

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Malahide** Ref: **159**
County: **Dublin** Mark: **303**
Category: **G** Date(s): **09/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	54	54
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	34	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	47	48
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	37	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	37
TOTAL MARK	450	300	303

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Malahide is welcome to the 2015 Super Valu competition.

Thank you for the concise and informative entry form and supplementary material including map and update year on of the 3 year plan.

The adjudicator would like to point out at this stage that as there was a very detailed input in each of the categories in your submission it would be neigh impossible to comment on every item in a two page document which is the norm for final Tidy Town report.

Rest assured that every effort was made to be fair and partial to the village and the effort of you the committee and also bear in mind that additional marks are hard earned at the high end achiever level of the competition

The combined active committee of 14 is an eclectic mix of representatives from all strata of the greater Malahide community with the collective ability to mobilise people to get work done.

This is every much evident in your submission and judging on the level of ongoing and additional that was done in the last year.

You have listed a large number of agencies organisations, businesses and residents associations that support the work that you do on behalf of the village and it would be unfair to single out any one contributor except to say that this type of support would not be forthcoming if the community as a whole didn't value your work on Tidy Towns. Something that came to mind from reading your entry form is that there seems to be very little involvement with Malahide Castle and Grounds which is surprising given the popularity of the amenity and heritage centre The map supplied whilst attached for a purpose that of identifying relevant areas that you wish to highlight was a little vague so the adjudicator got a copy of the Malahide Brochure and map courtesy of the ladies at the reception desk in Malahide Castle.

This an excellent publication produced under the auspices of Malahide Chamber of Commerce.

Congratulations on retaining your gold medal status and being at the high end of achievers in the competition.

Malahide would be seen as one of the jewels in the crown of Fingal County Council and therefore requests for various resources would be favourably looked on!

Then as you state this can be a two way thing it reflects well on the local authority if the likes of Malahide and its neighbour up the coast do well in the competition.

The adjudicator was rather surprised that the population was now over 15,000 including all the residential areas on the outskirts.

It is hard to understand, given that the village and its surrounds are so populated, how planning permission is being sought for an additional 150 plus housing units just below where the bridge is being widened.

What made it all the more staggering is that the planning sign was placed on a tree outside some of the most arable land in the country.

Excellent combination of communication methods from the tried and trusted to the modernity of the social media and the unusual in Toots the Town train which the displayed your ad message very prominently on trips around the

town.

The schools involvement is pretty impressive but one didn't notice any mention of the Community School housed in that very eye catching building across the way from the GAA and Hockey Clubs, I stand suitable chastened if I've missed it.

Thank you for the very supportive comments on the positive influence of Tidy Towns in the Community, yes you are right when you say that the work that you do does indeed help to increase visitor numbers and to keep businesses operating.

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

It was such a pleasure to traverse the village and its outskirts and to observe the many fine business premises, shop fronts, public buildings such as schools, churches and the likes of the public library housed in the wonderful Carnegie building.

St Sylvester's RC and Parish Centre was an extremely well presented building in the core area of the Village.

It was the first time that the adjudicator encountered a cafe menu board at the entrance to a church – a new form of fundraising with a community twist to it.

Well done to the person on the parish council who came up with the idea.

The schools visited including the already mentioned Community School were also well presented and tidy and credit is due to all those responsible for their upkeep

Not too many Garda Stations in the country are housed in such a prestigious building and indeed it was presented to a very high standard with wrought iron railings recently painted.

The unoccupied building mentioned in your entry form was extremely well screened in what was a very eye-catching black hoarding.

The name signs in both languages were very eye-catching but more importantly easy to read because of the pronounced colour scheme- Gas Yard Lane agus Lana An Ghaschlois it's so good to see the effort to make the Irish Language part of the built infrastructure.

The Village is not encumbered with a multiplicity of over head wiring which have blighted over villages.

Overall the standard of road surface and paths were of god standard and the adjudicator is aware that some improvements have been made since last year but still a few areas like Bissetts Lane that were a bit rough.

Some of the road marking like stop and yield were getting faded and needed to be repainted as it's important in a place as busy as Mullach Ide.

Sports Facilities in the village are top class and on the day in question Tennis matches were in full swing at the well appointed club, preparartions for an upcoming match were in full swing at the Cricket Club and kids training sessions for hurling were also on the go at the excellent St Sylvester's GAA Club ground.

The bollards on the footpaths in both the main streets and down narrow streets like Townyard Lane were recently painted and effective.

