

# Tidy Towns Competition 2014

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Suncroft** Ref: **386**  
County: **Kildare** Mark: **241**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **26/06/2014**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2014</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	36
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	32
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	36
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	33
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	41
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	26
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>241</b>

### **Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:**

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2013. We have noted that your committee of seven people hold many meetings throughout the year and have strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools. You receive support from local businesses and public bodies. The use of Facebook, notice board newspaper etc., are your 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 and a book of photographs. Please add more information for next year. 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:**

We enjoyed our visit to Suncroft village community and were surprised to find three cemeteries. The cemetery on the Athy Road had well painted gates. It has a stone entrance, painted walls and lime trees inside the wall. The old cemetery near the church looks untidy, the gates were dirty and there was debris inside the wall. Carna cemetery has nice a stone wall boundary; the gates need painting and there is a group of trees in the grass verge. The Village pump looks well but the impact is lessened by the untidy sites opposite. We admired the very colourful garden adjacent to Vinnie's. In the church and grounds we admired the Millennium Oak tree and sculpture. The grotto opposite the church gates was clean and tidy. Moore's and O'Hanlon's looked well and there was a strong colour on the Croft Inn. St. Brigid's School must rightfully be proud of their four Green flags. We admired the small garden and the water butts. The only fault to find with the school was the plant containers outside the wall. They are broken and would best be removed. Planting directly into the ground here would be more satisfactory. Some vacant house and sites beside the school were noted. Suncroft Lodge Nursing Home was nicely landscaped. Some dead trees here should be removed. The Community Field looked well and we noted that building of the Community Centre is underway. Katie's Cottage from 1600 looked well. Páirc Uí Cathain, the Amenity area was well maintained. It is relatively far from the village centre but we noticed that people use it as part of their walking route.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and you have some good examples in Suncroft such as the line of lime trees in the cemetery on the Athy Road and the birch trees on the Village Green. 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. 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. In that regard we advise that the two containers outside the school would best be replaced with two permanent beds defined by kerbing. These would help to manage car parking to right angled arrangements. The Amenity area has some square flower beds which look somewhat out of place in this rural setting. If these were removed it would be just as appealing.

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

You 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 interesting little stream between the trees and the boundary wall of the cemetery on the Athy Road and which travels to the village. This is an opportunity to utilise and gain points under this heading. Instead of killing off the vegetation on the bank of the stream and under the trees, we suggest that you allow it to grow and enhance this area. This could be an opportunity for wildflowers which we note you are planning for open spaces in the village. 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. We note your emphasis at present is on recycling.

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. There is an apparent overuse of herbicides, especially in the cemeteries. 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 concern for removal of unwanted signs and in that regard, the clutter of signs at corner of the cemetery on the Athy Road caught our attention. There are so many signs here that some are hiding others. Most of the signs around the village need cleaning and the 50kph sign at Carna cemetery is dirty as is the ramp sign at the village. A rusty gate opposite the cemetery needs attention and no doubt you will be talking with Kildare County Council and service companies about removing the clutter of overhead wires at the Village Green. A vandalised phone box on the corner of the green was also noted. Perhaps it is not needed anymore and should be removed. Two vacant buildings at the entrance to Newtown Grove look untidy. Some bits of posters on the pole outside the church were noted. The overuse of herbicide in the grounds of the old cemetery near the church and the one on the Athy Road creates an untidy appearance.

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

The sign for Newtown Grove has a background of birch trees that looks well. The grass is well maintained and no weeds or litter to be seen here. Service boxes on the open space look unsightly; could they be screened with a hedge? In Ashfield estate the grass was not cut and there were kerbside weeds and some litter. The name stone sits on a concrete plinth which would best be concealed with soil or plants. Church View had a clean name stone with lots of flowers at the sign. Houses and the open space looked well. A dead tree stem should be removed. Ard Bríd estate has lots of weeds at walls and there is scope for tree planting here. Most houses looked well; some are derelict. Empty plant container should either be planted or removed. Hawthorn Wood estate has a nice stone entrance with gardens enclosed with railings. Trees, grass and hedges are all well maintained. We visited the Co-op housing area and couldn't read the name stone but liked the oak trees growing there. There were weeds at the kerb and grass dumped at the hedge. Open space and houses are maintained. Askinraw Lane was clean and tidy.

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

The approach roads looked well. The hedges were fine and the road surface was in good condition. Footpaths exist at the shops and outside the Village Green. The name stones for the village are welcoming.

