

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballygar** Ref: **979**
County: **Galway** Mark: **238**
Category: **B** Date(s): **10/07/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	35
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	33
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	21
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	11
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	49
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	26
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30
TOTAL MARK	450	238

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ballygar is very welcome to the 2014 SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your excellent and most informative entry form. We note that you have 7 executive officers and 25 volunteers who meet twice weekly and that you have a further total of 65 contacts on your email system. You're working well with Galway County Council, Galway Rural Development, FAS Community Employment Scheme and have the benefit of 2 part-time workers via TUS.

Ballygar Carnival Committee donate €1,000 towards your work, a similar sum comes from the Community Enterprise section of the County Council with the Credit Union chipping in a further €100 with additional funding coming from individual businesses throughout the town. Your very successful cake sale during the carnival fair day raised an additional €1,100 which is a wonderful result and congratulations to those who were involved in the extensive baking that must have been involved. We applaud your plans to set up a Junior Tidy Towns Group linked to the local Secondary and Primary Schools. This is a commendable initiative which will help to insure that the Tidy Towns ethos becomes truly trans-generational. In this only your third year in the competition you have continued to make great strides.

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

Well done on the purchase of the former Court House/Temperance Hall in Market Square. This is a wonderful long term project and will give you a solid fixed space within the community while at the same time rescuing an important element of the built environment. The Community Shop featured sparkling windows and the area was neat and orderly. We admired the window boxes and hanging baskets together with the planters. The Men's Shed is a very welcome development and we admired the window boxes and tubs outside its front wall. The Bank of Ireland was very well presented and the Post Office looked well. St. Brendan's Credit Union in its stone faced building was admired while the Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore's House was appropriately marked. Tierney Wine and Spirit Bar, a stone building featuring delightful green doors, was well painted overall as was the Elm's Rest B&B. The Beauty Saloon featured very pleasant planting and flowers. The Kilmore Lounge looked well, Colaiste Mhuire itself looked well; perhaps they can help the presentation of the somewhat drab house beside them. The Coffee Drop caught the eye. Excellent work has been done on refurbishing/disguising abandoned house and the repainting of Moran & Co. and Fleur de Lis near Sycamore Court are good examples. A particularly fine job was also done on Byrnes on the Galway Road.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Your activities over many years, in planting shrubs and flowers, has grown to the extent where their annual

maintenance is its self a significant task which is being carried out with great success. It is good to see that you are continuing the expansion of tree planting notable in Forest View and Hawthorn, we applaud that in most cases the trees selected are old established native Irish species which has a material benefit in respect of the bird population. Well done on your prowess in purchasing seeds for planting by your volunteers. These will in due course add even more colour to your flowerbeds and hanging baskets. We applaud the discussion you are engaged in and we hope it does lead to the purchase of a suitably sized poly tunnel.

The Niall Walsh Community Park featured splendid planting in front of the fencing. We note that former timber rail sleepers were used in much of the landscaping in this location. The entire park looked very well especially the hedge at the opposite end. The various sporting organisations - The GAA, the Gym, Hurling and Football Club projected a very positive image. We enjoyed the large open spaces at the junction of Church and Main Street. An innovative reuse was the old tree stump on the Ballyforan Road, which made for an excellent presentation. The work at the request of elderly residence in Victoria Square was admired. The major exercise involved in the fine new pathway at the cemetery has materially enhanced the presentation of this area.

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

Pride of Place necessary goes towards your Wildlife Garden which is only in its second year. The trees and shrubs are becoming established and nesting boxes will help very much in this processes. Of particular merit are the fine slate signs which not alone provide the names but also some information on each flower and tree species. We welcome the survey by the students of Colaiste Mhuire of animals and look forward to their report on the August Bat Walk. The provision of bat boxes by the volunteers from the Men' Shed is a very welcome development. The Suck Valley Way is a wonderful amenity which was very well signposted. We admired the entrance to the wood at Forest View Estate with picnic tables and in a splendid way the splendid small pagoda which is there. Holly Grove Lake is an additional important resource.

