

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Naas** Ref: **382**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **306**
Category: **G** Date(s): **01/07/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	50
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	39
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32
TOTAL MARK	450	306

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014 and we note that you have been a participant since 1958. We have noted that your committee of five elected people and another nine appointed persons with specific responsibilities hold monthly meetings throughout the year and of course have work programmes as well. It is clear from the documentation that you have strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools and receive support from local businesses and public bodies. The use of Facebook, local newspapers, local radio, posters and bin tags are your means of communication. The involvement with the local community, especially the youth is impressive. Having three Tidy Towns Ambassadors to work with local schools is innovative. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention. The book of appendices is also useful but may we suggest that the sections be simply bound into the folder rather than the use of plastic pages which are cumbersome to use, especially on site. The before and after pictures are a great help in explaining achievements to an adjudicator.

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

Naas is fortunate to have fewer vacant premises than some other towns in Kildare and we note from your submission that you are actively working on improving such sites/buildings. St. David's Church just off the Main Street is a historic part of the built environment beside the ruins of earlier buildings. The Town Hall can only be described as splendid. The building and pavement looked well and was adorned with a multitude of window boxes and plant containers. The litter bin and the finger post bi-lingual heritage signs here and throughout the town were clean as was the information board. On North Main Street, all commercial premises looked well and appeared to be busy, even a boarded up premises was fine. The Racing mural opposite Whelan's Shoes was noted as was the one with the canal theme opposite Murtagh's, the chicken images on Gogarty's and the one at the canal harbour. Lawlor's Hotel was in good condition and had nice window box displays. The Presbyterian Church is a fine stone building in a prominent location opposite the Town Hall. The windows and railings were well painted and floral displays of good quality were attached to the railings. The Funeral Home sign at the rear of the church had a rusty pole. Moat Lane and other side streets were clean and tidy and buildings in good repair. The bus shelter was clean, no weeds or litter to be seen. Most commercial premises in Main Street were fine and Kavanagh's in particular were adorned with window boxes. The trees in the street in the vicinity of the Courthouse are fine specimens and we noted the hanging baskets on the poles. The classical style Courthouse is a major landmark of the town and the plant containers outside add to its importance. It is sad to see a derelict weedy building opposite Kavanagh's and nearby the Forge Inn is closed down and needs attention. All the banks buildings looked spruced. The left hand side of Campion's building has a weed going all the way up to the roof. William McCormack's had a great display. The Tyre Source was clean and tidy and the private car park in Corban's Lane was also fine. We admired the planting and trees at the entrance of the CBS. No weeds or litter to be seen. The Credit Union building was fine, Conways had good hanging baskets and Grace's Bar beside McDonalds had good floral displays. The

