey that it has) – it is then unlikely to refer to your Public Area Enhancement Scheme funding application, but we wondered. In any event no new work appears to have been carried out on the ground under this category heading for this adjudication year.

We have to say it was very difficult to appreciate the built environment in the centre of your town because of the incessant traffic and lack of any real pedestrian facilities. An example which we give you is how difficult it is to appreciate the wonderful building which is the Credit Union building – which is admirably presented – because of all the car parking to its front elevation. The adjudicator felt almost threatened by traffic in trying to walk slowly through the town centre. Nowhere was this more noticeable than in the main square. Crossing the bridge was a challenge! The peaceful impression one gets on the television clip of the Sixmilebridge riverside area was completely different in reality - because of the noise and constant movement of traffic both heavy traffic and car traffic. We hope that any proposals that you have will make allowances for reordering of the central area, so that it can be shared and made more pleasant. By contrast the journey to the upper town via the Library was most pleasant and pedestrian-friendly. However this would not be a suitable walk for anybody with mobility problems due to the number of steps involved. The library is a good example of the conservation of an important town building – the Church of Ireland.

We liked your black and white Irish and English Street name plaques. We admired the use of Irish in the name sign O Gliosan Ceol agus Ól.

The arched Galligan building requires repainting. Stiofán Fitzpatrick's Solicitors is a simply but classically presented building, without distracting advertising or projecting signage. Unfortunately the nice shop frontage adjacent appeared to be shuttered/disused. A very fine two-storey building on the north-east corner of the square is almost fully encroached upon by vegetation. The Pharmacy across the way is very well presented and also classically simple. By comparison the adjacent Centra building has a lot of clutter attached to its front elevation. Some other buildings around the Square would benefit from repainting.

Buildings along the eastern side of the Kilkishen Road out of the Square are in a very poor state of presentation. By contrast buildings on the opposite side of the road are very well presented. On the approach road R 471 to the Square the auction room building is very badly in need of repainting. The town pump on this approach is neglected. The pump itself is painted in a nice red colour, but the surrounds are untidy and uncared-for. The small well on the Kilkishen road has a lovely bright red gate and stonewalling. However the surrounds again do not do it justice, and there were old advertising signs thrown behind it.

The Little Church on the Limerick approach road was well presented.

The Garda Station was well presented, but capping and the bottom of the boundary wall need repainting.

The Church has some vertical staining on its pebble dash walls. The flagpoles at the church were empty. However the church is nicely set into a square and the very well presented two-storey parish office building was admired. Pots of flowers in this area brighten the surrounds. Good dry stonewalling was also admired.

The walls of the Bridge Kids building need painting before next year – especially the gable facing oncoming traffic. Are the three containers beside this building necessary?

The Gala and Food Cottage premises would benefit from the resurfacing of the forecourt area.

McGregor's lounge bar would benefit from repainting the elevation facing the town approach road, and this should include tidying of the name sign.

The Health Centre is well presented.

A Hall on the Newmarket-on-Fergus approach – in Upper Church Street (with music festival signage) has broken windows and is partially boarded up. Some walls require painting, and the general impression is poor. We also noted a terrace of derelict houses on Church Street which added to the poor impression arriving along this approach. A boundary wall on the corner of Church Street also needs repainting. An ochre coloured wall between the library exit onto Church Street and the Square is in poor paint condition.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

You do not list any plans undertaken for this year as your three bullet points under this category heading refer to 'our plans are to include' - indicating that this is work for the future.

Nonetheless under the Residential Streets and Housing areas you referred to the fact that you maintain the common areas in the village. This ongoing project presumably includes the common areas throughout the village, so we credit you here with this good work.

For the same reason as it was difficult to appreciate the built environment at the centre of your town, it was equally difficult to appreciate the fine landscaping at the town square on the eastern side of the River. This is a lovely area, but it seemed as if car parking encroached on every possible angle of this landscaped area. We admired the raised circular stone bed with the red floral display at the directional signage at the edge of the square.

