

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Listowel** Ref: **345**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **325**
Category: **D** Date(s): **23/06/2016**
06/08/2016

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48	49
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	43	43
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	43	43
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	40	40
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	19	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	38
TOTAL MARK	450	322	325

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Thank you for your entry into the 2016 competition. Your adjudicator was delighted to see your long-term plan. Every task had detailed actions, a time frame and notes added on the progress of each one. Now that you are about to commence the final year of your plan you should be able to plot your progress and measure your achievements.

Your entry form was concise and the appendices helped highlight the people and volunteers involved in your work. Well done on cutting back the amount submitted this year. We just need a flavour of your work throughout the year and too much information may mean that some vital work is overlooked.

Good communication is important and your PRO does good work in this regard. Your FaceBook page showed some of the heights your volunteers get up to (was the Church Tower clock face being cleaned?) and it is hoped by the time this report is printed you will have over 1000 followers.

The young people of Listowel have put a lot of work into the competition this year. The mural on the Ball Alley lane looked well that was created by the members of the Youth Cafe. Schools play a big part in your work and all schools have gained Green Flags – congratulations to St Michael's College for their recent achievement. You could also involve your junior TidyTowns to help evaluate and input into the new long-term plan, when the time comes.

It was good to read of your celebrations following your successes last year, especially the public barbeque in the Square. It is important to take stock and reflect on your achievements. One of the things that impressed your adjudicator was seeing two ladies, for several mornings in a row at 7am, watering the floral displays in the town using an inventive device to allow them to reach the higher displays. It is this type of dedication and spirit upon which this competition is built.

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

You have one of the most special buildings in any town in Ireland with nearly 100 protected structures in the centre. As such it was good to read that your businesses are making the effort to preserve and enhance these appropriately. You have transformed the central square area of Listowel to a focal point of which to be proud. What was reminiscent of a large parking area, is now a key area to the town and would entice the traveller to stop and spend time in Listowel. The placement here (somewhere) of a limestone sculpture should be a fitting tribute to your efforts, and will also sit nicely being of the same stone as St Marys Church.

The public realm by the library and courthouse presents very well and it is a lovely corner of Listowel. But it is a little

stark in comparison to the lovely landscaping in the locality. Perhaps a couple of mature trees could be planted in the courtyard area here? Bilingual signage was noted so well done to the active Glor na Gael committee.

The Carnegie library was lovely and there are lovely traditional fronted premises on Church Street such as W Keanes (No. 76). Lots of premises have really made an effort and there is a great mural on the gable end of the pharmacy by the nicely painted Garda station with its contrasting colours. Lizzy's little kitchen, the horse shoe bar and the gentleman's barber were just a small number of the premises stood out.

The Ozanam centre was clean and nicely painted. You have also considered strategically placed buildings such as the Classic Cinema and are working proactively to enhance them where possible.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

What a delight to see the Millennium Arch restored to its former glory. It was important that work on such buildings / features on main thoroughfares are prioritized. Hanging baskets on the bridge as you arrive were blooming and there was a lovely ambience at the Garden of Europe.

Landscaping on roads throughout Listowel was of a very high level with a mixture of shrubs and perennials that provide year round structure. The bed at the entrance to Kenny Heights was very attractive as was the planting at Tim Kennelly roundabout. However it was felt that the hazard directional arrows on this roundabout completely blocked the views and it is recommended that a number of these be removed if possible. There was some lovely tree planting as you drive on the approach road to the Courthouse and Library. Do please check the straps on the trees here as they are damaging the bark the trees, and also near the business park.

The hanging baskets by "Listowel autos" looked lovely and the landscaping by Applegreen should look good once matured.

It was good to see how you are motivating the community in landscaping with your 'Best Kept Roadside Garden' competition, sponsored by Listowel Garden Centre. Do keep this up and maybe introduced other prizes in line with national policy eg 'Best Bee-friendly front garden' where flowers suitable for bees are planted or the 'Best sustainable garden' – with prizes for using rain water or their own compost?

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

The appetisingly named 'Fruit & Nut' orchard was lovely to visit and will help enhance the biodiversity of Listowel. You have provided good, large bases at the bottom of trees for mulching – well done. The nicely decorated bee-boxes were admired – have you any inhabitants in the bird and bat boxes that you erected last year? It will be interesting if your swift boxes are also used – what a lovely project. Are you playing recordings of swifts to entice these migrants to nest in your manmade nests? It was good to read that you are still carrying out the actions recommended in the Biodiversity Report and raising awareness of wildlife and habitats through actions such as your children's art competition. As your own long-term plan comes to an end, perhaps this biodiversity report could be reviewed also?

Well done on your proactive work on the long-term eradication of Japanese Knotweed under the direction of Kerry County Council's Biodiversity Officer. You had signs up on this along the walkway raising awareness of your work here. There are a number of large stands of Japanese knotweed on Convent Road but there was no signage to indicate that this area is being managed appropriately.

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

This category of the competition is to you prevent waste being created. As such it was good to read many examples of you are doing just that. For example, three businesses have taken part in an environmental audit resulting in adopting measures on energy and water conservation. Other examples of appropriate work here include the 'greening' of your festivals, installation of solar panels at the grotto, rain water harvesting at the pitch & putt and even an inter-estate competition for the most water butts used! Your adjudicator also would have liked to sample the Food Fair demonstration on 'Stop Food Waste' that you ran with a local chef last Autumn. The external insulation scheme on homes on O'Connells avenue has already proved its worth, saving owners circa €15 a week on heating bills. This would also reduce CO2 emissions from Listowel residents.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

It was impressive to read that you, alongside the local party organisers, collected 6 full black plastic bags of cable ties from election posters. Your adjudicator would love to see this replicated throughout the country – and better still they could use 'reusable cable ties' so they do not even have to be recycled. Well done also on your works to combat the recurrent graffiti which seemed to have nipped this in the bud.

