

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Hollyfort** Ref: **217**
County: **Wexford** Mark: **230**
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	36	38
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	27	28
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	28	29
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	21	22
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	5	6
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	47	49
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	28	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	28	30
TOTAL MARK	450	220	230

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Your highest mark last year was for Tidiness and Litter Control – which brings us back to the basic thinking behind the Competition over 50 years ago! The concept has moved on since then, with Community Involvement increasing in importance and Resource Management beginning to make its point. It has been seen from your submission and from observation in and around the village that the Hollyfort Development Group is now making a concerted and comprehensive effort to come to terms with all categories, and very successfully so. This is most encouraging, and one has to acknowledge the sense of real pleasure that the adjudicator feels on reading such a submission and then on arrival finding how much of its contents is being implemented. Do not be discouraged by the still fairly low marking; a huge jump can not be expected immediately, but be assured that your enterprise has been noted and, provided you continue with the same sense of dedication, a further substantial increase may be expected next year. Your Entry Form is de facto a Development Plan; the 'Operation Hollyfort' document appears to have achievable goals. Your engagement with official and voluntary organisations is favourably noted. What you describe as 'a sense of belonging' clearly now exists. The organisation of concerts in St John's church in aid of Ballythomas School fund must be one example; so indeed must the Mt Nebo family walks. The description of the Day Care initiative reads impressively; social events centred on the community must help in nurturing the 'sense of belonging' to which you refer. On the very practical front the organisation of the Community Needs Survey must have provided much fuel for the fires of action – in many respects the answers reflect national concerns and trends.

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

The 'decent church atop the neighbouring hill', St John's, is well looked after, as one can see from the white painted glazing bars, black painted gates, and the reasonably good condition of the churchyard with ancient topiary. The pub, including its surroundings, was spic and span. The trompe l'oeil painting of the derelict warehouse in such a prominent position does two things – improves an unpleasing site and creates an effective and humorous eye-catching solution. The smaller dwellings nearby create a sense of streetscape so that the village is more than just a cross-roads.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The village benefits enormously from its hillside situation and the splendid mature timber. The picnic area and its low stone wall make an attractive as well as useful contribution; in general, where there are restored stone walls, one of the better elements inherited from the past are brought forward to today; new stone walls support (so to speak) this feeling of handsome continuity. The apparently new pump with its surrounding stonework is an attractive feature. This adjudicator is not sure about the pots on the Blackwater Bridge – they demonstrate care and thoughtfulness but perhaps do not quite suit the old robust parapet. The plated areas above the cross roads –

perennials on one side and more of a shrubbery on the other, help to enliven the scene. It is clear that you appreciate the importance of perennials. Well maintained pots of mainly petunias were seen. It is good to see from your photographs that you plant bulbs for spring flowering. Much indigenous whitethorn was seen in the hedgerows, to which you have added, as you state, 400 more. The number of young trees planted is remarkably high for a village of this size.

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

The Bann bridge area seems ripe for a riverside path to enjoy the wild life but it was supposed that the padlocked gate means that this is private property. Congratulations on your award for seating by the bridge and for interpretative signage which we look forward to seeing. The tree-cutting that had clearly been undertaken quite recently on the sharp bend between this bridge and the village has certainly improved visibility on the road and your notes state that much storm-damaged timber was removed; what is heartening to see is old trees replaced by young. The bug hotel was seen and it is hoped that it is attracting residents. Thank you for mentioning the presence of blue-tits in your nesting boxes – many committees erect boxes but fail to report how they are colonised. Congratulations on having identified and taken action on the appearance of knotweed. Your 'Raising Awareness' campaign deserves the attention it is obviously getting.

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

It is a great pity that there is no longer a school – partly because of convenience for pupils but also because it is almost always from the school that initiatives under this heading begin and multiply. You have undertaken a number of steps in regard to recycling but such projects invariably proliferate when there are well-directed children to carry them out; in this regard 'well done' to Luke Cooney and to those who supply unwanted food for his fowl – pictured. It is good to read that the village pump is supplying water for nearby planting. Your leaf-mould initiative is applauded. It is not clear whether the bins are in their new position or if this is the old one; in either case the recycling area should be convenient but not visually obtrusive. Your mark is not particularly low – this is a relatively new topic.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your voluntary helpers have covered an enormous tract of country in their litter picks: well done to them too. Another 'well done': to your Tus worker. Have there been any prosecutions for littering and dumping? In a few centres well-publicised prosecutions have been successful in reducing the practice but it is hard to keep a watch-out in a small community. In regard to tidiness, you will be all too aware of the untidy area behind the disguised warehouse and also the abandoned filling-station on the Gorey road. Boundaries – walls, hedges, fencing – in Hollyfort are remarkably tidy. Do avoid post-and-wire fencing which is short-lived and attracts weeds; and unfaced cement-block walls. Weed control is good.

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

Cottages with dormers, some apparently quite new, caught the eye favourably. The small estate above the cross-roads is charmingly presented. The Scholars Rest estate was not seen. Very interesting to note some new individual homes where the local tradition of facing stonework in brick is followed. Many comparatively new residences were seen on the Annagh and Gorey roads, the one next the Blackwater bridge with a wonderfully stocked front garden. A quaint house conversion is the old school near the church.

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

Very recent road surfacing has made an enormous difference, pulling the whole village centre together like what a good plain carpet does to a room. New pavements also contribute to the visual as well as the practical aspect. Street lighting is probably adequate and the up-lighting, which was not seen, at the church undoubtedly creates interest in the building. The approaches to Hollymount are all well maintained. The bridge and river signs were noted.

Concluding Remarks:

Hollyfort is a small village with an exceptionally large desire and capacity for creating improvements that are of benefit to residents and a delight for visitors.