

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Sneem**

Ref: **349**

County: **Kerry**

Mark: **322**

Category: **B**

Date(s): **25/06/2016**

07/07/2016

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	41	41
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	36	37
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	21	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	63	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	39
TOTAL MARK	450	317	322

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Thank you Sneem for entering in the national TidyTowns competition. You appear to have a good relationship with the many key bodies and organisations that help you in your efforts. You have a good way of working having established working groups on specific projects with two to four people on each. Your adjudicator was pleased to note that one of these groups is tasked just with involving young people from both the schools and the youth groups.

How refreshing to read that you publish the minutes of your meetings so they are available for all to read. This is so important in ensuring that you are seen as open. Your new website was visited and well done on this and for keeping your FaceBook page up to date with all of your news and events. . You also have a great army of Community Employment workers that help you achieve and progress in your work. How do you measure your achievements? You mention various plans – do you have one overarching plan for your work?

What was great to see is how you connect the different parts of the village together with paths and the new bridge over the river. You have really thought of desire lines and important links to facilitate pedestrians.

Your adjudicator would particularly like to congratulate the two national schools in Sneem and Tahilla as both have now received their eight green flag. On adjudication day it was simply lovely to see every GAA flag on display for the weekend's Feile, and to see so many of the visiting footballers enjoying their weekend away from home.

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

They say businesses should innovate to stay ahead of their competition. Well they certainly have with your bright shop facades, signs and fun and beautiful murals. Your adjudicator loved the action of the deer mural. She was also enticed up the alley way to the crèche! The renovations at the Catholic Church are superbly designed and are very sympathetic and modern in one. It has the most gorgeous modern balcony at its front. How nice it was to see red valerian growing around the edges of the car park here. The wind vane on top of the Church of Ireland looked well – a fitting top for this beautifully presented period building. The national school looked lovely freshly painted in two-toned coloured matching the window frames.

There are nice stone walls at the GAA pitch and it was good to see a little growth of plants above the stone walls. There was a field gate that was painted green and could be re-painted.

The Rowing club building and gates looked well, but if looking at it from across the river the front façade may need some attention also.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

There is a very high standard of open spaces in Sneem. The central green areas were well presented and it was interesting to view the different monuments gifted to the people of Ireland that are allocated in Sneem! The "Garden of the Senses" certainly made an impression on your adjudicator's senses. The sights and smells and gentle bird sound here all gave off a sense of calm. Roses, delphiniums - what a lovely oasis. Even the maze was checked out by your adjudicator who spent five minutes of her life negotiating this. All in all the gardens here were lovely.

The 'Way The Fairies Went' area and walkways were delightful to explore. Standing inside the fairy cone looking out the stained glass window was charming. Sneem is way ahead of the trend setting this up in the 90s, as suddenly lots of communities are providing fairy accommodation and celebrating them! The willow fencing planted here should help screen off this public area from campers at the new campervan park and give them some privacy. This is a good solution in keeping with the locality.

Your adjudicator enjoyed the continuity of colour in street furniture even down as far as the pier area. IT was also great to see how you have worked with the natural rock in the area in all your landscaping. Trees in small planters may struggle and some did look as if they were struggling a little so keep a watchful eye on them. It would be better to have these planted directly into the ground where possible.

The routes through the proposed Garden of Remembrance will allow for some nice circular routes – your adjudicator did try and navigate these from the Church of Ireland and quickly came to a deadend!

The boundary wall of a private house enroute to the GAA pitch was quite bare so maybe this could be planted at the front with some climbers such as honeysuckle to alleviate the bareness of the walls. Give some more attention to the plants in the Rowing Club and they may thrive better.

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

It was great to read that you are aware of the important wildlife and habitats in your area and that they are designated as some of the most important in Europe. Well done on commissioning a biodiversity report of the village. As a result of this you have erected wildlife information panels. Have you carried out other recommendations in this report?

Well done on your sustained work to eradicate three types of invasive plant species from your public areas – this is hard work (as you know!) but worth it in the long term. Are you erecting notices in these areas stating what you are doing? This should help raise awareness and may even have more members of the public following your example on their private land.

It was great to hear that as well as the following on from making that boxes the Men's Shed are now making bird houses. How many of these have been inhabited? What species? Have you organised any bat walks or wildlife walks? You have great amenities for appreciating the wonderful habitats of Sneem and it was a pleasure to explore these. The website www.birdwatchireland.ie gives dimensions of entrance holes for birdboxes as often they are too big allowing predators to access most small birds.

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

This category of the competition is about reducing waste being produced, not just recycling. Your entry highlights a number of very good examples of how you've done this. It was great to read that waste materials from your road works were used to touch up existing walkways. Other initiatives include the second-hand shop and producing compost for use in your own gardens. The community composting demonstration at the allotments looked great. You are very trusting as your adjudicator was able to see all the tools in the tool shed and amble through the polytunnel. Compost bins were in rotation and well organised. Also observed was the clever use of an old bath as a composter. Carrots, sweet peas, courgettes – all make for a polytunnel of which to be proud.

Sustainable travel is also part of this so it was great to read of the final stage of the Rás coming to Sneem and well done to all the organisers of this. You have also provided local safe walking / running facilities outside the GAA pitch. Again you are thinking of the needs of the community and considering access to facilities through the town. All commendable.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

2016 saw the highest number of volunteers turnout in Sneem for your County litter pick – 60 helped out so well done to all. Good to see dog waste dispenser bags in place.

The brown sign that says 'Sneem river' could be replaced. The utility boxes at the Catholic Church and behind the bring banks could be painted a dark green to tone them in a little more. The bring banks were very nicely presented and the planters in front here looked well. The new footpaths are of a good standard. Sneem's clothing banks were bright and clean and not rusty – the first seen on the Iveragh peninsula not rusty!

