

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Johnstown** Ref: **370**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **289**
Category: **B** Date(s): **18/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	43
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37
TOTAL MARK	450	289

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014. We have noted that you have a healthy number of 14 on the Johnstown Community Association of which a core of 5 comprises your committee. Your meetings are more frequent from March to September than for the rest of the year and you are supported by an active group of volunteers with weekly Saturday work days in Spring and Summer. It is noted that the voluntary groups have specific projects and that system of delegation is commendable. We are pleased to note the involvement of children with their parents in works programmes. The strong links with residents, voluntary groups as well as local businesses and public bodies is a key to success and we note the system of annual donations that you have devised for funding your projects. The development of your website is a good initiative which is also in keeping with modern means of communication as well as the use of Facebook, notice boards and newspapers. Having a committee member on the parents association is an important link with the local school. We are pleased with the positive impact that the competition is having on your community by increasing awareness of environmental issues and creating pride and a sense of place. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention. This is very helpful. We also note your 3 year plan which will be updated on a yearly basis and that is a very good approach. Well done on your submission for this year's competition; it is exactly the type that clearly sets out what you are doing in a well presented form with not too much documentation. However, try and add some more actions for each criteria for the adjudicator to consider.

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

Projects listed under this heading are the Heritage Trail which is now extended with the plaque on Johnstown House, the Way Directional Signs which we greatly admired, moving the bus stops with a new footpath surface. Johnstown Inn is a well-kept building with a plaque explaining its historical context. The adjacent houses are in good condition. The old church ruin and cemetery across the road from Johnstown Inn was visited. The heritage plaque on the wall outside explained its connection to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John from whom the town got its name. The cemetery was fine but some litter on the grass margin outside the boundary wall was noted. Nearby, a dead tree and a damaged litter bin were noted. Further down the street we admired the well-kept terraced houses with arched windows. The car park was clean and tidy. Playbarn Adventure Playground has well painted gates and was tidy. There was a nice ornate metal "Welcome" sign near here and in other parts of Johnstown. We noted some vacant shops near the junction of Puncestown Road and some graffiti on the entrance piers. The attractive island planting on the road junction caught our attention. ADM Londis warehouse and the Centra Supermarket were fine. The unusual Chusan Palms (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) outside the Chinese Restaurant are a contrast to the usual street trees for Ireland. They seem over-protected in the guards. The stately three-storey Johnstown House is an impressive building. The railings would benefit from a touch-up.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The project listed here is the planting of saplings of Birch trees for National Tree Week. The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and you have some good examples in the residential estates. Surprisingly, the centre of Johnstown does not have street trees even though there is plenty of scope for trees in the grass margins and also in footpaths. Perhaps since there is 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. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the stems can get damaged from the ties or stake. A guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible so be careful not to provide too many plant containers. It is better to have fewer well planted containers than a large number in which the quality of plants is inferior. If considering more seasonal flowers the use of permanent planting including herbaceous perennials for floral displays is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming.

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

You have a rich natural area surrounding your community and we note that you are arranging to carry out a Habitat Survey this year. It is important to promote an awareness of the many traits and to map these habitats. 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. Biodiversity is under threat globally and sadly Ireland is a part of this trend. Habitats of value include specimen trees, hedgerows, treelines, streams, woodlands and wetlands. List the plants and animals to be found in your natural environment and recognise their significance (native, protected, or alien invasive?). This would be a very useful project for schools. We were pleased to see that the stream inside the wall of Johnstown Gardens estate was accessible.

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

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. Thank you for providing the information on the 52 tonnes of waste that is diverted from landfill through your recycling centres and for segregating the waste from your clean-ups. You mentioned that your landscaping projects are designed not to require regular watering. Perhaps in next year's submission you might elaborate on the contributing factors. Are you able to evaluate the impact of the messages being posted on your Facebook page? There are a number of other measures that your community can take in regard to sustainability. 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 your actions under this heading including raising awareness of litter and the reduction of poles in the village. It is good that you receive support from the Environmental department of Kildare Co. Co. We are pleased to report that litter observed during our visit was very minor. The 50kph and the Community Alert signs need cleaning.

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

St. John's Grove estate is in nice condition and we noted the painted railings. Houses, grass and trees all looked splendid. A dead tree on the open space should be removed. Check the tree ties and stakes to ensure that they do not cause damage to the tree stem. Stakes are usually not necessary after two years and if possible should be removed. Furness Manor has fine specimen hornbeam trees and hedges and we like the street lighting. Johnstown Gardens also has fine established trees and a dead specimen should be removed. Johnstown Manor had fine hedges in private gardens, nice street lights, trees in grass margins were well maintained and we saw no evidence of weeds or litter here.

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

We admired the planted St. Bridget's Cross on the roundabout from Kill direction and the new road sign on the Punchestown Road. Finger post signs in the bed at the entrance to the well-kept car park were of a good standard. The roads and pavements were in good condition