

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Elton** Ref: **2096**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **201**
Category: **A** Date(s): **02/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	25
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	22
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	25
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	19
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	24
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	26
TOTAL MARK	450	201

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Thank you Elton for an enjoyable visit to this part of Limerick. In just a year since the committee was formed you have got many to work with you and you list the many local businesses that have helped you all on your way including:

Creeds; Cosey Kitchen Bar; Kilmallock Recycling; Quaide chainsaws; Sliabh Ri Ltd; Joe Wheeler Auctionneers; CIE; Hughes Agri Contractors; Accurate joinery and the local digger driver! What an enthusiastic group you are!

Well done to the volunteer who was observed pulling a wheelie bin from the village centre out to Athenacey graveyard. This graveyard is a lovely amenity and the community have managed it very sympathetically. The recent work recording the gravestones is a great heritage project that will be useful for all including any future 'Gatherings' in the community.

In developing your long term plan do come up with suggestions under each category of the competition. Some actions may be more easily achieved and hence should be short term goals. Others may take some negotiation or may involve a lot of other bodies and thus should be listed as long-term goals. Each year provide your adjudicator with a summary of the actions achieved. Your entry submission was excellent this year and you have spent a lot of time detailing this and the map. Well done once again and keep up the hard work.

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

Creed shop is a beautifully presented shop. The traditional wooden sash windows were great to see still intact and the red brick surrounds of this detached house looked very well. The outside looked neat and tidy with the coal bunker tucked neatly to the side of the building. The yard walls were bright and clean having been recently white-washed.

The entrance gates to Elton Sports Field was nicely painted. The oak tree is a wonderful asset to this amenity – how old is it? Have any local records been kept as some oak trees can live for hundreds of years. This could be a nice research project for local school children.

Cosey Kitchen has some nice hanging baskets at the front of the premises. Maybe a number of planters at ground level could also be added here? The extension window could be painted here to blend in with the other windows of local premises.

The newly painted doors at the joinery works looked well. The old closed pub may need, in time, a new window board but the paintings on the other windows look very well.

Another possible project for your long-term plan could involve empty properties. There are a number of these in Elton and it would be worth monitoring these and ensuring estate agents keep front gardens strimmed periodically or keep windows intact.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The central flower beds make a wonderful addition and you certainly have some green fingers in your community – well done in particular to Patsy Noonan and the locals that have provided locally sourced bulbs and plants from their own gardens. The perennials such as lupins and the cluster of flowers would look well throughout the year and there is just enough planting for the community that works well with the wonderful natural setting of Elton.

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

By the old pumping station as you arrive in the village from Knockainey, the verges have been strimmed right to the edge of the fence. You do not have to trim so tightly to this edge. Allowing a little grass here to grow longer provides nectar and shelter for wildlife and allows cover for wildlife to safely move along this area.

You say there may be bats in the old building. Summer evening bat walks are always very popular once the bats have come out of hibernation. A volunteer from Bat Conservation Ireland may be happy to head a walk with a hand-held detector that allows you to hear the bats hunt through echolocation.

Rhododendron ponticum is growing very vigorously by the small hump backed bridge. This is an invasive species and will out compete and take over other native plants. Further information on how to manage it is available from www.invasivespeciesireland.com but the removal of these two stands could be a good wildlife project for the village. Try not to dump grass cuttings at the edge of the stream as it will increase nutrients into the river. There are some lovely ferns growing by the stream and hump-backed bridge.

It looks as if weed killer has been used at the entrance to fields opposite Elton Close, and also under the fencing at Elton Close. This should be discouraged and pulling of weeds and strimming is recommended to prevent unnecessary chemicals being introduced to the environment. It is suggested that the gap in the hedging at the Sports Field is replaced with native tree whips and then the wire fencing is removed.

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

The installation of the water butt was noted and is a good example of how you are not letting things go to waste. You also re-use materials from the recycling centre which is recommended. There are many other ideas for this category of the competition in the guidelines available on-line. Car-pooling or book swaps are just two examples of how you can gain marks here.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You had a great turn out to your National Spring Clean in April. Interesting that your biggest littering offence seems to be now electronic cigarettes.

A number of cable ties remained on posts through the village as a result of the election campaigning.

Cosey kitchen have cleared back brambles or vegetation at the side of their premises. The next step will be to remove the old litter from this area.

The access road at the railway bridge was nicely planted with ox-eye daisies and it looked very smart with freshly painted green gates here. There were a number of poles at the entrance to the village with no signs on them – presumably the speed limit signs – which need to be replaced. This was also mentioned in last year's report.

There is a community alert sign that is very rusty on the Knockainey Road and it should be removed or replaced. The chain mail fencing by the estate could be repaired.

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

Both estates looked very well and the standard of presentation of homes was high throughout the Elton area. Homes in Elton Close looked very well. The trees planted here need some attention. Some looked as if they needed some watering and the stays were beginning to damage the growing trunks and they need to be removed. Some grass clippings have been placed at the eastern end of the close – perhaps a compost bin could be used instead here?

The relocated stone at the entrance to one estate was noted and it will be good to have this estate named in the future as planned.

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

Arriving into Elton you get a real sense of place and pride with flowers, strimmed verges and an area very well presented.

To help the repairs of the little hump-back bridge blend in, one suggestion is the use of natural yoghurt. Paint this on the new plaster and quickly moss will grow and blend in with stone work!

The field gate at the crossroads was painted nicely and this should be encouraged as the painting of gates in an area provides a sense of place.

Elton has a lovely tree-lined road as you approach the village from the south by the railway bridge. Please note that on this stretch of road, and on the road north to Knockainey, the overhead wires are sagging very low – you could touch them in places. As you drive into Elton from Killmallock, there is a 2009 Spring Fair sign on the side of the road.