We feel that an opportunity was lost at the new railway station area in relation to the lack of landscaping in a vast tarmac area. There were some dead (relatively newly planted) trees in this area. These should be replaced.

There was some good hedging to the security fences along the playing fields on Shannon Road.

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

Under this category heading you again referred to the Slí na Sláinte route and again in the future viz. 'the development of a walking route could exploit the advantage of the footpaths and encourage in a planned way etc.' So this is a plan and not a project completed.

You say that the wildlife sanctuary beside Mount Ivers estate is a wonderful amenity. You do not indicate that you have carried out any additional work either through survey, interpretation, or management of this area during this adjudication year.

You rightly referred to the fact that the Duck Inn, together with the wildlife plaque at Frederick Square are great attractions. But you do not indicate that you had any input into either of these projects in the current year.

We are unsure as to whether the riverside area at Gleeson's is in private or public ownership. In any event the picnic seating is worn, and it would be good if the rear yard area of the property could be screened from the duck viewing area.

Although you say that you control weeds by scoffing and keep the use of weed killer to an absolute minimum it appears that weed killer had been used in various locations throughout the town and on approach roads. This is not good for the environment. We would encourage you to continue with your idea of using nonchemical methods of weed control. If you speak to your County Heritage Officer and County Biodiversity Officer, we are sure that you would be well advised in this matter.

We observed what appeared to be fairly recent hedge trimming along the Limerick and Mount Ivers approach roads. 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. Before trimming any such hedges please consult with your local authority who will deal with this issue if there is a safety aspect involved.

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

Your projects here again are futuristic as it is June 2014 when you 'will run a recycling and water conservation information seminar'. This will therefore be the subject of next year's adjudication. Remember that the adjudication year for Tidy Towns begins on 1st June and ends on 31st May each year. So, for this year we are adjudicating projects begun after 1st June 2013 and finished before 31st May 2014 – or phases of ongoing projects completed in the current year. For next year the adjudication year will be from 1st June 2014 to 31st May 2015.

You say under this category heading that you monitor the bring banks and keep them tidy. We consider this under the category Tidiness. We observed your e car parking space near the church, but there is no indication that this is a new project as you do not mention it.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You monitor the bring banks and keep them tidy.

Well done on your participation in the National Spring Clean 2014. We are glad to hear that a litter control program is in place in the local school. You say that you 'confront dumping head-on and report illegal activities to the Environmental Department at Clare County Council.'

We noted a tyre advertising fly post on a pole near Gala and a sandwich board sign for the same at the Gala

junction.

Stonework along the riverbank is in need of repair close to the bridge area. Would it be possible to screen the yard to the cycle centre in views from the landscaped area on the Eastern side of the River? The River name sign on the raised bed at the corner of the bridge was partially obscured by vegetation. Some Footpaths in the region of the bridge were dirty and needed washing.

Your volunteers keep the approach roads litter-free. You segregate waste on your work nights. There was a little litter in the landscaped area in the Square. There was a lot of litter around the edges of the playground fencing in the Cappa Lodge area. We noted a little litter in the grass margins around the Cappa Lodge estate. At Fána Glas estate we also noticed a little litter. There was a little litter on the approach road by Sycamore Close and some on the Limerick approach.

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

You keep in touch with the local authority in relation to unfinished estates. Perhaps next year you might elaborate on what this two-way communication involves, and what success you have had from your liaison with the County Council on this issue.

We note that you support the residents associations financially to help them erect suitable name signs in their estates. Please let us know which estates benefited from this financial help during the adjudication year in question.

We visited some of your estates. Ashview Drive has lovely trees at the entrance area. We admired the sweet pea plants on the trellis beside house number one at the entrance to the estate.

Fána Glas has no legible name sign – just a small plaque re its foundation date. This like all other estates is not marked on your map. This estate looked bare and we noted some litter here.

We admired some hedging in this area also - we think this is called Shannon Road. In general the presentation of the various estates in this area was good. There was a rusty yield sign on a cul-de-sac/Shannon road estate.

