

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Maynooth** Ref: **377**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **299**
Category: **F** Date(s): **17/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	52
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	45
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35
TOTAL MARK	450	299

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014 and congratulations on your continued participation over the past 50 years. We have noted that your very active committee of twelve people have some who are contributing for more than 25 years so well done to them and it is good to see new members adding their support and that another ten volunteers have offered to help on projects. The monthly meetings throughout the year and get togethers on other occasions are noted. You have strong links with residents, voluntary groups and receive support from local businesses and public bodies. The support of NUI and youths in the area is also important as are the many other groups that you have listed in your application. We read the enclosed issues of Maynooth Newsletter and are pleased that they include several items on your works programmes and achievements. Being part of the community web portal is an important link as is your use of Facebook, notice board newspaper etc., as a means of communication. Having a Tidy Towns Liaison Officer for the three primary schools and the Post Primary School is commendable and the participation of children and their Green Flags on your float on St. Patrick's Day is important. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention and the legend for the numbers conveniently placed beside the map. The photographs accompanying the text were very useful. We are pleased to note that you regard the competition as contributing to strengthening community support and public awareness of environmental issues.

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

Maynooth is a wonderful heritage town and we admired reading the small piece of its history in your submission. The 12th century castle ruins is a fine feature at the entrance to St. Patrick's College and is testament to your links with the past. Nearby, the fine St. Mary's Church (Anglican) has an interesting history which we read on the stone plaque on the wall. We noted the improvements made to Farrell Bridge including new lighting so well done. The Newton Inn and Restaurant looked well. The bunting in the Square was cheerful. Trees on the Main Street add significant character to Maynooth as do the many good quality, well maintained commercial buildings that form the streetscape. Some of these include An Siopa Milseán, Elite Confectionery, Uí Néil, McMahan's pub and the lovely stone building of Mantra Hotel. No evidence of weeds or litter was observed here. Presentation Girl's Primary School was well planted – a small amount of litter was seen here. We admired the redeveloped entrance to Carton estate which forms a focal point for Main Street; the seats and flower beds are inviting and we noted the bike racks were well used. The information sign is very helpful and the avenue of trees is spectacular. United Irishmen stone plaque on the Tree of Liberty was noted.

Glenroyal Hotel complex looked well and we admired the new plant containers opposite.

The Lidl building was nicely landscaped; there is scope for some trees in their car park and in the grass margins of the industrial estate. The Maynooth Educate Together and Gaelscoil Uí Fhiaich schools are in good condition. Shops on the Dublin Road were well maintained and fronted with a fine stone wall. The Manor Mills Shopping

Centre looked well. St. Mary's Catholic Church is a fine building and St. Mary's Boys NS has a good planting outside the boundary; a dead tree here needs to be removed. Maynooth Post Primary School also looked well. The GAA complex was clean, tidy, well painted and the grounds were well maintained. St. Paul's Religious House and the Moyglare Nursing Home across the road were both well maintained. Genil Training Services complex looked well but the boundary hedge needs attention to remove the briars and cleaver weeds. The Dunnes Stores complex is a major focal point building on the corner of Kilcock Road; we admired the planting on the side embankment. Aldi shopping complex also pleased. St. Patrick's College and the new University buildings form an important part of new and old built environment in Maynooth. They are wonderful places to explore and enjoy the buildings and landscape. We were very pleased with our visit to Laraghbryan cemetery. New and old is well integrated. The stone boundary walls are a fine feature as are the mature lime trees. The altar was nicely placed between the old and new sections. No weeds, no litter and the grass and graves were well maintained. The number of seats placed throughout were attractive and no doubt functional for visitors.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and you have many good examples in Maynooth. The trees in the Main Street and Carton Avenue have already been mentioned. There are also important specimens of trees in the vicinity of Maynooth Castle and in the grounds of St. Patrick's College. These trees are an important part of your heritage and the famous Silken Thomas Yew (*Taxus baccata*) has been included in the recent book entitled "Heritage Trees of Ireland" by the Tree Council of Ireland. Perhaps this could be highlighted more for visitors. The new trees on the university grounds add significantly to the heritage of Maynooth as do some examples in residential estates such as Moyglare Hall. In planting new trees it is best to use a single species on a road or street for uniformity as was done on Carton Avenue. 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 and we are pleased to note that this is the practice in Maynooth. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the stems can get damaged from the ties or stake. This is a problem for some trees in residential estates and we have mentioned these below. Guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible, for example, hanging baskets and we wish to commend you highly for the standard of baskets especially on Main Street. The white containers at Maynooth Castle and containers in the square and at the Straffan Road bus turning point were admired. The use of permanent planting is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming and again; this approach is evident in many of your planting schemes. We note the inclusion of costs in your submission and that hanging baskets at a cost €4,000 were done based on the adjudicator's comments of 2012. In that regard, hanging baskets and window boxes do add importance to an area but the extent of usage has to be balanced with other project needs.