You have identified your main littering issues and are working on actions to tackle these, in particular the issue of cigarette butts, chewing gum and dog fouling. Your dawn patrols and litter pick evenings are to be commended.

The yard at the Council Offices, by the Ball Alley, had lots of road material stored here and looked very unsightly. Could this be screened off? Approaching Listowel from Tralee there is a broken solar powered speed warning sign.

As you head on the R553 to Ballybunion, one road sign protrudes at quite a low level across the pavement. The

sign has obviously been bent by passing traffic. It is poorly positioned here and it is recommended that it is moved to a safer location as appropriate.

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

You working closely with the many estates and have great involvement with homes and estates with your local garden competition (new categories could be added as suggested above).

Homes in Knockanure were nicely presented and in particular the bungalow adjacent to the church was very nice, catching the eye of your adjudicator. One resident was observed clipping the edges of grass with clippers. This practice is a good alternative to the lazy and environmentally unfriendly habit of spraying weedkiller to control grass growth boundary walls. There was a sign missing at Lartigue Villas.

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

It was great to see that the Old Mart Car Park had been fenced off and is now being taken in-hand. This was an age old problem that is finally starting to be resolved. Some of the commercial buildings that back onto this area have also enhanced their premises and together this greatly enhances this whole area.

The new entrance gates to Listowel Racecourse are a great addition on the Tralee Road. The landscaping in front of the Kerry Food factory looks well and it is nice to see the TidyTowns information sign as you come in highlighting that Listowel is a medal winner in recent years.

The repainting of the gable end of Tarrant's garage would enhance this area – maybe this could be a joint project with the community in collaboration with the owner? Pavements on Mill Lane were clean and well presented. It was good to note that you are not cutting back grass at the base of fences and hedges for biodiversity benefits. You could also extend this and not tightly mow all of the grass areas in front of the business park. Leaving a wider strip here unmown would benefit wildlife and still look as if it is being managed appropriately.

Concluding Remarks:

To the two lady volunteers in Listowel who were hitting the streets at seven in the morning we salute you. It is this spirit that has built the TidyTowns communities around Ireland - well done to them and all involved in Listowel TidyTowns. Onwards and Upwards!

Second Round Adjudication:

The Riverwalk amenity enjoys good maintenance in all respects featuring wildflowers, clear signage, bins, seating a STOP sign on Japanese knotweed and more. Container Flower displays at numerous sites are beautiful and quite understated. Sculpture at various points around the town is an appealing feature.

The great majority of buildings are beautifully painted and presented and O'Connors Pharmacy is excellent in its overall presentation and maintenance and John R's Home Bakery and Food Hall features a beautiful shopfront presentation and fascia signage.

Buildings along Tea Lane however look a bit shabby/weather stained and could be improved, Improvements to the old Mart at the end of the lane are noted especially to boundary fencing. Limestone curbs along William Street and elsewhere look well as does street furniture. All shopfronts look very well including their upper storeys. No plastic fascia signs were noted but signs on the two Sextons premises are out of scale to their neighbours and to their own buildings; The Mighty Dollar premises has an outsided protruding sign also.. The upper storey and gable of Michael Casey Consultant Engineer very weather stained and a lock-up premises in this lane features a rusted corrugated roof which looks quite shabby. The Tidy Towns window display is a great way of communicating Tidy Towns success and events. Market Square is 99% free of wirescape and just a little litter was evident. A Lucozade bottle close to the Risen Sun premises was noted and litter noted on the green areas at the entrance to The Lodge estate. Church Street looks good with its attractive lamp standards and no wirescape. Two premises within the Square near the Listowel Arms Hotel need remedial treatment to their plaster work, one is a solicitor's office and the other has a sign for Citizens Information. The Square is magnificent with beautiful planting, street furniture and its wirescape free aspect. Saint Mary's Church, Saint Johns Church/Arts Centre Seanchai Museum and Castle are all impressive in their presentation. Car parking is well catered for within the Square without compromising visual amenity.

The picnic site under the Millennium Arch looks inviting with young trees, mature trees, picnic bench and other seating and murals. The fruit and nut orchard here is a wonderful development. Stonewall refurbishment at the boundary of the Council offices is noted.

Lots of good quality fingerpost cultural signs are helpful in negotiating ones way around the town, another should be installed for the Town Park on the opposite side of the road. Reline the car park surface in the Town Park

Contemporary lamp standards and hanging baskets which feature on the bridge look well and are strategically placed for first and lasting impressions of Listowel. The nameplate on the Tralee road with parking information is informative and Glor na Gael signs are favourably noted on approach roads; the landscaped Failte in box hedging on the Tralee road is a nice touch. Some roadside boundary walls to properties near The Lodge estate need

treatment as does a low corrugated roof on the road leading to the grotto. The concrete block wall to the Presentation schools complex looks really stark and should be plastered and painted or planted. Some quite bad weather stained walls were noted in Convent View.

JB Keane Road looks wonderful with its beautiful landscaping. The free unrestricted car park is well surfaced and lined and features charging points for electric cars. The recycling point located in the car park is being nicely managed. A lane leading to the car park looks a bit shabby however beautiful walls with murals line the lane coming back out into the centre.

Colbert Street as a lot of beautifully painted buildings most of which appear to be residential, the same can be claimed for dwellings leading into the town centre from the Millennium Park.