Parking at St Michael's Church was neat and tidy and no doubt the new carpark here helps maintain parking and traffic movement on the Main Streets. More importantly it was good to read that local workers are parking here so freeing up on-street parking for passing trade. Well done to those people.

Some fresh litter was left behind some of the Summer seats but no doubt this would be quickly picked during your litter patrols. Some more fresh litter was observed by the Church walls but your biggest problem is cigarette butts especially older ones that have been in place for some time around the western green area. Debris and cigarette butts were noted all along by the charging points.

As mentioned earlier, so much of the new signage is attractive, appropriate and should attract punters so well done to the businesses for minimising inappropriate signage in your town.

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

The proposed walkway through Pairc Ard Shreeland estate will greatly enhance this area and add so much to this part of Sneem. Homes in Seaview Estate looked well though the road surfaces here and a number of estates was not to the best standards.

There was a beautiful detached dormer house with red fascia and variegated ivy growing on its wall opposite the primary school on the Waterville Road.

Pairc Na Sonas is still amazing that this is lying vacant with signs erected from 2013 on this unfinished estates. Well done on your work cutting grass here and keeping its appearance somewhat under control but the auctioneer signs need to be removed at least. Do keep the pressure on the powers that be to resolve this area as it lets Sneem down. .

Nice pavement finished opposite the Sneem hotel. Maybe paint at the bottom of the petrol pumps nearby? Whilst this is a working garage, some minor changes could look great here also.

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

In Sneem most lanes and side streets would be open to scrutiny of your many visitors, including your adjudicator. So it was great to be directed down many of these with your amenity signs and to see that they are presented as well as the main roads through Sneem. The road to the pier was a delight to explore and enjoy the views from this small harbour.

The new pedestrian access at the side of the bridge is a great safety addition to the village – and your adjudicator loved standing in the middle looking down at the water – this grill really helps you connect to the river. The approach to this is nicely kept and the planters help separate the traffic from the pedestrians here.

As you return from the Church towards town there is a back alley way which also stands out as most of these rear gates and entrances are also very well maintained – there's even a lovely mural in the rear garden of the public house here. However, one of these properties needs attention as door, downpipe and wall need attention. The alley down to the tennis court was nicely painted and clean.

There were some traditional wrought, iron gates in a number of areas in Sneem that would benefit from some attention. Your Heritage Officer can advise on the best way to prepare and paint them as befits these hand- made gates.

The road area by the resource centre was in a poor condition.

Concluding Remarks:

Fifty years or more going strong in this competition and visiting Sneem you see the results of decades of effort. You certainly have a geographical advantage with your spectacular setting but it is sustained effort and innovation that has resulted in Sneem advancing itself so well in this competition. Best of luck with your continued efforts.

Second Round Adjudication:

Flags flying on both of Sneems Greens gave a festive ambiance on a beautiful August sunny Sunday morning and indeed as always Sneem looked most impressive. Visually obtrusive wirescape and a particularly bad service pole with radiating cables outside of the Stone House Restaurant is unfortunate.

The Welcome/Slán stones look magnificent with their red inscription. The Kenmare approach road is perfectly presented in terms of road verges road edges name stones / plates road signs boundary walls and a new stretch of footpath. Park Sonas features beautiful houses, the concrete block walls to the roadside are unfortunate for visual amenity. The National School on the Waterville Road looks very well, it was a surprise to note the old circus poster (cirque de luminaire) on the service pole outside of the school, it ought to be removed. A roadside boundary wall to a property beside the school needs improvement. The Waterville Road is well surfaced for about 100 m.

Identification for the neatly presented small housing development on this road should be provided. An undeveloped site with rusted gates beside the latter residential development could be screened better as an interim measure pending redevelopment. A stone cottage and garden at the quayside was admired for its charm and beauty. The small carpark beside the barbecue area needs resurfacing and what appears to be a lockup premises/garage at the top of the Quay Road (close to the village centre) could be improved. A lockup premises on the quayside needs refurbishment and as noted by the first adjudicator the rowing club premises needs its riverside facade painted too

as it is a focal point when viewed from the quayside.

The Seaview Estate looks very well with its nice playground and well maintained green areas. One or two roadside boundary walls and the gable wall within this development need attention but visual amenity is good overall.

The rear facade of the Stone House at the top of the Seaview Road looks quite bad and needs improvement as it is a focal point within the public realm. A side area off the North Square leading to the Riverside Car Park (behind Breens Cafe and Bistro) featured walls which are badly in need of treatment / cleaning/painting/ white washing. A building with corrugated sections looks shabby too. Back areas (at the river) to properties which front onto the North Square look quite untidy and side walls of the Dan Galvin Hardware premises leading to the river and car park need immediate attention.

The road to the sports fields is good and its roadside boundary wall is handsome; unfortunately the flagpoles were empty and the festive ambiance did not extend to this section of the village; the circulation area within needs resurfacing together with the roadside area to the boundary wall. Some nicely painted residential properties are a feature of the road to the sports grounds, more recent ones painted a neutral colour and older ones in bright pastels. (Pairc Ard Shreelhane?) No doubt the site beside the neutral coloured dwellings (Pairc Ard Shreelhane?) is a work in progress that will be completed soon, (the site of the proposed Walkway/ Garden of Remembrance?). The road surface around the recycling point is quite poor. Flowers here are appealing and the recycling point is being nicely managed.

The lettering of the stone plaque on the entrance to the Church of the Transfigurations should be repainted in black or gold; the church itself is a little weather stained, the small burial grounds here are charming.