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

The information evening held in February on food waste, composters and digesters has the potential for significant benefit at individual householder level. "Taking Your Case to the People" at the Carnival Fair Day in August was an ideal opportunity to spread the word. The handing out of reusable shopping bags and drinking bottles is a pleasant and worthwhile exercise. The reusing of timber to make window boxes for the Town Hall is an excellent example of creative reuse of materials. The adjustment to the street lighting will also save energy. We admired St. Mary's College with their Green Flag and the well sited Bring Bank in front which was very well maintained and respected.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The related activities of litter control and tidiness have been amalgamated this year into this one composite category. Well done to the 13 plus people involved in the An Taisce Spring Clean-up, this was a tremendous jumpstart to your year. We admired the litterbins on the small bridge and especially applaud the "Adopt a Road" scheme which has been introduced. This has been found to be very successful in other locations and helps to "spread the load" while ensuring the town continues to be well presented. You satisfied the dual requirements of reducing waste by using your facebook page to request the removal of flags, old posters, unused electrical cables and out of date signage by businesses and clubs. Based on our findings during the day of adjudication this request has been very largely adopted.

We very much welcome your initiative in talking to farmers to replace untidy gates on the approach roads into the towns. In another centre they have gone one step further and requested that farm gates be repainted to a common two tone matrix. The result has proved extremely attractive and perhaps it is something that you would consider implementing over time.

Litter generally was not seen as a problem during our adjudication and we applaud also the material reduction in the extent of discarded chewing gum which is something very difficult to remove. We share your distress at the current condition of the stone fencing on the approach road from Creggs. This is particularly unfortunate and unsightly and it is hoped that the relative authority(ies) will tackle the problem with energy before long.

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

The Forest Park was a delight, the sizable communal grassed areas with trees recently planted and a bird box already installed was a joy. The entrance to the forest from here added considerable to the overall vista. We welcome the establishment of Residence Associations in Forest View, Hawthorn Park, Sycamore Court and Cúl na Cille. Undoubtedly the establishment of a residence association/ management committee facilitates greatly the better presentation of housing estates and also has a significant social dividend also. The communal grassed areas in Sycamore Court looked very well and individual houses were pleasantly presented. The picnic table in the grassed area was admired. In the Cúl na Cille some grass and weeds outside the curb detracted somewhat. The installation of ancient Bog Oak at the entrance to Rose Lawn Drive was greatly admired. The enhancement work done at Plunkett Park was noted where the fine old ornate cast iron benches were painted and the timber section enhanced somewhat.

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

The approach road verges were suitable but not excessively cut back on both sides on the approaches. Some thought needs to be giving to establishing a clear cut divide point between the town and the surrounding rural

countryside. There is a measure of self selection available on some roads but on others it will need to be more clearly defined for best advantage. Very pleasant trees on the right hand side especially on the approach from the junction with Creggs Road. The badly damaged fencing along this stretch has already been eluded too. Ballyforan Road surface was a bit uneven in spots and will need attention over time. The road here was very well swept. We admired especially the extensive flower arrangements encircling many lampposts. On the Tullyroe road we admired the very splendid 'Welcome to Ballygar' signs and the manner in which the verges were suitably cut well out along this road.

As a general exercise it is suggested that all street signs be subjected to an audit to determine (a) whether they are still needed (b) if they are clean and (c) if they can still be readily seen or are they less visible use to encroaching vegetation. An audit of this nature can often be successfully "subcontracted" to an interested group for example transition year's students. It is necessary to stress the need for close attention from a safety view point during this exercise.

Finally thank you for your thoughtfulness in giving us a laminated copy of your map for use in the event of rain. Fortunately our adjudication took place in splendid sunshine which added still more to our pleasure in visiting your well presented town.