

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Edgeworthstown** Ref: **714**
County: **Longford** Mark: **263**
Category: **C** Date(s): **16/06/2016**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	38	39
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	34	37
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	35	36
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32	33
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	23	24
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	28	29
TOTAL MARK	450	253	263

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome Edgeworthstown Tidy Towns to the 2016 Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition. Your entry is very much appreciated. Thank you for your entry form with projects numbered, colourful map with the projects also numbered on it in accordance with entry form guidelines, Annual Plan, Biodiversity Plan, Photo Albums, credit union competition and letters. Your population category is small town with a population of 2008. A committee of 20 seems a lot but it does give you options to set up sub committees. In addition to your Tidy Towns group, there is a good cross section of other interests in the town ranging from Edgeworthstown Strategic Planning Group, Historical Society to Rehab Group. Your channels of communication range from modern social media to traditional print media such as public notices. You engage well with your schools through your Schools Liaison Officer. Tidy Towns philosophy encourages the involvement of school children and youth. With 7 competitions behind you Edgeworthstown Tidy Towns has emerged from the beginner group into the ranks of the seasoned competitors. Your Tidy Towns group plays a full role in your community in cooperation with other community groups and business owners. The value of the Tidy Towns competition to your community is well set out in your entry form. As mentioned above your entry form and your map link very well which makes the task of adjudication easier. However, please do not hesitate to add extra pages to the entry form if the need arises.

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

The first project numbered on your map is the refurbishment of the Rectory in line with the Maria Edgeworth period. Alas, this adjudicator was not able to see the interior on adjudication day but will include it on my next visit. The painting of the foot bridge at the railway station was admired. It also gave this adjudicator an opportunity to talk to one of the station staff and get permission to cross the foot bridge. The station, footbridge and car park are very well presented. All neat and tidy. The painting of buildings on Main Street, and in other locations, was noted. The highlight of the past year must have been the opening of St Mary's National School. It is very impressive. A modern, colourful complex, it lifts the town, aided by other new buildings adjoining it. The school was flying just 1 Green Flag, no doubt the first of many. Everything about this new complex is sustainable as if the brief was "no expense spared". The extensive, colourful school buildings, large car park, excellent walls and gates, all combine to create an impression of quality. Coming so soon after a recession it is a vote of great confidence in Edgeworthstown and the staff and pupils of the school. May all who use it enjoy it to the full. Beside it is St Mary's Childcare Campus which is also new and well presented. Another modern, colourful complex. The Community Centre is yet another large, new building beside the other two. However, the driveway up to it is, as yet, unfinished but it was worth navigating around and through the pot holes to reach it. On an important approach road these three new buildings greatly enhance the first impression of Edgeworthstown. Another stand out building is a school – St John's Church of Ireland National School 1886. It is very well presented and belies its age. Large, well filled window boxes and flower containers at the base of the schoolhouse wall add

lots of colour. Well tended roses and shrubs along the boundary wall add further colour. Space has also been found for trees. Recycling bin. School yard spotless. All neat and tidy. A very well preserved and presented part of Edgeworthstown's built heritage. St John's Church of Ireland is a venerable building of traditional design. Also well presented. Graveyard well kept. Walls and gates sound. Oscar Wilde's sister Isola, "aged nearly 10" is buried here. The cemetery on the Granard Road is neat and tidy, well kept with a new extension – Edgeworthstown Lawn Cemetery. St Mary's Church 1872 and the priest's house look very well. Two well filled colourful planters flank the twin front doors of the church. Planting in the garden of the priest's house admired. The Great War Memorial is impressive, on a neat verge with containers of roses. Across the road Our Lady's Manor nursing home is in nicely landscaped grounds. A well presented property. Main Street has the Porter House, an iconic feature of Edgeworthstown's built heritage. There are clean bollards and the new wooden litter bins with flowers on their top. A long hoarding with an illustrated history of the town on a series of panels is eye-catching and informative. Potted shrubs, flowers and hanging baskets add colour. Window boxes also feature, particularly those on the windows of the undertakers – J Gogan and Son. The Library is nicely painted and looks well on Church Street. The Garda Station and the Fire Station also look well. The Fire Station is a modern building with extensive planting around it. Mostrim GAA Wolf Tones Club has lodged a planning application dated 21st April 2016. The inner wall is well painted with its name and murals and the name Hugh Devine Park. The car park has a gravel surface which was clean. The clubhouse is well painted. However, the outer car park wall is damaged. We wish Mostrim GAA success in its planning application. Very attractive. Commercial premises in the town centre have the "Best Kept Premises" awards so it would be invidious for this adjudicator to single out one or more premises for special mention in this report. All sectors of the community make an effort so it comes as no surprise that Edgeworthstown won the Pride of Place in 2015.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

All of the seven planted areas around the town were visited and admired. The roundabouts look well and are focal points in landscaping and maintenance in the town. The Fair Green also looks well with the exception of points made in the Tidiness category. The fencing opposite the Great War Memorial was seen. The whitethorn hedging on Bracklin Road was a good initiative. The cemetery is neat and tidy. In next year's entry form perhaps you would explain the management of the Fair Green i.e. who is in overall charge? Adjudicators do not want to hold the Tidy Towns group responsible for areas which are the responsibility of others. The dog fouling signs are good although this adjudicator did not see any during the adjudication. Other Tidy Towns groups are arranging Doggie Ambassadors who will carry extra bags with them to give to other dog walkers who have none. Congratulations to Ann Canning for winning the Best Kept Garden award in 2015. An excellent and much deserved achievement.