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

Maynooth is fortunate to have a rich natural area surrounding your community and it is important to promote an awareness of its many traits and to map these habitats. We admired the new information signs on Carton Avenue and at the Harbour; they are of a very good standard. Wildflowers on the canal bank at the Train Station (Harbour) looked well and the water lilies were beginning to flower on our visit. Joan Slade River also has a very good sign with information on the history of the rivers in Maynooth and the wildlife in the area. It is a delightful spot and we hope the bug hotel is fully booked. 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. We note your plans to undertake a wildlife survey of Maynooth and the nest boxes being used in primary schools as well as the 60 bird boxes in the NUI grounds. 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.

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. The recycling in excess of 26 tons of WEEE material and almost 600 tons of glass in Maynooth is impressive. We note your Waste Minimisation Officer's appointment to work with schools and your support for the Green Campus initiative at NUI. A number of other sustainability measures for you to consider are: 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. There appears to be excessive use of weedkillers on the roundabout on Kilcock Road. 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:

In general we found Maynooth to be a very tidy community and we do realise that a town of your size presents quite

a few difficulties in trying to maintain tidiness and litter control. We could see the benefits of your weed cleaning team as well as the street signage and bins cleaning efforts. The litter buggies are a clever idea and we note the support you receive from McDonald's as well as Kildare County Council. The removal of gum (an ongoing problem) was also successful. We were pleased not to see any election posters or cable ties. Some minor problems were observed and these include the following: A clutter of signage was noted opposite Lidl on the Straffan Road. At Maynooth Garden Centre the clutter of signage could be reduced. The Tesco complex also has a number of signs on the boundary railings which spoil the impact of the complex and the roundabout. The Train Station and car park looked fine except for a small amount of litter, a broken bike chained to the rack and the railing at the canal bank needs painting. The site opposite the GAA was not maintained and looks untidy. Some litter on the Kilcock Road roundabout

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

There are many residential estates in Maynooth and the following comments on the ones we visited are intended to provide guidance: The Straffan estate with its housing and apartments had fine established trees. The grass was well maintained and no weeds to be seen. The same comment applies to the road leading to Meadowbrook; some dumped branches should be removed. Kingsbry had a mixture of tree sizes. The 3 ton limit sign was dirty and there was graffiti on the adjacent green box. Some gardens were well planted as was the open space and we admired the linear planting here. Railpark estate has established trees and the gardens were mostly well planted. There is scope for a line of new trees to be planted on the large grass margin between the estate and the Celbridge Road. Griffin Rath Manor is a nice estate; the name stones were well done and the trees looked well. A small amount of litter observed here. The terraced houses on Newtown Road looked well. Beaufield Estate is well planted. We noticed the wooden fence is in need of maintenance but wonder if it is needed – could it be removed? In Pebble Hill Park estate, the trees were fine specimens and the hedges and houses were well maintained. Carton Square and Nagle Court has houses and apartments which are well laid out and well maintained.. The planting looked very good and no weeds or litter was in evidence – the supporting stakes on some trees need attention and removal if not needed. The small O'Neill park estate would benefit from tree planting and shrubs/hedges in private gardens. The overhead wires dominate here and some litter was noted. Moyglare Meadows and the Abbey were both well landscaped with plenty of trees and no weeds. Moyglare Hall is a new large estate which on approach has an excellent line of lime trees and a fine boundary wall of granite stone, brick and railings. Within the estate some trees have died and the supporting stakes need attention.

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

Maynooth looks very well on all approaches. Straffan Road roundabout and nearby Maynooth Business Park looked very well. The stone sign for Maynooth was neat and well planted. There was a hedge behind the sign and flowers in front. Straffan Road has a fine stone wall boundary and well established planting behind it. At the junction with Celbridge Road there were stainless steel planters and flags. A small amount of graffiti was seen here. We admired the new stone "Welcome" sign and new footpath near Griffin Rath Manor estate. We admired the stone wall boundary along Newtown Road. The line of trees was impressive. On the Dublin Road, the McDonald sponsored roundabout was nicely done and we noted the new "Welcome" stone sign here and on the Kilcock Road.