

# Tidy Towns Competition 2014

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Inistioge** Ref: **394**  
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **306**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **12/06/2014**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2014</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	47
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	49
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>306</b>

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

It is encouraging to read that you believe participation in this competition “helps to unite residents and business-people in a common aspiration”; you will have noted that the competition is now more community-orientated than heretofore. It is, in many respects, a new competition and the marking system has been altered accordingly. Heartiest congratulations on your 50th year of entry and for remaining at the top level in the county against very tough competition; the planting of the native oak is an appropriate mark of celebration. Your window on the future is evidenced by your (tough) Action Plan taking you up to 2016: this is thorough and detailed and where it differs from most others is that you give annual targets and deadlines – do not be disappointed if you do not reach them all in the time allocated, the important thing is to identify needs and work at overcoming perceived discrepancies. The connection with the national school is clearly a most productive one: have you considered a Junior Tidy Towns group? this has proved to be productive in, e.g., Moynalty. Your submission is particularly reader-friendly in that projects are systematically numbered. Thank you for supplying the replacement map at short notice, most helpful.

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

That Inistioge is a planned village which has developed, as they do, in an unplanned way makes it all the more fascinating. It is an understatement to say that the streetscape is ‘picturesque’ – this streetscape also interacts with the natural environment in a highly beneficial way. On the walk about the village several useful interpretative boards were seen; that at St Mary’s was particularly interesting. The juxtaposition of the two beautifully kept churches is both architecturally and historically significant; the charming little former Methodist chapel also tells its tale. The Community Centre was looking particularly smart, as was the school. Renovations were seen to be in progress in two places and also a building awaiting attention following a fire: it is hoped that the replacement will be in keeping with the traditional appearance of the street. It is very interesting to see how vestiges of the Woodstock buildings remain and how well they are now preserved.

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

The formal River Park opposite the café was seen to be beautifully laid out and nurtured and was attracting many visitors. The display of arum lilies in the café garden must be mentioned here. Several small and attractive landscaped areas were seen such as the Millenium Garden, on the main approaches, and at housing areas. The first class lengthy mixed herbaceous border alongside the road at the GAA was very favourably noted and also the entire GAA grounds opposite the school, which are so splendidly kept – on the date of the visit these were host to crowds of happy schoolchildren. Incidental planting, such as the pyramids of red petunias (or are they surfinias?), urns of red carnations and begonias, timber containers of colour-selected heartsease, and multicoloured hanging

baskets, combined to create vivid splashes of colour throughout the village. All this shows intensive creative planning and hard slog. St Colmille's Well and The Hatchery relating folklore with the natural environment caught the attention dramatically. Your tree planting record is admirable as seen especially in the Lower River Park.

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

The Report on Wild Life was read with interest. It is certainly correct to state that the Woodstock demesne has become 'a unique woodland experience' following decades of neglect. It does not seem to have been commented upon in previous adjudications, perhaps because we took it to be private property, but that omission is now rectified. (You will be familiar with Ms O'Connells recent book on Mary Tighe which has several fine photographs of the demesne and village.) The list of flora and fauna in this Report is most valuable and also the descriptions of how both are interrelated – such as the ravens nesting in the Monterey Pine. A truly dedicated observer has compiled this Report; the final paragraph gives much cause for optimism. The public walks in the neighbourhood of the village are numerous, delightful and instructive and it is good to read that you have plenty of visitors who appreciate them: an increase in walking and cycling tourism will continue the upward trend. (Are there places to stay in Inistioge? - this visitor failed to notice.) It is good to read that you 'minimise interventions' so that woodland plants recolonize the Grove site. Your participation in the Kilkenny field names project is important. Inistioge being situated in a Special Area of Conservation and containing a Natural Heritage Area gives background endorsement to your endeavours. Your pictures of native birds and animals were appreciated and also the photographic record of the Dawn Chorus event. The 'derelict garden adjacent to the River Park' was missed somehow (please name all such sites on the map) so it was useful to have the photograph of the way it has developed naturally as a wild flower area.

### **Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:**

In almost all centres the 'green flag' schools are enormously proactive under this heading and the 'message' of waste management is brought into households by the children. This is undoubtedly the case here too. It is also seen that you are in consultation with the County Council's Environment Awareness Officer in the Cleanest County Campaign. It is good to read of your activities under specific headings because these initiatives are 'invisible' to the one-day visitor, such as: water extraction from the Nore for irrigation; discarded mobile phone collection; community composting; mulching during the mowing season; paper collection and distribution of magazines where they will be appreciated. It was read too that you buy all your plants locally. Recycling is done as a matter of course. (Perhaps you will eventually have your own polytunnel.) Allotments were favourably noted in the GAA grounds and it is hoped that this initiative will expand in the course of time. A bring bank was seen to be clean and accessible.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Two unsightly rusty corrugated iron roofs were seen. It is understood that the few buildings in the village centre at present derelict are on the way to being rehabilitated. Inistioge is conspicuous for the absence of kerbside weed – congratulations. Flyposting was not seen. The improvement to The Grove site has been admirable as shown in the pictures provided. As to litter control, Inistioge's record under this heading is also good. Yours is one of not too many centres where the volume of litter is seen to be diminishing annually. The help of school pupils and the scouts as reported in your documentation is admirable and these young people are to be seriously commended for taken on this not altogether exciting task. The hope would be that the general public may eventually stop dropping litter so that none is ever seen – such as in the Netherlands. Last year it was reported that most litter is 'dropped from passing vehicles' and this is probably the case: how can you stop this? No satisfactory answer has been found elsewhere except in some larger centres where a watch was kept and prosecutions ensued.

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

'Charm' is an overused term but it certainly applies to the older houses in the village especially on High Street, Mill Road and The Square. All are highly individual, some remarkably so as the house with boxwood 'creeper' demonstrates! At the time of adjudication many were adorned with flowering clematis, wisteria and roses. The Orchard and Ard Aobhainn respect the vernacular tradition of building in their general style; they also have attractive communal as well as private gardens. In Black Church Square newer homes of equally thoughtful design are now occupied and there has been some tree planting. Good luck for the Inistioge in Bloom competition for private gardens.

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

Street furniture of all kinds was seen to be well maintained. The cleaning of growth from the magnificent bridge has been beneficial, certainly it must have been a highly complex operation. (As you must know, the removal of mosses or lichens on buildings has to be approached with care.) The revelation of sculptural motifs is most exciting. The slipway was visited – again one was struck by the accord between the man-made and the natural; it was not quite clear what work had been undertaken but your pictures show the extent of rehabilitation of the entire area – thank you for enclosing them and also for illustrating the other sections of the submission. Surfaces of the main thoroughfares are good. The 'quaintness' of side streets is something to be valued. The verges of the two main approach roads were seen to be trim and they, with the tree and shrub planting, give a very good initial impression of Inistioge, in fact they signal to the visitor that a very special place is about to come into view.

