

# Tidy Towns Competition 2014

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballymore Eustace** Ref: **357**  
County: **Kildare** Mark: **301**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **27/06/2014**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2014</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	50
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	40
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>301</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014 and congratulations on your 12 years of participation. We note that your committee of five people is one less than last year and wonder if you have plans to add some more members in the future. Your committee is quite active in holding 12 meetings in the year and you have strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools. You receive support from local businesses and public bodies. Many thanks for attaching a good map of the area with projects identified. The numbers are quite small so perhaps you would consider making them larger for next year. Your plans for the future are quite impressive; it is clear that you have developed a very good approach to improving your community. The involvement with local schools is commendable and the transition year students assistance in the clean-ups is a great activity for encouraging civic pride. We also noted their involvement in other projects. The personal report by one student is impressive; we note her aim to establish a facebook page which will greatly assist your communications. Congratulations on your initiative through KFM to have election posters speedily removed. The documents supplied for this year's competition, including the book of photographs were very well prepared and demonstrate a good approach to implementation of various improvements in your community.

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

Ballymore Eustace is a delightful town to visit and we are pleased to learn from the photographs the extent of works done over the years. Most pubs and restaurants looked fine and seemed to be busy. The Pharmacy and Lu's Chinese Restaurant were fine. Hanging baskets on attractive lamp poles were noted. The car park at the Thatch had a clothes bank. There was a small amount of litter there and some hanging baskets to be seen. A rusty roof of an adjacent building in the car park was noted. The distinctive entrance gateway to the chapel with the bell in view was admired. The church was clean and tidy and the adjacent resource centre looked well. Near the Ballymore Inn, we admired the gardens. The Post Office looked fine. Liffey Waterworks entrance was neat and tidy. St. John's church and cemetery could easily be missed as it is hidden behind trees. The dense tree planting here conceals the church from view. Perhaps the woodland could be examined with a view to removing some trees or low branches to open up the view. The Band Hall is a fine building, that is well painted and the car park is clean and tidy, no litter or weeds. St. Mary's cemetery looked fine. Our only criticism is the overuse of chemical weed killers. The Country Kitchen is a good use for the former school building. The sign needs cleaning. Individual houses in the town were generally well maintained except for some that are vacant and we note your attempts to improve some of these. Chapel Street has new footpaths and we admired the traditional cottages with window boxes and plant containers. The Community Resource Centre is well painted and has floral décor. Day Today shop and the Village Store looked well. The car park gate could do with painting. Oliver Plunkett Road had a nice well painted house. An empty premises opposite has a surround with weeds. Rose Cottage had lots of roses. The school is well painted, it has one Green Flag and there are fine trees in the grounds. We were most impressed with the Liffey Walk. The

welcome signs were great, the pathways very comfortable and the view of the six-arched stone bridge (Liffey Bridge) was well highlighted with the steel and timber decked disabled anglers' platform. We enjoyed the wildflowers, viewed the seating and picnic table and read the Salmon Lifecycle, Mayfly and Caddis Fly information boards. We noted the new pumping station surrounded with wildflowers.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

We noted the Landscape Enhancements Concepts report attached; it is great that you are examining this and other issues in a strategic way. Car parking does seem to dominate the town in certain areas and trees would be one way of reducing that impact. However, we advise that trees be planted into the ground for long term effect rather than in containers. Of course, such proposals will require public consultation because the character of the town is not of tree lined streets and you will want to conserve the view of the cottages. The Market Square has perhaps the best potential for tree planting. In planting new trees it is best to use a single species on a road or street for uniformity. Also, it is important to ensure that the base of new trees is maintained free of weeds and grass and also flower beds to ensure early establishment. Guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible such as has been done with floral boxes sitting on a wall in front of a cottage on Chapel Street. The use of permanent planting is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming which has been noted in the feature planting at entrance points to the town. Some gardens in St. Brigid's Park are exceptional and these are discussed below.

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

We note from the attached bat survey that four species were recorded and these are associated with treelines and mature trees in your area and that you had a survey of hedgerows and treelines completed last September. The 11 recommended measures for conserving the bat population include the avoidance of chemicals for weed control. You are to be commended for undertaking these projects provide valuable guidance for the continued management of these areas. You have a rich natural area surrounding your community and it is important to promote an awareness of its many traits as you have done with the information boards at Liffey walk. Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to achieve under this category. In this regard researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages.

### **Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaíthe:**

This category is becoming more and more important and the available marks are now increased to 50 to highlight the need for communities to address the issues involved in tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. We note that you have a new waste water treatment facility which no doubt now meets the environmental regulations. Your 2012 household survey indicates a high level of awareness and practice in the area and we congratulate you for that and for issuing the recipe book. We also noted the four pages of tips in the Bugle on making homes more energy efficient and water conservation. To save the Earth we need to move quickly to a zero waste society. Your town can play its part by first looking at the volume of waste that is generated. Contact your waste contractors who can help with this. Try to find out what is being thrown away and armed with this information you can start to think about how waste can be reduced. Examine the waste pyramid and note the recycling is only the fourth most preferred option after avoidance, reducing and re-using. One third of our waste is organic in nature, such as grass clippings. You can avoid collecting mown grass by more frequent cutting and using mulching mowers which shred the clippings and facilitate faster decomposition. In regard to water usage, self-watering hanging baskets are a help in reducing the amount of water used and also the task of watering. Other waste minimisation projects might include working with retailers to cut down on packaging, reminding people to re-use shopping bags, discouraging junk mail, encouraging the re-use of water bottles and coffee mugs at school and at work. In response to an over use of chemicals for weed control, many useful products of the past are no longer available and therefore communities are encouraged to use other means such as hoeing to maintain weeds. In some cases, allowing wildflowers to develop is an acceptable alternative. These activities will highlight the fact that you are focussing on this category and when you develop more projects in the future your marks will increase.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

We note the 'Adopt a Road' Scheme that you successfully introduced in the past year. You did not escape the problems of last winter's storms; we note that the broken wall at St. John's Church was damaged at that time. The entrance gates there need painting. The recycling bins opposite the Kilcullen Road junction look clean and tidy. The entrance to the ESB site at Broadleas needs tidying and the gates need painting. Truce Road had a poor road surface and the 50 kph sign was dirty. A stone wall and gateway needs repair and we noted a derelict house and an old rusty shed. Several vacant houses were noted in the town and we commend your efforts to have them cleaned and painted.

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

Surprisingly, Ballymore Eustace has fewer residential estates compared with other towns of its size. Liffey Court and Liffey Heights estates were both fine; houses and trees looked well. We noted some plant container in grass here and suggest that maintenance is less if planting is done directly into the ground. There is space for more trees and some kerbside weeds were noted. In Assumpta Terrace, the houses, trees and grass were fine. In St. Brigid's Park some owners made superb efforts with their garden. We admired well trained Pyracantha against the walls and fantastic hanging basket displays in the gardens. Hillcrest had most houses with well planted gardens. We admired the big sycamore tree at the entrance.

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

From the before and after photographs we learned of the extensive work done in Ballymore Eustace on resurfacing of roads and footpaths. The impact is very good. We note that you are working on nameplate signage to welcome visitors and look forward to them next year. The concealed entrance sign on the Kilcullen road is almost hidden with vegetation. The hedge parsley here was delightful. Road signs were clean and we noted the new trees on the Kilcullen Road. Stone walls need repair and the section of block wall would best be screened. We admired the planting at the junction of Naas and Kilcullen Roads