

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Whitegate** Ref: **1128**
County: **Clare** Mark: **258**
Category: **B** Date(s): **12/06/2016**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	32	33
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	32	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	31	33
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30	35
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10	11
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	27	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	27	27
TOTAL MARK	450	245	258

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Whitegate is most welcome to the 2016 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks your entry form and hand drawn map. Your group has made great strides in the competition and Tidy Towns is clearly now an ingrained part of community life. With 12 on your committee you are well positioned to maintain this momentum. Last year's adjudicator suggested you prepare a three-year plan – was this giving consideration? Such a plan need not be an onerous undertaking but would simply allow you to plan for long-term developments in your village. Actions should be arranged under the headings of the contest so that you progress on an even manner. Do consult the Tidy Towns manual for more information. You are engaged with the broad range of community organisations and this is excellent. Your application could be improved upon were a more user-friendly map provided. Ideally this would highlight the locations of projects recently completed as well as the town's landmarks.

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

It is excellent that derelict buildings have been painted and renovated. However these should be detailed is the adjudicator would not know the impact this has had on your town. Try to use 'before and after' photographs as these are most effective. The old church is an important heritage feature of the town. Some weeding and removal of debris (such as old tyres) would enhance the area in the short-term. Have you investigated opening it up as a community resource? Buildings in the town are generally well presented and freshly painted. The Half Barrel and Lucas' look well. The post office and Xpress shop are very clean and tidy. The derelict building across from Lakyle estate would be greatly enhanced with a coat of paint while it is waiting to be sold. The Nightingale cuts a dash with its striking red and white paint work.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

If a new green area has been developed please state exactly where so that the adjudicator can inspect. The GAA grounds are looking very well and are a great amenity for the town. A slight touch-up of the paintwork on the entrance wall is needed. Whitegate benefits greatly from mature trees and shrubbery which adorn approach roads and private gardens. This is added to in summer by welcome splashes of colour. The display at the 'white gate' especially caught the eye. The new green area was admired and maturing chestnut trees are a great asset in this rural setting. A nice addition would be to paint the farm gate. All stone walls and farm buildings are important elements of the rural character which come right into the heart of Whitegate.

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

This is clearly an area in which you are excelling and it is wonderful to read about the range of awareness raising

activities that are underway. Lough Derg is indeed one of the most important areas for wildlife in Ireland and you are fortunate to have it on your doorstep. Do you ever check to see if your nesting boxes are used? Do the schoolchildren ever get to participate in a bat walk to see if their boxes are occupied? The seasonal nature walks are a fantastic initiative and it would seem there is a scientific monitoring side to this. We would love to know more such as how the data are being used and if this is planned as a long-term study. The wildlife panel was admired along with the suggested walks. The wall painting of a pike is another eye-catching feature.

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

You are engaged in a number of projects under this heading. Your skip idea is good but is the idea here on recycling or reuse? Trying to find new uses for unwanted items needs to be the emphasis on waste reduction. Is composting widespread among home owners in Whitegate? The use of rainwater for watering flower beds is excellent – are there any moves to introduce this into homes? You mention area that you have a green schools committee. What ideas are they generating that could be expanded throughout the community? 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:

It's great to hear that you are involved in the national spring clean and this is a great way to kickstart the year. Do include your before and after photos in the application so that the adjudicator can see the impact this is having. The town is very tidy and clean and there are no major issues of note. The recycling area was clean and orderly. Litter control was to a very high standard on adjudication day well done on this excellent achievement.

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

Do make sure that you provide sufficient detail of your projects so that the adjudicator knows what was done. For example, tell us more about the In Bloom competition. Whitegate benefits from a number of residential areas and these bring vitality to the community. Lakyle Park is very well presented and the raised bed with roses particularly caught the eye.

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

Verges and hedges are very well maintained on approach roads. The welcome sign on approach from Portumna was admired although the pots of flowers may not be necessary in this location. There appears to be an infestation of Japanese Knotweed along this stretch – is this being dealt with? It is an alien invasive species and you should contact your local heritage officer for advice on how to eradicate it. The display of farm machinery was admired along the harbour road.

Concluding Remarks:

Whitegate is a charming rural village that was full of activity when this adjudicator visited. Your participation in tidy towns will help to cement the strong community spirit that exists. Keep up the good work!