The following are a number of premises that appealed to this adjudicator: the previously mentioned St Sylvester's GAA Club have a very attractive Clubhouse in Church Street and looked as if it was being refurbished inside, Macaris Take Away an example to other fast food outlets, Permanent TSB has made their premises very accessible taking into account people with disabilities, Duffys Bar busy with attractive front, Scotch Bonnet Urban Cafe nice when lit up at night, Gents of Distinction and the Focus Shop.

Malahide Credit Union, Ivory Dental simple design, and Caris Closet Bridal were also noted for presentation.

On the outskirts the following premises were admired The Garden House, Mark Walsh Cars, Castle Lodge an excellent premises and so colourful, Hilltop Local Shop very well presented but just make sure that gas cylinders are stored at side if possible and Food Fayre

Bloomfield Business Park looked well managed with ample car parking.

Signage especially in the beach area and on coast road was unobtrusive, clear and visible.

One could not leave this section without mentioning two iconic places associated with the village namely Malahide Castle which was in splendid condition and offered so much in the way of heritage and amenities to the many visitors that frequent it and the wonderful old style and so well maintained Grand Hotel.

Finally Malahide is a very busy place and the traffic can be chaotic but shanks mare or maybe Toots is the only way to appreciate the attractiveness that it has to offer.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The standard in this category as one would expect from a place that is host to so many visitors over the year and that is part of one of the most attractive coastlines in the country, was very good.

Many very fine public landscaping features coupled with a myriad of such attractive gardens and boundary walls populated with trailing flowers were viewed during the adjudication roundabout.

It is mentioned in another section that a sum of money has been allocated to the upgrade the Village Green.

I would suggest that the Committee engage with the council and consider having the landscaping element of this area re vitalised.

The adjudicator just thought that it had become a little jaded and that it was in need of some enhancing treatment.

The existing planting arrangements looked tired and the features such as the maritime sculpture looked a bit forlorn, it's an observation and I may be way of the mark.

The Committee has enough of expertise within its ranks to address this and come up with something novel if it is felt it's needed.

The adjudicator visited Railway Avenue and was impressed with the new changes.

Good idea to remove grass cuttings to encourage flower development and this is something that all of us ordinary gardens forget to do sometimes.

What a wonderful array of colour was to be seen the extremely well presented and orderly Train Station another place synonymous with Malahide.

All that immediate area has been enhanced by primarily trailing petunias and if you didn't feel invited after stepping off the train here well you should throw your hat at it.

Some very fine arrangements to be seen also by way of hanging baaskets, tubs and larger planters in the centre of the village and Divineys stood out for this adjudicator mainly for contrast of colour of premises against floral back drop.

A number of other mixed shrub beds with perennial plants were observed at the Marina complex, at the Malahide Has It welcome signs particularly on the Coast Road, at the aforementioned Food Fayre.

The Grand Hotel excelled in the landscaping department with some wonderful lavender blooms dominant.

Some extremely well presented gardens that took a lot of maintaining were viewed on the adjudication trail and one would be unfair to indulge and single out individuals.

The adjudicator noticed that many of the committee have been instructed on how to maintain trees properly and how to look out for warning signs of decay etc.

Lest not one forget but it would be remiss of me not to mention the excellent Epilepsy Allotment Centre on the Swords end of the village and its contribution to you as a community.

This is an extremely progressive move and one which has earned the extra mark in this category.

Keep up the excellent work.

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

The protection of mature trees insert in this category has been dealt with under the previous section.

What is noticeable about the projects listed in this category is that they are an ongoing catalogue of excellent stuff that you have been involved in over the years.

As committee you seem to be very aware of the wonderful diversity of wildlife both on land and maritime related that is available to the community and indeed the visitor alike.

The measures taken to preserve, interpret and educate as in the case of the children Frog project are practical and more importantly within your power to do.

The Heritage Trail is a major feather in your cap and it something that this adjudicator will be back to do at a more leisurely pace in the early autumn.

Your are wished well for the continuation of this project into 2016.

Just as a matter of interest the Malahide App is an excellent compendium of information and well done to the producers Nimble Tours and to Fingal County Council for facilitating it.

I'm just wondering are you going to be flavour of the month with the mams of the kids in Malahide having all those tadpoles in jam jars all over the village!

Malahide has its own variety of mosquito that's a novel one indeed.

The adjudicator was impressed that in the course of his travels particularly out the coast road he saw how some meadows were preserved with walk ways through them.

This of course promotes the preservation of a diverse amount of wildlife species.

Continue working closely with the Biodiversity Officer of Fingal Council as well extracting knowledge from what one presumes you may have in our midst a large number of wildlife and maritime life enthusiasts.

It would be good to see the results in the form of another few dedicated schools, both primary and second level projects over the next few years.

