

# Tidy Towns Competition 2016

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ennis** Ref: **68**  
County: **Clare** Mark: **326**  
Category: **H** Date(s): **12/06/2016**  
**13/08/2016**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2015</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2016</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	49	49
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	43	43
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	47	48
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	34	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	20	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36	38
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>326</b>

### **Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:**

Ennis is most welcome to the 2016 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your application form with maps and additional information. It is good to admire the level of ambition with which you conduct your work and evidently you have your eye on the top prize. To this end it is clear that great effort has gone into maximising participation among local people, an essential measure for advancement in the contest. Last year's adjudicator made some remarks about slimming down the entry form and this still applies. The adjudicator wants to know what specific projects have been undertaken since our last visit. It is difficult to reward marks when we do not know exactly what has taken place and where. There may also be some duplication and inclusion of unnecessary material so a special effort should be made to minimise these. Your committee is clearly expansive while you are involving local schools and business groups. Particular initiatives may be required to target cohorts that do not yet participate. Your map was clear and well laid out but try to highlight particularly new project areas in need of inspection – many of the items numbered are streets or landmarks which could appear on the map itself. It appeared from last year's report that you are working against a three-year plan. Is this still the case? If so it should be included in the application, perhaps with annotations highlighting where progress has been made.

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

Do be specific in listing projects i.e. if a derelict building has been occupied or renovated identify exactly which one. Before and after photos would be especially effective for projects like this to demonstrate the impact of works done. Similarly if public buildings have been painted do reveal which ones. Best of luck with the forthcoming Clare cultural centre and we look forward to following progress on this. The historic heart of the town retains its closely knit but bustling feel. Heritage exudes from its corners such as at the Old Ground hotel or the O'Connell monument. At the fine cathedral of Peter and Paul a nearby gable wall with signage and stains would lift the whole area if painted. O'Connell Square looks well but is dominated by traffic where there could be a civic space of European quality. Relatively little space here is available for pedestrians and the urge is to move on rather than linger. Abbey Street has many shops which add character to the town. O'Connell's Medical Hall is one, it would be great if they could repair their lettering and remove the giant sticker which blocks out the window in order to reveal the full beauty of the facade. It would be nice to refresh the jumping cow mural at the Rowan Tree Hostel as it is an eye-catching feature. The library and local study centre was admired for its beautiful presentation. Bindon St. is impressive architecturally.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

Do give more information on the 'green areas' competition, what is involved and how are winners selected? The Mill project is an exciting addition to the public realm. It is great to read about the abundance of new trees which were

planted for 2016 – including the seven oaks in commemoration of the Rising. The extent of floral displays is most impressive while it's phenomenal to think that these are all grown locally, well done! The post office field project sounds interesting but we would need more information on Tidy Towns involvement or what was undertaken here.

Many eye-catching displays of planting were admired throughout Ennis on adjudication day. In the vicinity of the youth centre colourful beds really highlight the road junction at the R474. The centre itself is an attractive building with installation of the Huntsman however planting was totally neglected. Some of the trees in the neighbouring car park should have their rubber ties removed. The garden of remembrance is beautiful but Japanese knotweed is growing in one of the beds and needs to be addressed. The renovated mill and surrounding area is very nice although the high black railings and warning signs do disrupted the aesthetic somewhat. Some unfinished works near the mill race crossing needed to be finished. Elsewhere carefully positioned planters enliven areas e.g. along O'Connell Street. At the museum trees and flowers create a welcome appearance although a lot of bare soil and a neglected monument to the Entente Florale should be addressed. Market place was admired for its abundant use of Street trees.

### **Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádúrtha:**

Ennis indeed enjoys a unique location in terms of its proximity to important wildlife areas. The adjudicator wants to see what actions are being taken to raise awareness of this wonderful asset e.g. is there a local natural history field club which could arrange walks or outings? The works to the local water network will improve water quality in the River Fergus and it will be interesting to see how this affects fish life. The forthcoming biodiversity action plan will hopefully have a strong emphasis on awareness raising. Well done to the students of Scoil Chríost Rí, Holy Family and Junior School for the tremendous work they have been doing in support of our wildlife. There is a lovely walk near Cloughleigh Road where the River Fergus can be enjoyed. It's rather neglected looking however with excessive weeds, litter and stands of Japanese knotweed along the banks. A little attention would make this the perfect picnic and wildlife viewing location in the heart of the town. The 'Ennis River and nature walk' panel is very hidden away and is in any case quite faded, this should be renovated and moved to a more visible location.

