

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tuamgraney** Ref: **90**
County: **Clare** Mark: **306**
Category: **B** Date(s): **26/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	44
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	43
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	45
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33
TOTAL MARK	450	306

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Tuaimgréine - Welcome Tuamgraney to the Super Valu 2014 National Tidy Towns competition. Firstly we would like to congratulate you on achieving a Bronze Medal in the 2013 National Tidy Towns Competition! You have continued to maintain your commitment to improving your village. Thank you for the pleasant welcome letter which you attached to your Entry Form. We did enjoy our visit despite the constant rain on adjudication day. Last year's adjudicator was luckier! Thank you for confirming the boundary between Tuamgraney and Scariff. We are glad that you look forward to our adjudication report, and we hope that you will not be disappointed with its content. We appreciate all the trouble you go to as a small community. This was this adjudicator's first time to adjudicate in your village. However we had visited the village a number of times in the past as tourists, and we are quite impressed with the big improvements that have taken place there in recent years. We would like to explain that not all medal winners receive a second round adjudication, and you are not alone in this. So do not let that disillusion you.

You have a very large number of people involved in the Tuamgraney Development Association committee, and you hold monthly meetings. It is probably a good idea to have your meetings on the first Monday of each month, as it is an easy date to remember and one which is usually not filled with social engagements! We are impressed that you receive an annual subscription from each household. We found the insertion of poster copies, newsletter copies, and non-specific project related photographs within the Entry Form to be a little confusing, and we would suggest that you attach such photographic or illustrated detail in an Appendix to the Entry Form, suitably referenced from the Entry Form - where relevant - in 2015. We note that you do attach certain general backup material on pages 24 and following. It would be preferable to include all backup material here at the back of the Entry Form with relevant referencing to the Form itself. Finally we would suggest that you consider exactly which category heading your projects belong to before you fill in your Entry Form – as you seem to insert projects into non-relevant category headings occasionally. You will see examples referred to in this adjudication report.

The number of agencies, bodies and businesses that have supported your activities in various ways is impressive. Amongst these you list Tidy Towns, (as the organisation name submitting the Entry Form is Tuamgraney Development Association.)

You use many methods of communication both traditional and modern. In relation to your parish newsletter, we hope that you also circulate relevant newsletters to representatives of minority churches that may happen to be represented in your area. The Facebook page with 500 members is a very 'immediate' method of communication, and appeals to young people. We also note that you have a parish website. There is certainly no excuse for people in the area not to know about your activities – given the many media forms you use in communication.

You are lucky to have so many varied schools in such a small area. We are delighted to see that there is a Green Flag Officer at all schools. Furthermore a Junior Tidy Towns committee exists also. Students become involved in many projects including wildlife and litter surveying.

You list a dozen reasons why you feel the community have benefited from involvement in the competition. They can be summed up in the 12th - which is 'making your village a better place to live work visit and play in'. You summarise your group's work as a 'diverse group of people working together to improve the quality of people's lives by making your village a better place.' In doing so you take into account many aspects of your distinctive village.

Your 6 inch map is reasonably informative. However, it would be great if you would number the projects for this year sequentially throughout Entry Form and reference these numbers on your map. We would ask you to do this for 2015.

Tuamgraney Development Association Plan 2012 – 2015 deals with each category heading of the Tidy Towns adjudication process. However there is quite an amount of confusion in relation to the completion date of projects - insofar as we note that some of the projects you include for this year's adjudication would have been adjudicated last year, as the work was completed before 31 May 2013. Remember that the adjudication year is from 1 June to 31 May, so this year's adjudication period is from 1 June 2013 to 31 May 2014. We will refer under each category heading to some of these projects/instances. In these cases you sometimes refer in your tabulated plan to the fact that the project was completed ahead of time. Therefore such projects completed in May 2013 or beforehand would have been seen by last year's adjudicator who will have visited you after 1 June 2013. You would have been credited with those projects in 2013 markings - whether they were mentioned specifically or not in the adjudication report. We would also comment that many of the projects within the plan are spread over the three years of the plan. This is quite appropriate for some projects that are ongoing or phased. We would suggest that you try to identify more projects which will be completed within a single adjudication year, and try to achieve these annually. As a result of this confusion the adjudicator found the adjudication process quite confusing for Tuamgraney. We are sure that you will also find it disappointing because you seem to think that these projects can be listed for consideration in a second year. This can only happen where the project in question is phased into distinct annual phases. A project completed before the end of May will be adjudicated in that year. A project completed after 1st June will be adjudicated in the following year. We hope that this clarifies the situation for you.

