

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cooraclare** Ref: **722**
County: **Clare** Mark: **270**
Category: **A** Date(s): **08/07/2016**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	35	36
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	37	38
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	34	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	27	27
TOTAL MARK	450	265	270

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Cooraclare is most welcome to the 2016 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your application form with additional information, photos and maps. Last year's adjudicating report suggested some changes to your plan summary. This should ideally stretch over three years and be laid out under each of the contest headings. Do refer to the Tidy Towns handbook for more information on how to go about this. Your photos are very welcome and provide the adjudicator with a clearer idea of what has been achieved since our last visit. You already have an impressively large committee and this seems to have grown again this year, well done for the strong show of community support. Do make sure when filling out the form that the projects are described under the appropriate heading. Each project needs only to appear once under the most suitable category and again the Tidy Towns handbook will help you in this regard.

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

Your community fruit garden is best described under the landscaping heading. Well done for tackling the dangerous wall. You are wished success with the redevelopment of the creamery. O'Doherty's pub looks very well and its vintage ads are a great feature. The church is very well presented and benefits from an abundance of mature trees and well mown verges. Tubridy House was bright and cheerful on adjudication day. The abundance of tricolours and your 1916 commemoration of Conn Colbert really sets Cooraclare apart. The mural is an especially eye-catching feature. The beautiful national school was admired on adjudication day with its baskets of flowers and neat hedges. It would be nice to see its gates painted. The Top garage/Gala is very clean while a display of roses is particularly eye-catching. The playground is a fantastic facility and is being well maintained.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Well done for all the work that has gone into your fruit garden and persevering in the face of the unexpected Japanese knotweed issue. Your emphasis on flowering shrubs and 'wildflowers' areas is most welcome. Well done to the premises owners who went to the trouble of hanging out colourful displays of flowers, it really brightens up the appearance of Main Street. The riverside area is a really beautiful location. There is scope here to allow a wider band of vegetation along the river bank to express itself, at least 1 m with no mowing which would add more space for the flowers and insects. Displays of flowers across the bridge and on the traffic island on the Kilrush road really brighten up these locations. Your garden was visited on adjudication day and you appear to be keeping the Japanese knotweed at bay. It will require vigilance for many years to come to eradicate it completely.

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

The project with the school identifying the wildlife at the river is excellent. Rivers are such important habitats for people and wildlife. Following their path can reveal connections to the land all around as well as the open sea beyond. There is much opportunity therefore to use the river as a learning tool. Look at the websites of the Environmental Protection Agency to find out about water quality, and Inland Fisheries Ireland to find out how fish life in the catchment is doing.

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

You have identified composting and reusing items for insect hotels and landscaping projects as examples of resource reducing projects. These are excellent and the adjudicator is looking at how you are trying to build on these successes. The goal remember is to eliminate the generation of waste entirely! This may sound ambitious but it is achievable. It will require constant innovation by your group so that year by year you are incrementally reducing waste volumes. The use of rainwater butts is another very worthy initiative and there is scope here to encourage their use in homes and businesses throughout Cooraclare. If local schools are involved in the green flag project do list their achievements here also. 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:

You are commended for initiating your own system of litter patrols. Unfortunately this is an essential element of any group's work in order to maintain the high standards of presentation which were expected in the contest. Well done on your perseverance with agencies on the condition of your footpaths as well as overhead cables. This will surely pay off in time. It's great that the schoolchildren got stuck in with the national spring clean and your photos showed the enthusiasm with which they tackled this task. At the school a parking area had gathered leaves and some litter and generally needed to be swept. The bring bank was quite clean on adjudication day.

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

Many attractive homes were admired throughout Cooraclare during adjudication and all were presented to a very high standard. Freshly painted facades and clean boundary walls were especially attractive. At the grotto new planting was admired however the overall effect lacks impact. Some older shrubs are obscuring the statue (from a distance) while a rethink of the presentation would be beneficial. When picking a style try to maintain consistency rather than a variety of randomly chosen plants.

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

On approach from Kilmihil there did not seem to be any sign to welcome the traveller to Cooraclare. Perhaps we missed it but if this is absent it would be worthwhile addressing this in a manner consistent with your signs on other entry/exit points. On the Kilrush approach the name sign is in an inconspicuous location and should be moved further out the road to reflect the actual village boundary. Your new footpath was admired and as you highlight you really need more of these. A safe pedestrian route across the bridge seems to be especially urgent.

Concluding Remarks:

Cooraclare is commended for its vision and perseverance in achieving its goals. You are wished continued success and we look forward to returning 2017.