

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Balrothery** Ref: **872**
County: **Dublin** Mark: **223**
Category: **C** Date(s): **27/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	30
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	32
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	26
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	16
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	43
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	26
TOTAL MARK	450	223

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Balrothery is most welcome to the 2015 Tidy Towns competition after an absence of a number of years. Our records tell us that your last entry was in 2009 and how the complexion of the country has changed since then! It is great to know that you now have eight on your committee and are holding regular meetings. We hope that your new-found momentum will ensure that your tidy towns activities become established over the long-term. You have made good local contacts with businesses but do make sure that you are also liaising with Fingal county council and regional support bodies. These are excellent sources of advice while also potentially providing access to funding. We very much hope that you will pursue your idea of forming a junior tidy towns as this can be a most rewarding endeavour for both parties. Do allow them the freedom to develop and implement their own projects. Your map was poorly printed and should ideally label all the main features and roads of the town. It does successfully highlight the locations where projects have been completed but it would be helpful to the adjudicator were the legend to the numbering code to be presented on the map itself. This would avoid the need for cross-referencing the application form while walking around the town. It is recommended that you prepare three-year plan. This would allow you to strategically plan for the future development of your area and would set out actions under each of the contest headings. Do refer to the excellent tidy towns manual for extensive guidance on completing this task.

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

Do make sure that you describe in full detail the nature of your projects. E.g. do tell us exactly what is planned or has taken place at your heritage centre. Remember that the adjudicator may not be familiar with your town or previous works which have taken place. The Balrothery inn was looking very well on adjudication day with its fresh facades and displays of hanging flowers. The protruding sign with beer ad on the main road is a little dated and needs to be cleaned in any case. The castle and adjoining graveyard are important heritage features the town. They were mostly well presented on adjudication day although there was a small quantity of litter while a metal fence has been abandoned in the long grass by the new graveyard. A newly tarmaced pathway was admired. It would be great to get some heritage information to provide the visitor with some background information on the castle. Painting the steel gates to the new part of the graveyard would enhance this point of entrance. The Gala was clean and well presented although its brackets were lacking flowers. Scoil Oilibhéar Naofa has well maintained grounds with imaginative installations, well done on these. The entrance presentation would be enhanced were the gates and steel crash barrier to be painted. It's green flag was admired.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The village surroundings benefit greatly from a number of mature trees and hedges that enter the town itself. These were well maintained on adjudication day. Green areas throughout were well mown while verges were free of

weeds. Attractive displays of summer flowers were admired on the road near the Balrothery in and at the old pump. The mature lime trees at the graveyard are excellent features. Do make sure that rubber ties are removed from trees where they are no longer needed as they can lead to damage. The small planted areas in front of Styles is a little tired and needs some maintenance. Otherwise the area here is clean and well presented. The green area near the small roundabout is let down by tatty wire and metal fencing which lends a poor impression. The green areas with trees near the shops look very well and greatly benefit this area by breaking the straight lines of buildings. Large pots of flowers look very well at the speed limit signs near the shops. The green area at the large car park is neat but could be enhanced with a more striking landscaping arrangement. Do get advice on how to make the most of this area.

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

You are fortunate to have a local lake which is accessible for walks etc. The adjudicator is looking at how you use amenities such as these to raise awareness of your natural heritage. In the first instance you may need to find a local enthusiast or committee member who will commit to further researching this area. Work towards increasing your knowledge of the flora and fauna around the lake. Perhaps contact your national parks and wildlife service ranger or Fingal biodiversity officer to arrange a guided walk. As you point out there are many areas where wildlife is present and these will include local hedgerows are grassy banks. Ensuring that your planting schemes are of benefit to pollinating insects or birds will be worthwhile. This is a great area for working with your school so the adjudicator would like to see you developing an art or science project with them.

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

Well done to the national school on their green flag. Do specify at what stage of the process they are at in this program. As you point out their good work does not end at the school gates so do try to learn from their experience. Your composting initiative is excellent. Do get advice if hoping to produce compost which is suitable for spreading on flowerbeds. Check out the Irish Peatland Conservation Council which can arrange a demonstration. Do make sure that you involve the wider community in any initiative as this would ensure the greatest long-term impact. As this is an area of continual improvement you may want to carry out more research into ways of minimising waste or reducing resource dependence. For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

It is commendable that you are carrying out weekly litter patrols. It is also worthy that you are being vigilant regarding tidiness issues and do persevere in the removal of old poles etc. Do tell us more about how you are encouraging local people in attending to their areas. This kind of awareness raising work is essential in addressing long-term presentation issues. How is the issue of litter being addressed in the local school? Do highlight any undertakings which are aimed at preventing the generation of litter. The bring bank at the Balrothery inn car park had some minor debris such as broken glass and bottle tops etc. An effort should be made to keep this area swept. Some road signage needs to be washed. The post box has attracted some graffiti which should be painted over. Do remove fly-posting as it appears, e.g. outside the takeaway. The area around the shops is quite clean although gum on the cobblelock has gathered in some quantity. There is also some litter and other debris. The bus shelters on the main road are clean and structurally sound. Quite a lot of litter had unfortunately gathered in the large car park on adjudication day.

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

Well done for working on Balrudeary Woods/Fields but do work with Fingal county council if there are long-term presentation issues. Many attractive residential areas were admired throughout the town on adjudication day. At 'the Green' a fine granite name stone looks well while newly planted trees were noticed. A nearby estate with eye-catching stone pillars has handsome houses but appears to have no name. Tristernach is a beautifully restored older house that was admired for its colour scheme. At Knightwood beautiful redbrick houses impressed the adjudicator along with mature garden displays. At Balrudeary Fields well maintained houses complement neatly trimmed green areas. Knight's Hill has excellent planting. At Church Road Manor the landscaped bed at the entrance could be trimmed back from the kerb for enhanced presentation.

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

As pointed out in previous reports it is recommended that approach road welcome signs be situated at appropriate locations. These should be in Irish and English and aim to create a sense of expectation on arrival. Along the main road verges need to be trimmed. There is no need for extensive cutting back, simply keep a 1m margin mown to create a maintained appearance.

Concluding Remarks: