

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Abbeyshrule** Ref: **473**
County: **Longford** Mark: **316**
Category: **A** Date(s): **01/07/2014**
25/07/2014

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	49
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	41
TOTAL MARK	450	316

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Abbeyshrule is welcomed to the 2014 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Well done on your achievements in the competition to date, deservedly so. Many thanks for your entry, supporting documentation and informative map. Your continuous dedication to the competition is noticeable in the presentation of your village and the completion of new projects each year. You had a busy year in 2013 with the visit of President Higgins to Abbeyshrule. An occasion all villages and towns would like to be hosting. Your continued achievements in the Communities in Bloom competition are applauded. It is good to see the youth of the area getting so involved in helping in all the categories of the competition. The new playground is an excellent new project for the village sited in a superb location. Your entry portrays full community involvement and a good established relationship with the schools. You also have great support from the many agencies like the local authority and waterways Ireland as well as local businesses. It is also important that you have workers dedicated to enhancing the village and working well with volunteers to achieve your goals each year.

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

On entering the village from the Ballymahon road the carefully maintained graveyard focuses ones attention here. The Cistercian Abbey located at the end of the cemetery looked fresh after the removal of ivy from its perimeter walls. This is an important and interesting heritage building to visit and view. It was noted that there is wheelchair accessibility. On day of adjudicating the adjudicator felt that the notice for information on access should be also placed on the cemetery gate. This would provide any visitor with clear directions on how to access the abbey. Proceeding on into the village, the Rustic Inn looks splendid and this building will be further enhanced by next year's competition with its new development taking place. The unoccupied house by the canal got such a good makeover that it looks occupied. The new children's playground is an important amenity in an area and brings a buzz of activity to this location. The new seating looks pristine at various points throughout the village as do the sculptures also dotted around the village.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

There are many open spaces for the visitor to ramble around the village and that is what the adjudicator did on adjudication day. The peaceful walks on the canal were enjoyed which lead to fisherman's haven. A haven indeed as many people were here relaxing in the sun. The avenue of trees on the approach road was admired and sets the scene as you enter the village. The road to the village gives the opportunity to fully admire the many areas of landscaping that blend in so naturally with the rural setting of the village. The gardens of the residents along the road added their own charm to the landscape of the area. There were areas of seating; however the adjudicator would recommend that seats be placed on hard surface or bark chipping for easier ground maintenance.

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

The natural wildlife habitats that prevail in the village surroundings such as the stone bridge, the river and canal, trees and hedging are all natural havens for wildlife of the area. Some wildlife that was spotted in the area was pine martin and mink which can be detrimental to other wildlife on the canal as you have observed. There are three key issues in this category Education, Conversation and Celebration. The local schools and the community are addressing all of these three issues, keep up this good work.

The village has a very natural surrounding and this should be retained and integrated into the life of the village. You are doing great work in leaving natural habitats on the canal and river banks. On the approach roads you maintain and cut large amounts of grass and have some substantial width in your grass verges. It would be interesting to investigate could a corridor of grass be left next to the hedges to ensure more cover for wildlife is provided. Mowing on the outside of this corridor will still maintain order and tidiness on your approach to the village.

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

Abbeyshrule understands what sustainable waste resource management means, you seem to tick a lot of boxes in this category. One area is providing water butts in two places in the village for use in flower watering. This type of water saving method could be used by the community at large with water charges been introduced shortly. This area will be looked at by many people saving water and funds. Tidy Towns groups are being encouraged to move away from planting bedding plants that require large volumes of water during summer months. Containers for flowers as you have in Abbeyshrule would use less water than hanging baskets. Groups are also encouraged when hosting events to avoid the use of disposable items.

The local authorities prevention network website have added a specific Tidy Towns page to this website providing practical tips and advice on sustainable waste and resource management. The website address is <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>. This hopefully will be of benefit to groups.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The village is maintained to such a high standard that it is difficult to find any untidiness. On adjudication day there were briars protruding over the wall along the footpath opposite the corncrake sculptures. The roads were clean and free of debris, this can be difficult in a village setting in rural Ireland which has tractors and farm machinery passing through. Sometimes it can be unavoidable. Your policy on litter control is certainly working. Having the younger members of the community aware and vigilant on keeping your village free of litter is excellent. You have set a pattern of having no litter bins in Abbeyshrule and it is working well.

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

The residential and housing areas of the village are well presented. It is good to see the use of bilingual name plates at entrances to the housing areas. These entrances also boast superb landscaping that it is neatly maintained. The use of year round seasonal planting is applauded. The village's continuous colour is carried down to the canal walk. The individual houses through the village are also presented to a high standard. One house in particular caught the judge's eye that had many pots around the garden, which must take a lot of time to water and maintain. The green wooden fencing in one estate although looks well, could perhaps do with trees planted here or some additional planting.

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

Well done on your continued work on all approach roads into the village. The well maintained grass verges certainly take time to maintain to this standard. Following on from last year's judges' comments on reducing the amount of grass mowed along the canal, maybe this could also be looked at on the approach roads. Your distance in grass could also be reduced by keeping to a shorter distance outside the village signs. Perhaps the residents are keeping these areas. With your new initiative on cycling in the village some of your grass verges are wide enough to maybe incorporate a cycle lane, just something to consider. The bridges throughout the village are superb and the lanterns on the approach road from Ballymahon are in keeping with the surroundings.

Second Round Adjudication:

It has been many years since this adjudicator has visited Abbeyshrule and your village today is quite astounding. It is clear on the Ballymahon approach that a special place is imminent. The vista from the canal bridge – wow! From this viewing point each aspect of the competition can be viewed and clearly the highest standards are being achieved. Crimson floribunda was a feature in various locations around the village and its environs. Multiple public gardens were noted here and there all maintained to a fantastic level. Even a small horticultural nook was spotted with lettuce, scallions, parsley and cabbage in abundance! The Rustic Inn façade looks great and we look forward to the removal of the scaffolding when renovation works are completed – a BBQ was on by the canal bank as the adjudicator passed on a sunny July evening. The modern church and grounds are pristine. Congratulations on the completion of the village playground that was funded by the Tidy Towns Committee and caters for children of all ages! Granite seats were noted at various places and provided a resting place for your adjudicator. The canal is a wonderful amenity and clearly an integral part of all that is Abbeyshrule. I am in agreement, however, with the first adjudicator in relation to comments on grass mowing. Litter control was good with only a single cigarette box being spotted on the Bog Road. You are at the end of your current 3-year plan and your aim for the coming years of energy, innovation and community is lauded. Please ensure that for future entries to the Tidy Towns that you update

your 3-year plan annually as this will allow you to optimise new unprecedented initiatives.