

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Monasterevin** Ref: **379**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **243**
Category: **D** Date(s): **25/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	41
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	28
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	34
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	26
TOTAL MARK	450	243

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014 and we compliment you on participation for some decades past. We have noted that your committee of twelve people is triple the number of last year so congratulations on this success. Meetings are held every Wednesday after your weekly clean-up operations and we are pleased to see the support of youths in these activities and the satisfaction that volunteers are getting from their involvement. The strong links with residents, voluntary groups and support from local businesses and public bodies is the way forward for success. The use of Facebook, email, parish newsletters, local newspapers etc., is your means of communication. The involvement with local schools through the board of management is commendable. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention and photographs. Thanks also for the summary sheet of the overall plan for the community. It helps to see progress on various areas. Your comments on the benefits of participation in the competition are appreciated; we are pleased that you feel benefit from success and pitfalls

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

Having driven through Monasterevin many times in the past we were surprised on this occasion to see more interesting buildings that are away from the main thoroughfare. The oasis that is Moore Abbey is looking superb with its well-maintained buildings and landscape. We admired the mature trees here and the River Barrow. There was a nice gate lodge and the entrance adds to the townscape. The gates need cleaning and painting. Finlay's and the Bellyard pubs were admired. They have well-painted doors. In Dublin Street the large buildings are in poor repair and the recently installed slate catchers are now catching weeds. Fitzpatrick's commercial premises were in good condition. SuperValu complex was very good; the recycling bins and adjacent area was clean. Topaz service station was fine. We noted the work done by you at the railway bridge. The railway station looked fine and we noted works underway at the former station residence, the gates of which are rusty. Bollards on the canal bank were well painted and a seat is provided. We admired the line of trees here. Drogheda Street has many important buildings including the church and the large yellow and red brick house opposite which had a great display of roses in the garden. At St. Paul's Secondary School the building and walls were well painted. The small St. Mary's Park has some very large trees which are part of the mature tree line on Drogheda Street. The former Christian Brothers' House is well restored. Scoil Eimhim Naofa had a large banner proudly stating that they achieved four Green Flags in 2010. The Community Centre and Credit Union buildings were fine. Mooney's Pub was nicely painted in black and gold. We admired the Monasterevin Youth Action mural on the closed shop in Main Street. Some good buildings in this area were Stack's Pharmacy, Carmody's, Church of Ireland and "This n That" shop on the corner. The car park at Monastery Pharmacy was very good. The Bank of Ireland needs painting and there were weeds in the gutters. The Celtic Cross is an interesting feature but lacks sufficient space to be appreciated. It is good to see the Hazel Hotel reopened and looking well. We suggest that the plant containers near the front door be planted or

removed. The cemetery at Kill Cross had a good boundary wall and entrance and we admired the St. Bridget's Cross on the gates. It was clean and tidy with no litter.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Monasterevin is fortunate to have many mature trees, interesting woodland and many fine new specimens planted in residential estates. The trees on Drogheda Street are significant landmarks. We note that some dead trees were removed from Drogheda Street and the timber is being used for candle holders and other items. The tall tree opposite the former Christian Brothers' House is dead and should be removed before it becomes a safety hazard. The grounds of Moore Abbey are well maintained and some of the residential estates are excellent. 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. This is an issue in some residential estates mentioned below. Guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible. The use of permanent planting is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming. Empty or poorly planted containers are less effective than no plant container. The landscaped margin between the Kill Cross cemetery and the road had seating and some fine specimen mature trees (oak, horse chestnut and pine). The younger beech trees do not need support anymore so we advise the removal of the stakes and tree ties before they cause damage to the tree stems. A playing pitch near Cahill's Cross was surrounded by a green steel palisade fence and we admired the trees in the margin outside the fence. We admired the hanging baskets (helmets) on the Fire Station

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

We note the promotion of the walkways by the canal and river and your aim to have a "Green Way". You have much to offer in that regard, especially with access to the grounds of Moore Abbey. It is important to promote an awareness of the habitats in the rich natural area surrounding your community and it makes sense to have someone talk about the ecology of local bogs. There is a small stream running along Drogheda Row and we were pleased to note that it is quite clean. Perhaps this stream and its environs can be added to your wildlife activities. We enjoyed looking at swans swimming on the canal. 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.

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. Your actions under this heading include using water from the local canals for watering hanging baskets and that is very worthwhile. Congratulations to the pupils and teachers of St. Evin's primary school for achieving their 6th Green Flag in the area of energy and water usage. Do you have information on the volumes of material recycled from the facilities at Supervalu? It is good to see multiple usages of items such as brackets on poles and no doubt the Eco Car is a novelty in the area. There are a number of other measures that your town can take in regard to sustainability. Contact your waste contractors and 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 your regular clean-ups of the area and the support of volunteers. The weekly action by youths is to be commended. The survey of signage is a good idea to reduce clutter. You are lucky to have TUS workers to assist your efforts. We wish you good luck on the window improvement project ; we admired the "Building a Better Town" mural in a shop window in Main Street. The existence of untidy vacant buildings such as Holmes and other premises in Dublin Street is a major issue of which no doubt you are well aware. Old petrol pumps on Main Street are no longer in use; this site needs redevelopment. A derelict thatched house at Cahill's Cross was noted. The crash barrier opposite the Railway Bridge in Fern's Bridge needs painting. The Youth Club had weeds at the entrance.

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

Hopkin's Haven estate had nice Whitebeam trees at the entrance; a dead specimen needs removal and

replacement. The name stone looks fine and there is a floral display sitting beside it. We suggest that some planting on each side and at the rear of the stone would complement it better than the flower box and would be less maintenance. The houses were well-kept as was the open space. There is scope for greening the gardens with trees, shrubs and/or hedges. No evidence of litter or weeds. Moore Abbey at Cahill's Cross had a good stone wall and the houses looked well. In Rosglas estate, the name stone was covered in weeds and vegetation. The houses and hedges were well maintained and there was plenty of planting in the gardens. Plenty of fine trees were noted here but there is a need to check the stakes and ties and remove them before they cause damage to the tree stems. Ardeevan estate had plenty of trees. No weeds to be seen in the kerbs but some were in the planting. At Abbey View and Woodview estate we admired the large open space at the entrance and the view they have of the woodland in the Moore Abbey grounds. Some trees in the estate were topped; a practice which is not recommended. There was no evidence of weeds. St. Evin's Park and Fern's Bridge estates had houses, entrance, grass and trees all looking well. Houses on the road (including the thatched cottage) near the railway bridge looked well. St. Mary's Avenue has fine bungalows on the right that are in much better condition than the houses opposite. At the end, there is an apartment block that looks unused and is derelict. Togher Wood estate we were advised was a model in terms of maintenance and we concur. We admired the clipped evergreen planting in the margins. Togher Grove has fine houses and an open space with some excellent mature trees. The grass was well maintained and we suggest a dead tree at the entrance be removed.

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

The gateway to Moore Abbey grounds forms a distinctive entrance to Monasterevin on the approach from Kildare. The grass was cut, hedges trimmed and the houses along the road were well-kept. Mature trees and a fine stone wall boundary adds impact as does the Abbey View and Woodview estates. On the other end of the R445 approach, the Hazel Hotel is a good landmark. Most signs throughout the town and on approach roads were dirty. Road signs were dirty near the railway bridge as was the sign for Ballalley Cross. St. Mary's Avenue has a poor road surface.