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

Congratulations to the schools that have attained green flags and especially St Oliver Plunketts who are on their sixth.

The six different categories of achievement are indicative of what our life is all about in the present era.

Well done on being the main driver of the waste reduction movement amongst the business community and hopefully the benefits derived from participation in the Green Living Course will be put into practiced within all sectors of the community not just business.

The recycling banks were visited as was the treatment works near the fire station and all were presented well.

For next year the adjudicator would advise the committee to consider looking at projects more in line with waste prevention as distinct from waste management/minimisation.

Visit the following www.localprevention.ie for related information and ideas on waste

prevention and also the EPA website for update on the National Waste Prevention Strategy

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Quite a lot of work has been done in this category since last year and one can see the results all over the village and in the extended outskirts.

Graffiti is a problem in most reasonable towns and villages not to mind other larger urban centres.

Some of it actually can be artistic dependent on where the artist cum perpetrator comes from.

I digress and let I be accused of encouraging such a practice most of the stuff seen is often rude and racist as well as being an untidy addition to a wall or gable end.

Travelling around the village one noticed the public places where the graffiti has been painted.

Weed control can be problematic especially when there are growth support conditions such as humidity or intermittent rain.

The committee has done its utmost to encourage people to clean weeds from immediate areas near properties on a regular basis.

Do encourage the use of organic weed killer as very well advocated one morning by Patrick Horkan on RTEs Sean O Rourkes morning programme.

Fly posting as you say can also be problematic and a few examples were seen around the village and on a few

poles but all a voluntary committee can do is keeping these problems to the forefront in the hope that people will heed them and thus contribute to the general tidiness of the village.

Bits of litter were observed most blatantly in the village green where plastic bottles and wrappers strewn on the grass and FIVE receptacles within easy access.

Sure look there will always be people who will not conform to even the most basic of civil requirements and let me say it covers all so called social classes.

I saw an ordinary young mother with three fairly boisterous kids bring them to heel and make the put wrappers in the bin, good examples makes good citizens. Top marks to that young lady.

It's very heartening to see an employee of the local council being recognised for his work in your committee too often the great work these people do is often seen as "their job why shouldn't they do it"

Finally get the young people involved in a more organised fashion as it will give them an idea what it takes to keep places tidy and also a sense of pride of place.

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

Your introductory comment in this category sums up what has been achieved in this category primarily by residents taking it upon themselves to support your work in keeping their own properties and communal areas in top condition.

The standard here was very high and it warranted an increase in marks and I have already alluded to the positive and practical use of the Irish language so kudos on that score.

The adjudicator noted the areas you have mentioned and some were visited but the following are a few personal observations.

Properties on the Tree lined St Margaret's Road were very well presented and well established.

The quite large St Sylvester's Villa also tree lined was well maintained but some of the green area that fronts on to the Church Road/Hill Road could do with some planters to complement the mature trees. Hill Top Drive had a communal green area with mature trees that was maintained perfectly.

Parnell Cottages has a nice planting arrangement at its open entrance a similar arrangement should be put on the other side which is part of St Sylvester's Villas.

Castlefield Manor a more recent development than those already mentioned had some lovely homesteads with nice green area in front.

Oakleigh Court also a very mature development secluded by trees and Ard Na Mara was also admired for the standard of presentation of houses part of the kerbside had excessive weed growth.

The Yellow Walls area had diversity of properties and all seemed to be very well presented and the boat at one of the entrances was quite attractive.

On the Coast Road Seaview is a nice development in a splendid setting.

Coupled with the housing developments visited the adjudicator also had the privilege of admiring some well appointed homesteads with lovely front and side gardens in some instances.

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

The adjudication took place on what was a busy July day when there was a myriad of visitors quite a lot from Northern Ireland so traffic rather hard to navigate when doing this task.

That said the car was abandoned and it was easier to walk.

The "Welcome to Malahide" and "Failte" signs were observed on the way in from both the Estuary and Coast Road sides and are very attractive and inviting.

Well done to the business sponsor for undertaking the funding of this initiative.

The long grass conservation project has been mentioned in the wildlife and habitats section.

Both the Swords and Dublin Road entrances were well presented

The junction at Mark Walsh Motors is extremely busy and traffic is reasonably well controlled here.

The laneways and internal roads in the village were in good condition overall but part of the surface was a little rough at Strand Road.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to come back to Malahide and visit all the areas of both historical and general significance.

Some immense work has been undertaken by the very proactive committee with the help of both other organisations and the local community as a whole.

Malahide is a high achiever in the competition and has improved year on year and to sustain this type of effort demands great commitment on the part of all concerned.

You are wished well into the future.