Church of Our Lady and St. David looked great. We admired the small "Calvary" in the front garden, the grotto to the side and floral displays on the railings. The Convent Tea Rooms looked busy. Buildings opposite the church looked fine and many people were enjoying a coffee and chat in the delightful Chapel Lane. We admired the new commercial and residential development on Dublin Road near Poplar Square. St. Corban's Cemetery is one of the best we have seen. We admired the stone wall boundary and railings, the entrance gate as well as the plant containers in front of them. The two buildings inside are very attractive and the graves are well-kept. Seats outside the entrance are a good idea. A dead tree inside the wall needs to be removed. The church of the Irish Martyrs is a nice building with plant containers at the front door. The trees here are fine and the car park is weed and litter free. One dead tree needs removal. The Centra shopping complex across the road looked well. The Hospital and grounds is a large complex. The buildings are well maintained and there are trees throughout the car park. The nearby Naas Workhouse Cemetery is well maintained but the name stone needs cleaning. Vista Primary Care is a modern building with good planting and a sculpture. The Fire Station was shining and we noted the trumpet sculpture. Naas Care of the Aged had floral displays and we admired the cedar tree growing beside the entrance. The Harbour View Hotel is an impressive building. The Council Local Government offices were noted. A small roundabout between them and the Osprey Hotel could be developed. The access road has a nice stone wall and the plant containers on the Newbridge Road boundary were admired. The Osprey Hotel and apartments looked well and the water feature was a delight. The standard of landscaping here was very high. Some tree stakes here are no longer needed and should be removed. Veritas is an impressive stone building and Freedom Travel had lots of flowers. "Swans on the Green" had plenty of flowers. The Garda Station looked well and was adorned with three tiered plant displays at the entrance. Naas is fortunate in having the Grand Canal in the town. The historical trail was well marked. There were boats and barges on the canal. Both they and the locks looked well-managed. Ashgrove Dental Clinic was fine. The library and nearby Youth Centre building looked well. The trees were fine and signs were interesting and to a good standard. The derelict building detracts from the area. The well and new canopy looks well. The Leinster Leader and the Naas Hotel buildings were fine. An abundance of floral displays on the hotel almost hides the sign. Toilets at the car park behind the Town Hall are a welcome sight and a rarity in most towns. The Eircom Building could do with a facelift and some trees would also help here. The old cemetery on Abbey Road was fine. The Moat Theatre opposite the Moat has lovely character. Monread District Park was visited and looked well, especially the trees along pathways. Some seats would be a welcome addition as we were advised by some locals sitting on the name stone. The playing pitches were fine and a valuable resource for the local community. The car park is a little exposed and we suggest some trees be planted in the grass margin on the boundary with the road. Tesco Extra is a large shopping complex which looks well but would benefit from additional tree planting in the car park. The Aldi store here and at the other end of town looked well. Monread Health and Fitness Centre looked fine and the neighbourhood shopping (Mace) also looked well. All service stations in Naas looked clean and tidy. Millennium Park is a well landscaped and well maintained business park. The IDA building in Monread Industrial Estate also looked well and enhanced by the established line of trees on the road. An Post and Time House enterprises looked well. Pity about the weeds in the field between them.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The appendices include information on a proposed Naas Green Way (NGW) and we wish you luck with this venture utilising existing pedestrian routes around the town. In your submission for 2014, the emphasis is on the use of seasonal bedding plants especially in containers to add colour to the townscape and these are very successful. The use of permanent planting is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming. In that regard we noted the flower beds at particular locations on the various roads; the Begonia bed beside the church car park entrance on Sallin's Road and the bed of Begonias opposite the New Caragh Road and the planting scheme opposite Tesco Metro.

What is surprising is the lack of mention of trees, which are the main structural elements in the landscape. It is accepted that you have some good specimens of trees from Poplar Square to South Main Street, but there is scope for more tree planting to enhance the streetscape. The Old Railway line pedestrian route looks clean, tidy and the line of trees is impressive. In general, the residential estates are well furnished with trees, however, Monread Avenue would benefit from tree planting. 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. This is a minor matter in some parts of Naas. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the stems can get damaged from the ties or stake. This is also a minor 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 as is the case with the many plant containers and hanging baskets especially all along the Main Streets. In that regard, the plant containers and three tier displays in Poplar Square and on the roundabout beside the Church off Ballycane Road were excellent. We do wonder however how long this effort can be sustained because it is costly and takes many hours to plant and maintain. The floral display on an end house in a road after the church on Sallin's Road was fantastic. The signs for "Private parking" were rusty. The lakes are terrific facilities for Naas; they add landscape character as well as wildlife interest. The planting is appropriate. The signs were clean but the solar compactor bin needs cleaning. A good wildlife sign and pleasant walks. Young and old swans entertaining visitors.

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

Under this heading we note the mention of the Otter project which we note will be ongoing. It is interesting that the lack of access to the DeBurgh's estate means that the otter habitats there are undisturbed. Bird nesting via a webcast is a great novelty that avails of modern technology. We also note the plans for a bat survey this year. Identification of various habitats in Naas is appropriate as is the tree trail at the Lakes. You are aware of the rich natural area surrounding your community especially the canals and lakes as well as the DeBurgh's estate and we note that you are promoting their values. 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. We noticed the little stream beside the grotto; can it be made more accessible? The wildlife information boards on the banks of the canal and at the lakes were well done and very interesting. Wild flowers and other natural vegetation on the canal banks were admired. There was no sign of weed killer usage along this area. The green areas on both sides of Ballycane Road are managed for wildlife purposes and we noted the small stream there also. Plenty of red and white Valerian on the Abbey Road were a delight.

