

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Macroom** Ref: **183**
County: **Cork(South)** Mark: **303**
Category: **D** Date(s): **05/07/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	46
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	41
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	36
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36
TOTAL MARK	450	303

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Macroom is most welcome to the 2014 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your application form with additional information. The level of entry and commitment by your group the Tidy Towns effort is evident in this entry form. This is up to the usual high standard but do take a look at your additional information as much of this is not relevant. There is no need for brochures etc unless they are new to this year. Your town map was good for general navigation but unfortunately it did not highlight the locations where projects have taken place. This is usually done with a number code, with a brief key on the map itself and referencing back to descriptions in the application form. You are urged to revisit this as it is an essential element of the judging process. The adjudicator would not want to miss out on points simply because projects could not be located. You have good community support and it seems you are liaising well with businesses and support agencies. Maintaining these links is essential in sustaining your success. It was noted elsewhere in your report that you recently received high viz vests with the Tidy Towns logo across the back. Well done, these are excellent in promoting your efforts on an ongoing basis and making sure that people are aware that it is voluntary work that is making the difference.

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

Vacant buildings need to be dealt with in a systematic fashion. Audit them, describing the level of attention needed, liaise with the owners where possible but also the local authority. Prioritise and offer material help where this can make a difference. Progress can and is being made so do persevere. Developments at the newsagent, Museum and JC Murphy's pub are testament to this. Do provide detail as to how the significant built heritage of Macroom is interpreted for residents and visitors. Are there walking tours available or events during Heritage Week? Businesses were looking very well during adjudication and it was great to see such attention to presentation and appropriate signage. The Market House and surrounds are busy but very well presented. Lidl is clean and well landscaped. The bus depot is in a poor introduction to the town with a number of tidiness issues including excessive temporary metal railings, discarded traffic cones and manhole covers, weeds, litter and tatty signage. The boundary wall needs to be painted as does the large black box that could be an oil tank. The town centre sign frame needs to be repainted and the bin cleaned. The Victorian era postbox would be a nice feature if the surrounds were better. St Colman's church is a wonderful structure overlooking the town with a good level of presentation. St Mary's secondary school was admired for its clean boundary wall and abundance of attractive plants. Middle Square is a fine focal point of Macroom with nice landscaping and strong built heritage. It is a civic space that is sadly used as a car park while a number of tidiness issues should be attended to. The pipe sculpture needs to be cleaned. The North Square is good but could be really excellent. Again it is mostly a car park when elsewhere in Europe there would be a cafe and civic plaza. There is an abandoned parking sign next to the old IRA monument and palettes and traffic cones at the entrance to the public toilet. A farmers market on adjudication day does liven things up and individual building presentation is excellent. Perspex on local information signs is, in some cases, in very bad condition and should be

replaced. The wonderful old church on Castle Street is looking forlorn. Simply clearing the weeds out of the gutter and replacing the hoarding over the door would be an improvement. Thankfully the grass is mown so doesn't look totally neglected. It would be great to see the Castle garage renovate its entrance as it is such a strong feature.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Well done on the installation of your new outdoor gym. This is an excellent new amenity for the town and your contribution is acknowledged. Your new bridge over the River Sullane is both attractive and practical. It's location was not marked on the map however. Planting of summer colour is very attractive and well done to homeowners and businesses who have added to this. Street trees work well where they exist but more are needed for example on North Square. The raised stone bed across from Cornucopia really needs more than annuals flowers and you should be thinking larger, perennial plans for this location. The Demesne is a fantastic amenity right in the heart of the town. The United Irishmen monument needs to be cleaned. The roses along the drive look really well.

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

The removal of rhododendron from the Castle Demesne is a significant undertaking and well done. Unless treated appropriately with herbicide these stumps will regrow so continued vigilance is needed if your new native saplings are to gain the upper hand. Do consult with your county Heritage Officer on appropriate treatment. Well done on putting up all those bat boxes. Will this be accompanied by a bat walk to raise awareness of these incredible little animals? Your new information boards will also be useful in this regard. As you recognise the Gearagh remains an internationally important wetland area. How is this value communicated to the local people? It would be nice to see events to celebrate its uniqueness. It is understood that it is under threat from alien invasive species, particularly the Himalayan balsam. This is one plant that is relatively easy to control without herbicides or special training so maybe there is something the Tidy Towns group can do. Be sure however to liaise first with the ESB and NPWS before any interventions. There is an infestation of Japanese knotweed along the river near the tyre centre. This needs to be dealt with appropriately as it is a threat to native biodiversity. Do consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland on the best way to eradicate this alien invasive species from this exceptional area of natural beauty.

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

The SMILE resource exchange is a wonderful initiative that was news to this adjudicator. However you provide no indication as to how businesses in Macroom avail of the service. Some examples of the utility of the exchange would be most welcome. How does the Tidy Towns group promote the work of the 'give are get'? The adjudicator would like to see concrete examples of how you are promoting waste minimisation and resource efficiencies through your communication tools. Well done to the schools on their green flags. The Walk on Wednesday is good but is there any reason why walking cannot be promoted on other days? How is safe provision for children to cycle to school provided? For helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have regular litter collection meetings and this is excellent. Do you participate in the national spring clean? Do provide detail as to how you raise awareness of the litter issue among schoolchildren. Do you personally call into businesses to discuss this issue? That would be most impressive and face-to-face contact is likely to be far more effective than leaflet drops for instance. Entering the litter challenge is a wonderful initiative and no doubt keeps the issue alive in people's minds. The town is very tidy with no major issues of note. Do watch out for ugly or unnecessary protrusions from buildings at first-floor level for example at the post office and on the McCarthy's newsagent (otherwise very attractive buildings). Litter control on adjudication day was to a very high standard, well done.

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

It is great that you have a number of residents groups and that you liaise with them. What about those areas with no residents association, how can you bring them into the fold? Lovely homes were admired to the rear of Supervalu but the small streets had no names. The Orchard is a fine estate of handsome houses. The enormous Celtic Tiger era hoarding should be taken down and work with the developer to replace the metal fencing with something more pleasing to the eye.

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

Your issue with the bypass and traffic is noted and one you obviously live with on an ongoing basis. Do keep up your contacts with your elected representatives at a local and national level to lobby for its completion. Your efforts in maintaining the approach roads are noted. On the court approach there are a number of signs to welcome the visitor to Macroom. Are all these really needed? Not all are of a good quality. This adjudicator would feel a single welcome is sufficient and preferably a bilingual one in local stone that could be attractively landscaped.