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

Your main relevant projects under this category heading for this adjudication year relate to stone wall repair, bilingual sign direction, and painting of unoccupied properties. We will explain why we have excluded some - or considered some under different category headings which they more rightly belong to. You list the Limekiln as a project completed for this year (including a photograph thereof) - yet you tell us in your Tuamgraney Development Association Plan 2012-2015 that the Limekiln was completed in May 2013. Therefore it is not eligible to receive additional credit in this Tidy Towns adjudication year which extends from 1 June 2013 to 31 May 2014. If it was completed in May 2013 it would have been taken into consideration by last year's adjudicator in your relevant marking of 42 marks, as the adjudication will have taken place after May 31, 2013. Indeed this is the case as the adjudicator refers to 'the restored lime kiln' (under Roads Streets and Back Areas.) Nonetheless we visited the lime kiln and we have to say that the path descending from the enclosed viewing area towards the road gate is extremely steep. The adjudicator found it to be quite alarmingly so! We can give you some credit for the ongoing maintenance of this part of your built environment, but not treat it as a project for this year.

With regard to the floodlighting of St Cronan's church, we hope that you have discussed this proposal with the Architectural Conservation Officer of your local authority. Issues in relation to floodlighting older buildings – such as fungal growth potentially caused by floodlighting on Protected Structures need to be considered. Floodlighting also should be discussed with the Heritage Officer or Biodiversity Officer in relation to its potential effect on wildlife. The nice gates at St Cronan's 10th century church were admired. We do not think that the composite type flowerpots in use at the entrance gate are suitable for such an architecturally important building. We also admired the lovely gate piers and gates to the old lodge opposite the church.

The Catholic Church is very well presented with a nice blue legible sign. Hassett's Bar looked very verdant. We admired the good classic white cottage opposite Hassett's Bar.

Teach Bhtian looked extremely well (front and side elevations.) All properties around the centre of the village were very well presented. The school looked well with its Green Flag flying proudly.

We admired your public lights in the area of the Memorial Park.

Áras Bhrian Bhóru looked well and the very clean footpaths on both sides of the road at this point set off the adjacent buildings. Nilands looked very well and we admired the trees opposite this property. There are two lovely buildings on the side of the Kerry Co-Op entrance.

At the harbour the Waterways building looked well, but the sign could be repainted.

We complement you on a job well done on painting all field gates a bottle green colour generally. This gives a sense of unity to the village – which is quite linear and 'spread out' over various approach roads.

Your marks are already exceptionally high in this category in relation to projects completed and in relation to other

centres adjudicated, and we do not feel that there is sufficient evidence to increase marks here this year.

We wondered about the old well on the Tulla/Ennis approach – if you have any plans for its conservation. The stone inscription was impossible to read. We would suggest that you speak with your County Architectural Conservation officer in this regard.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

With regard to your listing of Reddans Quay Road project - listed as your 1st project for this year under this category heading - once again in your Tuamgraney Development Association Plan you say that this project was completed (ahead of schedule) in May 2013. Therefore for the same reason as the Limekiln cannot be accredited extra marks in this year's adjudication, neither can the completion of this road project. However we can consider the ongoing maintenance of the landscaping.

The five shrub beds at the top of this road do catch the eye and they are full of bright annual bedding plants. Obviously these have been replanted this year. Well done

The positioning of the planted boat certainly gives the passerby the 'hint' that this is a riverside/lakeside settlement - although the river/ lake may not be visible to the casual traveller who is not informed of the geography of the locality. However yet again you say in your Plan that this restoration and planting was completed in 2012 and replanted with summer bedding in May 2013. We assume you mean it was replanted with summer bedding in May 2014 as the 2013 bedding plants would be in a sad way by now! Therefore we credit you here with the replanting for this year. Certainly the boat was seen in 2013 by your 2013 adjudicator, as it is mentioned by the adjudicator under this category heading also.

Well done on the planting of another 300 native trees in the community woodland. We are glad that the schoolchildren are involved with tree and flower planting.

You referred to preservation of the gate and urn in the Famine Memorial Park under the Built Environment heading, but we deal with it here, as it is part of a landscaped area. Your paint works at the Calvary Memorial in the East Clare Memorial Park are also part of this category heading. Although you also list repainting and building of the bridge at Memorial Park under Tidiness etc. we consider it here under Landscaping. So well done on your enhancement and improvement of these areas!

New beds located on the Killaloe approach road are dealt with under the Approach Roads etc. category heading, although you mention them here. The planting of fruit and nut trees adds interest and biodiversity to your planting projects. We also credit this under the Wildlife category heading. The installation of a flower bed and grass area at the GAA field is considered as part of Landscaping - you include it under Tidiness etc.

The Reddan's quayside area is maintained very well.

We admired shrubs around the L41341 road junction. The rose display opposite the fitness centre was attractive.

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

We hope that your success in being nominated by Clare County Council under the Eco community initiative in their Pride of Place competition 2014 has a successful outcome.

You continue to maintain the community woodland and have provided a new access path therein. The relatively recently planted oak trees along the main access way were seen to be 'smothered' by meadowsweet and other plants etc. These oak trees need to be given space to grow - around their immediate environs. We admired the adjacent bogland and the bog irises. The rural aspect of this lane with views outwards to unspoiled countryside and fields containing neat silage bales is attractive.

You are lucky to have CELT in your midst as a resource in relation to your work in landscaping, wildlife, and sustainability. You mention their five-year biodiversity plan, a website, and local wildlife preservation education and enhancement. The plan is currently being reviewed with the Biodiversity Officer from Clare County Council.

The planting of fruit and nut trees is to be commended. Your owl and bird boxes are good projects. You mention the fact that you use non-chemical sprays. However it would appear to the adjudicator that some chemical sprays may have been used for weeding purposes. We wondered, for instance, about the weed killer used near the Famine Pot area on the Tulla/Bodyke/Ennis approach road and on the entrance road to the community forest. Where weed killer has been used the dead weeds/grass should be removed and disposed of properly. We note that you are aware that chemical weed killing is injurious to the environment, and we would encourage you to continue to use nonchemical sprays. The County Heritage Officer/Biodiversity officer would be good sources of advice in this regard.

The guided walks and biodiversity surveys undertaken in July and August 2013 relating to flora and bat surveys are relevant to this year's adjudication, but not those earlier surveys mentioned in your Entry Form, as they would have been accredited in earlier adjudication years.

Despite our best efforts we could not locate the new entrance to the wildlife park. It does not appear to be located

where you have shown it on your map. Neither could we see any evidence of signage for the Park so we viewed the area from the cut-off roadside on the Killaloe approach.

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

You have been involved with various recycling projects such as uniform and book exchange, clothes and other items recycling. You have recycled fencing and timber into seats. You segregate waste. Scrap metal is also recycled. Paper is shredded in schools. It is important to remember that Sustainable Waste and Resource Management is about more than recycling. Waste minimisation is what it says. It is about trying to reduce the amount of waste produced in the first case. You will find helpful advice in the Tidy Towns Handbook. You will also have noted the guidelines sent with your Entry Form last year. Do consider some further of the project suggestions therein for 2015. We recommend that you make keep in contact with the Environmental Awareness Officer of your local authority. You have potential to increase your marks in this section. You mention an annual waste prevention workshop organised by Clare County Council. However you do not tell us when you attended this workshop, and how many from your community travelled to this workshop.

Well done on your survey assisted by Youthreach of five businesses in relation to water usage and conservation. The school has checked for water leaks. Food measures have been distributed to schools to highlight the issues of portion size/food waste.

Congratulations to the Community College on achieving their third Green Flag, and also to the National School who are working towards their second Green Flag.

All grass cuttings are mulched.

You mention the sculpture from recycled cans under the Built Environment heading but we consider it here. Yet again this project was noted by last year's adjudicator, so is not a project for this year. Last year's adjudicator said that 'the fish made from cans is an imaginative intervention.' We agree and also commend it for its artistry. However, this is another example of a project included as completed this year which is inaccurate. Nonetheless we thought that the recycled fish at the quayside looked most artistic in its simple classical surrounds.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done on your painting of farm gates which we also credit you with under Built Environment.

You are in ongoing discussions with building site owners. The immediate approach to the community forest from the village has untidy sites for sale. Machinery and container/logs were left lying in a site just beyond the houses at the head of the roadway.

You are addressing fly posting and graffiti. We did not see any evidence of graffiti on our visit to Tuamgraney. However we did see some evidence of fly posting. There was some fly posting on a public light near the Memorial Park. Another fly post for the RFC Lotto was noted. Further fly posting was observed opposite Clareville bed-and-breakfast, and on the Tulla/Ennis approach road.

The gum litter task force/including schools was launched in April of 2013 and you included that plan as a project for 2012 – 2013. Nonetheless you state in your plan that it is your intention to support the school to continue the project. We assume that that is why you are including this under this category heading for this year. It is an ongoing rollover projects.

Some boundary walls within the village would benefit from repainting. The white wall adjoining the Croaghlin River Park area, with its riverside seat, is in need of repainting.

Whereas we admired your information boards with much interesting information, we noticed that the surrounds of the Tuamgraney Heritage Trail large information board are weathered.

We noted an empty sign holder at the Health Centre on the Killaloe side. There was too much signage on a blue door in the area of the fitness centre building.