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

Green school participation is a major element of this category. It would be useful to provide a list of all schools in your area and a note on their progress. Last year's adjudicator suggested that printing your application on double sided pages would be a step towards reducing the impact from the tidy towns group, was this considered? The 'stop food waste' initiatives are excellent but do detail how many of these took place and give an indication of the impact. The new site cycle lane in the town – which was presented elsewhere in the application – is a major development in promoting sustainable transport. Are there other initiatives with this aim? The junior Tidy Towns book reuse and rental is exactly the type of project the adjudicator is looking for. Are there ways of expanding this idea beyond the school? 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:**

Well done to the GAA and Ennis sub aqua for doing their bit! Your clean up on May 7th got a phenomenal number of people out to make their town better, what great community spirit. Graffiti is a terrible scourge of the urban environment and it's great that you are tackling it. Where this has been done do include a before and after photo to demonstrate the impact. The town is generally tidy but inevitably for a town of this size there will be some issues of note. A number of badly dilapidated phone boxes were noted and these should be removed. An empty pole at the garden of remembrance should be taken down. Cigarette ends were a problem outside bars and bookies, perhaps if every premises owner were to sweep their own area at least daily the task of litter control would be lightened. Vigilance regarding signage and advertising will need to be maintained. Especially at first floor level a proliferation of signage, especially of the low quality sort, will degrade the streetscape. Graffiti, while not a major problem, was noted in one or two spots e.g. along the lane by Empire Moviplex. This needs to be addressed swiftly in order to avoid any proliferation. Litter control throughout the town centre was very good, indeed as the adjudicator stayed in Ennis for a number of days it was possible to get more than just a single snapshot. Well done for the work that has gone into this.

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

The appointment of the residents committee coordinator is an excellent idea. Your plan to erect bilingual nameplates is most worthy and we look forward to inspecting these in due course. Ennis has a large stock of houses and many of these areas were visited during the adjudicator's time in the town. Many handsome and well maintained estates were admired such as Westfields along the R458. Does your group monitor unfinished estates? It would be great to catalogue these and promote any short-term remedial works. At the Heritage estate the central statue of the Virgin is a phenomenal display.

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

Where poles have been removed or refurbished do give us an idea as to where this took place and perhaps a before and after photo to demonstrate the effect. The road network around Ennis has been greatly enhanced in recent years and the bypass has been constructed to a high standard. The statue of Icarus is striking, are there plans for any more such installations? Near the town centre a number of cycle lanes and good quality paths were noted and these are essential in promoting sustainable forms of transport. Directional signage at the junction of the R474 and Hill Road needs to be refurbished. The large car park where many buses and coaches set down (near the

museum) is ordered and enhanced with many mature trees (although one dead one needs to be removed). The area was, critically, free of litter. Ennis is a warren of lanes and alleyways. These can be problematic in some centres but here they are attractive features that provoke interest and exploration, e.g. at Chapel Lane.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Ennis is a thriving, bustling town with an energy which comes from being open and welcoming. It was a real pleasure for this adjudicator to spend some time enjoying local life and seeing up close the benefit that your involvement has. Well done.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Ennis looked very well on second adjudication day and was in full preparation for the Fleadh Cheoil! A fantastic Irish dancer and fiddles were evident at the Clareabbey roundabout and a singer on the Kilrush road roundabout to welcome visitors! Indeed colourful floral displays at bridges, junctions and public and private premises abound throughout the town. Public Statuary and sculpture are a strong theme throughout the town. The fine limestone one depicting the striking of a deal with the 2 figures of farmers and cow at the market area is particularly striking and appropriate. The Centurion Sphere is a new one for the 1916 Centenary formed in patinated copper or bronze by the River Fergus. The main streets of the town -O'Connell Street, Abbey Street and High Street were well presented. There are two fine shopfronts on Abbey Street, Knox's and O'Connell's –this adjudicator is in agreement with that of the first round in relation to the latter. The fine limestone paving on this street was admired. There is a mix of quite eclectic architectural styles throughout Ennis which create interest. Don't neglect upper stories when considering overall presentation of streetscapes, and also pay attention to items of street furniture such as bollards. There are a few empty premises and unfinished developments which are a sign of the current times. Hopefully these issues will be resolved in the not too distant future. The Old Ground Hotel was very fresh and the Cathedral was well presented with colourful displays to the front. The new indoor market building was attracting a lot of attention on the day.