

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardclough**

Ref: **353**

County: **Kildare**

Mark: **305**

Category: **B**

Date(s): **09/07/2016**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48	49
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38	38
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	37	38
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	39	40
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	37
TOTAL MARK	450	300	305

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

We welcome Ardclough Community Council to the Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition 2016. It was a pleasure for this adjudicator to visit your lovely community for the first time. We would kindly ask that you fill in the 'Estimated location' section as this helps us greatly in finding smaller places not on some maps. You have taken time and effort with your entry form – the information is clearly spelt out and it is beautifully presented.. Thank you for the helpful map with numbered projects. Please include a key on or near the map page of what the various numbers stand for so that we can see at a glance without searching the entry form each time.

For a relatively small community, you have a sizeable committee of 14 members involved in several worthwhile community projects, about nine are involved in Tidy Towns activities. You are affiliated to Muinir Na Tire and have good support from volunteers in the community. This shows sign of strong community spirit and residents working together for the greater good of the community. It is good that you are welcoming new residents to become involved in your community activities.

You have good links with outside agencies such as Kildare Council, Waterways Ireland and Kildare Leader Partnership. You are fortunate to recently have had a Tus scheme. We hope you succeed in securing a similar scheme soon in order to assist you with your maintenance efforts. You are quite proactive in your communications strategy and we look forward to hearing more about the impact of social media in reaching out further to the community. You have good support from local businesses and from community groups such as the GAA club. Thank you for submitting your excellent 3 year Plan (2014 – 2016). It clearly sets out your actions under each of the Tidy Towns category and is enabling you to monitor and review your progress each year. We look forward to seeing your new Tidy Towns Plan next year.

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

We admire the energy that has gone into your recent projects such as the refurbishment and taking over of the old school 3 years ago. This building now appears to be a hive of community activity. The new school is a fine modern development with extensive grounds – no doubt all the children are delighted with their new 'home'. The new mural was admired here. The 'National' Heritage' sign at the village green gives an excellent overview of what can be seen in the surrounding area. The GAA grounds looks very well with some attractive planting along the side boundary wall. Treatment of the derelict cottage has enhanced its' appearance.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The church ground is beautifully maintained. The village green is simply landscaped, which works well here. Visitors to the village are greeted by clean 'welcome' signs complimented by simple flower beds. We have to

mention Wheatfield under this category (as opposed to Residential) as we were so impressed with the attention to detail and high level of maintenance carried out here. The manual edging along footpaths was evident, so nice not to see yellow lines following weed killer use. The beds were in excellent order and contain a good variety of plants. Well done to all involved there. We observed the colourful perennial flower bed from the roadside, installed recently as part of your 'Ardclough bee happy' project. This bed is of much higher value to pollinators than your standard bedding plants. We would recommend that you include a future plan to remove the old evergreen hedgerow from the old school and replace with a native (or beech) alternative. Would you consider managing some of this large green area as 'wildflower meadow'? We commend you for your vigilance with regard to pesticide use and for attending training on new regulations. You have come up with some interesting alternatives! Your ongoing tree planting/maintenance programme is noted. The flower planters on the Wheatfield give an inviting impression to passers-by.

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

Ardclough is blessed with a beautiful natural landscape and canal side location – ideal for walking as well as providing several habitats for wildlife. Indeed your 'Get Kildare Walking' initiative could be included under this heading. Your participation in NUI Maynooth's Bioblitz project sounds like an enjoyable learning experience. We are impressed by your Bumblebee workshops for both adults and children but would like to know a bit more about who facilitated it/funded it? Perhaps you have local expertise or did you apply for this initiative? How many volunteers attended from Ardclough and has there been any subsequent follow up? We are impressed that you annually update your bird species list. You have good links with Birdwatch Ireland. The true story of the peregrine falcon made for fascinating reading as did that of the nesting cobb swan. We would have liked more time to walk the canal but you show a good appreciation of the important wildlife and habitats you have here. You are promoting this to locals and visitors alike with your new wildlife signage. This is one of the best WHNA submissions we have seen from a small community – well done to all involved.

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

Well done for attending the IPCC course on community composting and your subsequent building of your home-made composter made from salvaged timber. As you become more confident in its use, perhaps you can further promote home composting by individuals in the community? We admired the community garden where a small amount of vegetables are being grown – this is a great way to cut down on packaging, chemicals and of course air miles. Again you show that you have been proactive in this category by approaching the school with regard to carrying out a food waste project with householders via the school children. We look forward to hearing your full results next year – well done to all involved.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

There was no litter in Ardclough on the day of our visit so well done to all involved in your regular litter picks, National Spring Clean and your ongoing anti-litter campaign. Again you show your innovative approach such as inviting your young canoeists to help pick water-borne litter. Fantastic! Your ongoing challenges regarding passing traffic litter, tourist litter and dog fouling are noted. Unfortunately there are no easy answers. We like the new 'canal' anti-litter poster – very eye-catching.

Did you carry out any recent work relevant to 'Tidiness'? Please read the blue text under this heading on your entry form as a reminder of what is being asked for.

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

Ardclough is made up of individual houses and two housing estates. Most were neatly presented with attractive gardens and many lovely trees. We referred to the lovely Wheatfield Upper estate above under 'Landscaping'. Thanks for the new sign indicating the community garden – definitely warranted! We like the idea of the new seat facing the evening sun in what looks like a lovely, peaceful area. The gated Lishandara estate is also nicely maintained with some lovely tree planting. You are engaging very well with all residents and encouraging them to play their part in some way. Well done to all involved.

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

Approaches and road verges were well maintained but not overly so. They are made more welcoming by the positioning of welcome signs and flower beds. Well done for addressing signage in need of attention. The discreet but effective pathway from the village to the new school is cleverly designed, with the original roadside hedgerow remaining intact as a wildlife corridor.

Concluding Remarks:

We are delighted to hear that Tidy Towns is providing the motivation to Ardclough residents to continually improve the local environment for all. An impressive entry - keep up the good work.