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 activities listed by you include surveys conducted by students which are leading to a plan for minimising waste in your community. The success of Osprey Hotel in reducing its waste by 55% is amazing and we hope that message can be spread to other commercial operators in Naas. The recycle shops for charities are noted as well as the water reduction plans for schools. The adoption of Slí na Slainte routes for better health are positive and the Green Schools Programme is a way of getting children and their parents to embrace various means of reducing, reusing and recycling. Scoil Corban was proudly flying a Green Flag and we admired the mural in the alcoves. 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. We noted bring banks and clothes banks in several locations around the town such as the Council offices. 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. In that regard, do you use mains water for the plant containers or do you take the water from the canal? 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. We note that you are already controlling some weeds by manual means. There was no obvious use of chemical weed killer in St. Corban's Cemetery and we note your admiration for the caretaker there. 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 are impressed with a team of 63 volunteers on a clean-up team which work several times a week in keeping Naas tidy. It is good that you also have the support of students and teachers. They do a wonderful job as we found very little litter in your community. They also clean signs and litter bins and segregate the waste material collected. Recycling bins in the Tesco Extra and Tesco Metro were fine and the area around them was clean. We recognise that in a town the size of Naas it is very difficult to ensure that all areas are litter free, especially with large volumes of traffic as we have seen on our visit. Therefore, you are to be commended on this effort. We note from the pictures how you have removed weeds from kerbs and walls and that is a great success. We recognise that the Council staff work with you on these tasks by collecting the bags and sweeping of streets as well as graffiti removal. There was graffiti noted on the gable of a vacant building in Loch Buí and kerbside weeds. We assume that the large construction site between the Main Street, Corban's Lane and Church Lane is the planned centre town shopping centre which you expect will be a catalyst for removing some car parking from the Main Street. The existence of overhead wires in the Main Street does interfere with the streetscape and perhaps a future redevelopment programme will facilitate their being placed underground. We observed a chimney over McDonalds that had weeds and a gateway beside Express Alterations which was untidy. There are too many signs at the entrance to the car park of the Church of Our Lady and St. David and at Trident House and nearby premises there is signage clutter which takes from this otherwise pleasant approach. On the canal bank, some signs for those in charge of dogs were dirty as was the litter compactor at the Lakeside. Opposite Rathsker heights on the Kilcullen Road there is a vacant site. Xanadu premises needs attention.

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

There are many residential estates in and around Naas and we visited a number of these. In general, they are all well maintained and litter and weeds are hard to find. The annual garden and estates competition is a good idea as evidenced by the high standard of these estates. The following comments apply to the estates visited. In Church Lane, Rose Cottage deserves 100% for the excellent garden. We admired Abbey Court estate through the gates. The Sycamores which incidentally had hardly a sycamore to be seen had plenty of Rowan and purple leaved plum trees. A dead cherry tree should be removed. Spring Gardens had a few flower beds. The individual houses on the Sallin's Road were good quality. Millwood and Millbridge were well planted estates with nice houses and a good road surface and no litter or weeds to be seen. Morell Road has trees that are maturing well. The Oldtown estates looked very well, particularly the Sweet William in the beds near the entrance. In this estate and in Monread Lawns there is a problem with tree stakes and ties which should not be needed any more. We suggest that they be removed. The car park opposite the entrance to Monread Lawns had some litter and some graffiti on the outside wall. There is scope to add climbing plants to screen the walls. Monread Meadows had very good hedges. We admired the fine avenue of birch trees at Monread Crescent and the entrance planting was well trimmed. Aylmer

park estate was fine with a nice flower bed at the entrance; one tree stake near here should be removed. The children at play sign had some graffiti.

Kerdiff Park and Lawns were fine. We admired the hanging baskets and well maintained gardens at Dun na Riogh estate. Cherry Grove estate was fine. The houses in Sunday's Well estate look well; we admired some nice birch among the mature trees. The grassland meadow on the hill was interesting. The pathway to Lacken View had some litter and broken glass. Lakelands estate has trees and shrubs. Some suckers on trees need removal. There appears to be excessive use of chemical weed killer here. The sign for Lakeland, Meadow Court and Ashfield needs refreshing and within the estate there were no name stones to distinguish one estate from another. A dead tree here needs removal. On the Kilcullen Road, Rathasker Heights was an open plan estate with a nice planting of birch, no weeds or litter to be seen. The complex in St. Ita's Place needs landscaping. Cottages on the Newbridge Road were admired. Jigginstown Green and Park looked well especially the displays at the name stones. Just over the bridge on Abbey Road we were impressed with the climbing plants on a gable and side wall of a cottage.

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

On all approaches, the "Welcome" signs were clean. All the roundabouts were planted and clean. Failte go Nás in hedging at the Dublin Road approach was excellent. The stone boundary wall around Oldtown Demesne is a great feature of Naas. We enjoyed reading the information boards on the history of the demesne. Further on the seats provided a welcome rest. Sallin's Road makes a nice green entrance to the town. The row of poplar trees are a main feature on the Blessington Road. Near here the entrance to Craddockstown Golf Course looked well. In general, road surfaces were in good condition and we admired the paving in the town centre. We were very pleased to see side streets and back lanes in such good condition.