

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathangan** Ref: **383**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **304**
Category: **C** Date(s): **24/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	52
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	41
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	25
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31
TOTAL MARK	450	304

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014 and we note that you have participated for 30 years. We have noted that your committee of four people have a further six volunteers who work with you on specific projects. You also have a core of 25 volunteers that expands to over 40 when particular works are being done and you also have school children helping at weekends. You seem to be well organised with reporting every two months at public meetings. You have strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools and receive support from local businesses and public bodies. The use of newspaper and the electronic notice board are good means of communication. The involvement with local schools is commendable. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention in colour code. This is a good idea; can you please put the legend on the map for convenience. Thank you for before and after photographs. Well done on providing valuable information in this year's application. It made interesting reading and gave a good account of your actions under the eight criteria. We do encourage communities to aim for a 3 year plan because it is not possible to achieve everything in one year and it is good to aim for targets over a period of years.

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

You are to be commended for your action in dealing with vacant premises. In Market Square, a number of buildings are closed and some are for sale. The Bridge Bar, Dillons and the Burrow all looked well. The town square was modified some years ago with expanded pavement and new road surfaces and it is noted that overhead wires were placed underground. It is therefore a very modern treatment with well painted bollards protecting the pedestrian surfaces. We admired the old village pump and also noted the painted hoarding beside Hacketts. The Credit Union in Chapel Square is a fine building and beside it we noted work ongoing at the Community Centre. Noone Engineering premises beside the church is in fine condition. The church is an imposing building and we noted the established ivy growing against the walls on each side of the car park. Plant containers outside the front of the church looked well. N. Conlan car dealership was a fine building. The landscaped areas had good shrub planting and grass. The entire place was clean and tidy with no litter. The Spar and Tulip Restaurant were fine. Ardscoil Rath Iomgháim was a nice painted building with established trees and hedges on the boundary. The pedestrian bridge looked well with a nice view of the canal but also two untidy sites are visible from here. One of these seems to be a work in progress. Merrimac Transformers is looking well and has good sized trees here also. GAA and the tennis club, the Day Care Centre, Fullams and Sorrento were all looking well. The Boy's school was fine but the sign was dirty. The Garda Station in the former national school (1910) was fine. The new playground in Tannery Park was admired.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

We enjoyed some fine specimens of trees such as the line of birch on the main Street, copper beech and poplars on the riverbank. A fine avenue of lime trees guided us to the Church of Ireland and its 300 year old graveyard which is well maintained. These are the main structural elements in the landscape and suggest that there is scope to add more trees to the streetscape in Rathangan. It would entail the loss of some car parking spaces. Some trees to frame the church are also suggested. 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. The use of permanent planting as done in a number of places such as outside the well-kept Bunscoil Bhride is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming. Tannery Park is a fine amenity for the town; seats here looked inviting. William Byrne Heather Garden and Maura Laverty memorial gardens looked well. We advise against topping trees such as seen in the grounds of the school. Such pruning causes trees to die prematurely. We noted the plant containers in the Market Square and the terrific hanging baskets on the heritage lamp posts outside Hacketts. Well done on using the 15 plant containers for winter-spring floral displays as well as summer displays. In your application, we note the range of tasks undertaken throughout the year and congratulate you on this very organised approach.

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

Tannery Park is a special place for you as a Community Wildlife Park being ideally located between the river and canal. The Bluebells and Buskers event to promote Killinthomas Woods is another appropriate activity under this heading. Good luck with the Ballydermot Walk initiative. Well done on the two wild flower surveys per year on the canal bank, for providing this information to schools and for working with Waterways Ireland in managing the grass cutting to allow floral displays from May to September. The bat survey information was also interesting. The natural area surrounding your community is a haven for wildlife and it is important to promote an awareness of its many traits and to map these habitats as is your aim. 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. We noted your project of harvesting rainwater from a number of buildings and look forward to an update next year. The art project should also prove interesting. Thanks for the information on the energy survey and hope you make better progress next year. You have listed many actions based on the waste pyramid and we congratulate you on this initiative. 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. 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 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:

The management of litter is an all year round activity for you and Kildare County Council. Well done on organising the garden competition with support from the Credit Union. The 'adopt an area' initiative is a good approach and thanks for including the information on collection volumes. The programme of works is impressive. Litter was a problem in the vicinity of the canal and the Ardscoil. The old mill not in use anymore is awaiting a new use. Weeds in a gutter of a building opposite the Credit Union were observed. Some litter seen at the recycling bins at the rear of the church. All litter bins in the town were clean.

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

Doorley Park has good houses, planting and we admired the garden hedges. The grass and trees looked well and no weeds to be seen but a small amount of litter. Pomeroy Park is an open plan estate. We noted trees in the grass margins. Grass and houses are well maintained. It is important to check the ties and stakes on trees in both of these estates to either loosen them or remove them before they cause damage to the tree stems. Houses on the Kildare Road were in good condition. There is scope for tree planting in the grass margin. The Meadows estate has a large open space and mature trees. We admired the houses, some with hanging baskets. A small amount of litter and weeds were noted. Spencer Court looked well behind the nice gates. Annsborough View was different from most other estates in that the roadside margins from the entrance are densely planted with a variety of shrubs, all looking well. Trees by the wall also pleased. Houses and grassed areas were well maintained. A few weeds were noted at the kerb. Glebe Court had a nice hedge on the roadside. Inside the estate we enjoyed the clover sward in the grass with some trees. At Ard Mhuire we enjoyed the planting. At Ballyderrig estate the houses and open space were fine and we admired the entrance planting. St. Patrick's Park is

an estate with a number of boarded up houses. The road surface is poor, litter and weeds were prevalent and the playground needs refurbishment. We note from your submission that Kildare Co. Co. has plans for redeveloping this estate.

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

We have noted the projects listed under this heading and you are to be complimented on your efforts to improve particular areas within the community. On the Kildare Road there was a nice stone wall and all the signs were clean. However, a few weeds at the kerb. Lock Road along by the canal has a nice stone wall boundary and we admired the birch trees.