The entrance to Drewsbrough House was weedy. It was noted that it was for sale, and also that weed killer had been used in the entrance area. At the Coillte premises the wall - and base of the wall in particular - would benefit from freshening up before next year.. The Kerry Co-op entrance was full of dead branches. At the harbour area, what appeared to be treatment works would benefit from landscaping.

You have weekly clean up evenings and you take part in Spring Clean month. Your commitment to daily litter patrols is admirable. Litter is segregated.

The school have conducted a litter survey which has been useful to you in your planning. We congratulate you on

the development and implementation of a Litter Control Plan (page 18 of your Entry Form.) It would be preferable to include this in your actual plan rather than in your Entry Form. However we are delighted that you have completed this plan, and we are sure that you can expand on ideas taking into consideration the County Litter Plan and any reviews thereof. Tuamgraney is very free from litter and giving your commitment to this through daily litter patrols and litter planning were not surprised. We noted a little litter at the entrance to the harbour area and at two other locations adjacent.

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

A lot of the projects which you list under this category heading do not belong to it for example the Lough Derg signage strategy. We deal with the projects that are relevant.

The quality of residential properties in the village is very good. This extends to the cartilages and garden areas. Some weekly cleanups specifically focused on householders.

You support local resident groups. At Radharc na habhann Liaison you have liaised re-road surfacing. You mention this surfacing work under the Approach Roads etc. Category but it is relevant to this category. The road surface and kerbing was found to be variable here. There are good trees at the entrance

You organised a front garden hanging baskets competition.

You provide encouragement for active participation in 'paint your house scheme'

Dun Carraig estate(?) is unfinished with only the Leapfrog crèche constructed. Four poles at the edge of this estate are unused an

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

Once again you sometimes mix up category entries. For instance you list the restoration of the Limekiln under this category heading, but we have already dealt with it under the relevant category heading which is Built Environment. You carry out grass maintenance on approach roads.

Here you mention the road resurfacing at Reddan's Quay road. You mention this in an earlier category but it is dealt with here. We have alluded to the fact that this was a completed project before this year. However we admire your ongoing maintenance of this approach road which looked very well – apart from the non-removal of dead grass, and apart from the fact that the village end of the road near the four flower beds still has a particularly rough surface. Despite the improvement to the road, the entrance to the Quay area still has some 'significant' potholes and a very 'serious' ramp.

The enhancement of beds on the Killaloe Road approach road was completed in 2012. However you are maintaining this area very well and it was a pleasure to approach Tuamgraney with its very clean sign with uncomplicated signage symbols along this road. This creates a very good first impression. The lovely trees, together with maintained verdant grass banks look extremely well. Whereas the potted floral displays give colour, we consider 'the jury out' as to whether they are a little bit urban in this setting – given that you are small rural village. We would prefer to see planting in the soil for visual as well as sustainable reasons. The same comment applies to the installation of hanging baskets on approach roads. The verges were very well trimmed along this approach, but we came across an orange coloured sandwich board located on your well trimmed verge. You maintain verges on all approach roads. Although road signage was generally found to be very good, you are in discussions with Clare County Council regarding the replacement of faded road signs and with regard to the new footpath on the Tulla Road between the GAA and the Famine Memorial Park.

You organised the resurfacing of the entrance to Kerry Co-op with cooperation of the owners. On adjudication day the adjudicator was not impressed with the condition of the roadway leading to the community woodland, nor indeed with the signposting thereto. On your map you call this the entrance to Raheen Oak Wood. We have to assume that this is the entrance to the community woodlands, as you have shown no other community woodlands other than those evident on the ground to the east of the village. The roadway is extremely rough.

On the Tullow road approach, although outside the speed limit signs we would like to complement Tuamgraney GAA on the lovely planting along the bare block wall. It is a pity dead grass was noted in the car park. The surface of the car park is quite rough. We also noticed a small billboard sign for the Boru Festival and signage for Lotto. Flagpoles here need painting. However a good painted barrier looked well. A plastic bottle was thrown on the ground near the sports ground. We admired shrubbery in the local yellow colour. S Tuamgraney sign on this approach is at right angles to the road. We admired the lovely green road edge linear park with its enclosed footpath and good timber fencing on this approach to the village. An advertising sign for bed-and-breakfast was observed. The graveyard is sited close to a nice treed approach to the village. This approach also has some good stone walls. However there are very bad potholes at the road margin/hard shoulder in this facility. As with the Killaloe approach, we consider that the potted plants might be replaced by in-soil sustainable planting. Perhaps you can do this on an incremental basis. We would like to see the car park at the cemetery/Famine Pot area surfaced marked and landscaped.