Lios Anama had two good wheelchair spaces. It was very neat with nice hedging including copper beech and good semi-mature trees. There are nice views from this estate to the hills beyond.

In the Cappa Lodge area there were some nice flowers at the entrance splay. Planted pots here were superfluous, and the grass was too long for them. They were also laid on rough ground and therefore were slightly tilted in places.

An estate on the Newmarket-on-Fergus approach had no name attached to its boulder.

Floral arrangements at Beachwood Grove were admired. The name sign in gold lettering on a boulder looked well. A notice attached to a tree here is bad practice.

The roadside wall requires painting at Sycamore Close estate.

Church View estate is very nicely laid out around a manicured square/green. Here we noticed a well kept grotto opposite the church.

We admired the OPD residences on the approach to the Library.

Well done to the resident who was cutting the grass margin along the roadside outside Oakwood.

A car was parked on the grass margin and path outside Inis Orga. A terrace of houses opposite Inis Orga was very well presented.

There were some overgrown gardens in the estate near the Jamaica Inn.

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

Although you discuss the fact that you keep signposts washed and cleaned under the Residential Streets and Housing areas, the general cleaning of such signposts is considered here under the Approach Roads category. We see that you had a meeting with Clare County Council in relation to parking in the village. Clonlara Road was resurfaced and is lined – which you say improved parking in the square. We are not quite sure what you mean by this.

On the Shannon (Station road) approach trimming was required around the 60 K pH speed limit sign. There appeared to be an amount of weed killer used outside a very derelict house and untidy farm complex. (Please refer to our comments under Wildlife). Old petrol pumps looked decrepit on the left-hand side. In this area we note two double 'headless' road sign poles. The missing signs should be reattached or the poles should be removed. There was a rough surface and some weeds in front of the black and white town sign at the railway bridge. There was a derelict house on the right-hand side along this approach. A large tyre sign (hoarding style) on the left-hand side at approximately the 50 K pH speed limit was noted. We noted that some of the black and white painted road sign poles were well painted and others were dirty. Nearer the town some nice low stone walls and grass margins - together with trees were admired. We noted a large yellow fly post. There was a large advertising sign on a gable as

we approached Pound Street and also a large unattended open space nearby. A very derelict house in this area appeared to have no effort made to camouflage it. This is at a strategic corner, and we wondered if you had made any attempt to obtain permission to do some remedial work here?

On the Newmarket-on-Fergus approach we admired the nice simple black and white town sign. Some poor setback surfaces at a hilly part of the road looked poorly. A lotto sign was noted along this approach.

On the approach road by Sycamore Close we noted a poor farm complex on the right-hand side. This actually looks worse on leaving town by this route. There was a little litter on this approach and the backs of the green/cream/terracotta buildings at the yield sign to the Shannon Road would benefit from repainting. We would suggest that you consider painting all field gates on all approach roads to give a sense of unity and tidiness to the town and its immediate surrounds.

On the Limerick road approach the black and white town sign area was found to be overgrown. We noted some litter along this road approach and some verges needed trimming. The graveyard appeared to be neat. A site with security fencing would benefit from screening. We noticed that the paths were weed free. There was some fly posting. Along this approach we noticed some fairly recent hedge trimming (Please refer to our comments under Wildlife in this regard).

On the Mount Ivers approach road grass was been cut and bagged. There are large grass spaces to be looked after along this approach. We noticed some fly posting at the 'v' junction around the 80 K pH speed limit sign. We also noticed hedge trimming along this approach. There was a lot of signage near the town centre on the Limerick approach road.

On the Kilkishen/Tulla approach road we also observed some fairly recent hedge cutting. There were very clean yellow and black road signs along this road. Fly posting was noted here too. A plastic bucket was thrown in a hedge opposite the Mount Ivers new estate.

The Jamaica Inn on the Broadford Road appeared to be closed. Its splay walls would benefit from painting.

Within the town centre we noticed some on-footpath car parking -which is both obstructive to pedestrians and other footpath users, and also looks untidy. The footpath on the L471 approaching the square (outside the auction rooms) needs upgrading.