

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinasloe** Ref: **190**
County: **Galway** Mark: **290**
Category: **E** Date(s): **05/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	42	42
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	46	47
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31	32
TOTAL MARK	450	285	290

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

You are very welcome to the SuperValu TidyTowns competition and thank you for the filled up entry form and good map plus the very nice photographs. I note that meetings are held as requested with your AGM in March to prepare for the Spring Clean week.

Your activities are appreciated by the amount of agencies and bodies that are assisting you.

Good communications are assured from publicity in the local magazine and parish newsletter plus The Connaught Tribune.

It is pleasing to find that you have good contacts with the local schools. Taking part in the competition for thirty years is a long history with TidyTowns and we are pleased to find that the town has benefited to a large extent.

This is a positive approach to the competition.

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

There is a most impressive built environment with some really beautiful historical structures to the more contemporary places that blend so well to the town. In Society Street we enjoyed the older ones such as the Courthouse and the town hall, and there is a pretty old church building that nestles peacefully. The old buildings on the left hand side facing to the town centre are splendid and great to see the structure (Mercy Convent?) being lovingly renovated. Then out further the outstanding Leisure centre is set back nicely from the road with the great car park at the back, and good quality children's playground. The Garda Station was neat and orderly and across the road the splendid Haydens Hotel really stands out. The Shearwater is most impressive adorned with spectacular landscaping.

On the Galway road Portiuncla Hospital is presented in splendid condition and on a visit to SuperValu we observed their spacious car parking facilities. GAA and Soccer clubs in this area have good playing pitches and dressing rooms. Down at the back of the Soccer Club we came across another well kept children's playground. Duggan Park and surrounding area are very well kept.

On the Dublin road the Catholic Church is an imposing landmark structure and presented in great condition. Creagh National School is beautiful. The Graveyards are splendid and a credit to the people of Ballinasloe. The old hospital building is now in poor condition and gives a bad impression of the town as people arrive from Athlone. Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital is a well kept place. Murray's large store is well presented.

St Michael's Square was in spectacular condition with lots of people strolling around with great interest in the sculpture of the horse. St Michael's church really stands out in great condition, but road works prevented us from getting near to it or approaching it from the back.

The presentation of the shops and offices in Ballinasloe is kept to a high standard with some really beautiful displays of shop fronts, to mention some of them could be unfair as there are so many. But here and there we did see that unfortunately some of them have ceased doing business.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Landscaping is of a very high standard in many parts of the town, notably the roundabout for the Shearwater hotel, outside the hotel and at the top of Dunlo Street. Good landscaping at Lidl which has a spacious car park. The landscaping at the Harbour and across the road from it is beautiful. Up outside the graveyards attractive shrubs and flowers stand out in a great display of colour and freshness. You are the beneficiaries of all the tree planting that has been done over the years with huge quantities of a variety of beautiful trees and shrubs and we compliment you for continuing this practice. The presentation outside Duggan Park large GAA complex is most impressive. The Fair Green and Show grounds have very large open places that are very well kept.

It is not necessary for me to list out every detail of landscaping all over the town just to say it was a particular pleasure to stroll around and enjoy the surroundings. You have attained very high marks in this category and it is my pleasant task to confirm this again this year. There is just one point and that is the trees in the containers in some places and it could be better if those trees were planted direct into the ground. The upcoming road works give you an opportunity to further explore this possibility.

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

There is an abundance of wildlife all over Ballinsloe and notable at the Marina, and it is great to see that there are plenty fish there viewed from the footbridge and boardwalks, and this tells us that these waters are not polluted. There is a lovely little footbridge at the back of St Michael's church, but it was closed off due to the works at the church. Congratulations on the provision of the display board giving details of the species that are present in this beautiful park. On my travels I saw some buddleia plants and Nepata which are great for the wildlife. I note the good work that is being carried out at the schools on biodiversity. I took a trip out to East Galway Support Group House but was unable to see their sensory garden, and this premisses is very well presented.

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

The energy efficiency refurbishment of the 8 houses for older citizens is applauded and we note the ongoing work in Creagh Training Centre and Creagh School with the impressive reduction in the amount of waste sent to landfill. The recycling of printer cartridges and Mobile phones are positive initiatives.

The two bring banks are maintained to a very high degree.

I am setting out hereunder some additional information on this category that might be of assistance to your community.

The EU Waste Management Hierarchy is elimination, reduction, reuse, recycle and there are many ways of doing all of this. Carrying out some sort of waste awareness survey or distributing a questionnaire would give people a starting point in terms of waste prevention. Groups can take many steps to reduce the level of resources used and become more efficient at using materials, while at the same time reducing waste generation. Bulk buying and avoiding disposable products, using local libraries and repairing goods are all ways of being more resource efficient. With the children involved in the excellent green schools initiatives we can study what they are doing in the schools and carry it forward ourselves. All the trees have huge amounts of leaves in the autumn / winter and most of this could be collected and composted. Composting is the way forward and you could further educate the people on how best to do this, by for instance, holding a workshop that demonstrates that to achieve the best results we must mix green kitchen waste with brown waste like hedge clippings, and also by turning it occasionally; more information is available on this from the county council. Compost reduces the amount of waste going to landfill, and produces good material for the vegetable and flower gardens, plus it cuts down on spending money on such like material. The collection of scrap metal from householders such as old steel beds, wheelbarrows, bicycles, gates, galvanised iron etc and bringing it to central point could earn money for your activities as there are plenty registered dealers in scrap metal who could buy it from you, and reduce the risk of it being thrown in ditches etc.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

I read of the many initiatives that are in place all over Ballinasloe notably from Ballinasloe Training and Employment and Rossway Walking Group. Over such a large area it was noticeable that weed control on pavements was good. The sculpture at the Marina stands out and it appears that it was disfigured with graffiti, but now looks perfect. The ongoing road works at the Catholic Church and restoration of the Convent building are being carried out in a very responsible fashion. The streets in the centre of the town were particularly well presented with the shopkeepers obviously playing an active role, and the road sweeper is working very well. Many litter bins are well serviced.

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

We compliment your committee for the support that is being given to the residents associations. An annual gardens competition is a great initiative to bring a competitive edge and presents places in spectacular condition and nice to find that it is sponsored by SuperValu. The town houses are splendid and many adorned with lovely hanging baskets and window boxes of flowers. I was surprised to see a few small houses around the corner from the Garda Barracks on Dunlo Hill that are no longer occupied, as they did not seem to be run down properties.

On the approach roads there are many splendid houses with spectacular displays of shrubs, flowers, trees and lawns.

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

Traffic flowed in an orderly way around this busy location. The road surfaces are in good condition on the roads that I travelled on. Great open spaces make for comfort and safety notably alongside the open spaces like outside

Duggan Park. Traffic signage was very good with appropriate road markings. Splendid long stretches of footpaths make for comfort and safety; and the fit and healthy people have huge stretches of footpaths for instance to walk from Garbally college to the Catholic church on the Dublin road. Plenty car parks greatly assist the flow of traffic and good examples of this was at Slí na hAbhann, Fair Green and the Leisure Centre.

We look forward to visiting this lovely town in the near future. It is a nice place in which to live and work and of course visit.

Concluding Remarks:

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