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

Updating the Edgeworthstown Biodiversity Audit and Management Plan was a good initiative. It will require discussion and consultation but already action is being taken such as the visit by a group of pupils from St Mary's School to the Glen Lough Spa. Visitors to Glen Lough without a guide will need information boards on what is to be seen, similar to those in the Fair Green. Another initiative that you plan to implement is the installation of bee boxes and sand beds. Hopefully these will be functioning in time for next year's adjudication. Bees are under pressure and the updated plan refers to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020.

In the Fair Green the small biodiversity garden was noted. Hopefully this will be enlarged in the future in line with the map in the Biodiversity Plan. Also noted in the Fair Green was a bee hotel. Another first for this adjudicator who is used to seeing bug or insect hotels. There is a crossover between this category and the Landscaping category in relation to planting to attract bees and butterflies. No doubt you will be increasing your planting of suitable species. The updated Biodiversity Plan has recommendations which will result in new projects which in turn will result in increased marks. Will the projects proposed for the walled garden in Our Lady's Nursing Home be open to the public?

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

Marks in this category have been increased from 20 to 50 marks in recognition of the time and effort put into it by Tidy Towns groups. This category has evolved in keeping with current waste prevention policy and best practice guidelines. These guidelines are based on the revised Tidy Towns Handbook guidelines distributed to Tidy Towns groups in 2013. The category is about waste prevention. Entrants should move beyond recycling and take steps to (a) reduce the amount of waste being produced by the community and (b) reduce the environmental impact of the waste created. Once Tidy Towns groups have prevented waste as much as possible, they should look to reuse, recycle. In summary "rethink, reduce, reuse, recycle".

The reuse and recycle projects you tell us about in your entry form are important and worth doing. However, as set out above there has been a revision of priorities in this category. The role of Tidy Towns groups is to give leadership in the community in promoting the principles of waste prevention as the priority, just as you promote anti-litter awareness on your web site. The C and D Foods energy saving initiative is good, so, too is the reduction in water use by reducing the number of hanging baskets. The schools are in the Green Flag Programme and so operate a resource and energy saving regime. The overriding priority is to stop waste getting into Edgeworthstown in the first place. There are guidelines on the Tidy Towns web site www.tidytowns.ie – see Publications "Sustainable Waste and Resource Management Document". Project 10 – Recycling the set of the 1916 pageant is shown on your map behind St Mary's Church, not on Pound Street.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You had a good turnout for the National Spring Clean in April. Areas covered included the town, approach roads,

surrounding link roads and known black spots. In addition you have your weekly litter picks on the N4 bypass. Your Tidy Towns group and the traders association also do a litter pick and kerb/footpath sweeping on Sunday mornings between March and October. You also use your web site to promote anti-litter awareness. The new wooden litter bins are attractive and enhance Pound Street and other locations. Those on Pound Street had flowers on the top of the bins adding a nice splash of colour. Overall, your anti-litter programme is effective but there was some litter on adjudication day. From the Ballymahon roundabout to the turn off to the old Longford Road there was litter on both sides of the N4 – plastic and paper, probably from passing traffic. On the old Longford Road there was plastic near a burned out house. Next to the remains of that house is a boarded up house. That stretch of road seems to invite litter. At a derelict commercial structure on this road are 3 metal used clothes containers which are creating more litter – 1 pillow between 2 containers, cardboard boxes, coffee containers, drink cans, paper. In the Fair Green there were 7 concrete flower containers, some empty, others full of weeds, beside the stream and netball court. Discarded large fabric bags inside the gate on Ballymahon Road. Tidy Towns sign on the gate pillar. Weed control needed at base of boundary wall. New wooden litter bin at the gate admired. At Kane's Supermarket the Bring Centre has 6 clean containers in the car park. No litter. 24/7 launderette in car park. Good amenity. Busy. First of its kind seen by this adjudicator. Tidy Towns cleaning team busy in the centre of town. You also removed cable ties and 'left on' posters. You could eliminate the task if you persuaded other community groups to declare Edgeworthstown a poster free town during elections. Other towns and villages have successfully done that, including at least one National Tidy Towns winner. You are commended for organising and promoting the "Best Kept Premises" awards. Keep up the good work. The 2 gate painting projects were seen at Pound Street and opposite St Mary's Church.

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

Your entry form tells us that Devine Crescent was awarded 2nd place in the 2015 Better Estates Competition organised by Longford County Council. Congratulations to all involved. Your map shows the name and location of each of your housing estates, eleven in total. Given the time constraints in completing this adjudication and in the size of the adjudication report it will not be possible for this adjudicator to single out one estate for special mention. Tidy Towns is not that sort of competition. It is more appropriate for the local authority to carry out that role. Housing estates seen during the course of the adjudication will, of course, be commented on.

Mostrim Oaks houses are well presented. Mature and young trees. Use of weed killers on grass strip on footpaths noticed. Tidy Towns encourages the use of non weed killer methods of weed control. Estate unfinished. Residents clearly making an effort to enhance their own houses and gardens. Well done to all. At the Fair Green houses on the Ballymahon Road are well presented, including Edgeworthstown National School 1840. Grounds well kept. Shannon Park is a large housing estate. Houses look well. Extensive public green areas. Mature trees and shrubs. Weed control needed at kerbs. Abhainn Glass has no name at the entrance. Large estate. Houses look well. Not fully finished e.g. roads. Chestnut View has a large sign standing on a well kept grass area at the entrance. Attractive, nicely painted name with image of chestnut tree. This neighbourhood is not on your map. Extensive well kept grass area with mature trees at the entrance. Well presented detached residences. On Bracklin Road are Bracklin Park, Clover Well, Auburn Park. Bracklin Park has no name sign. Walls need paint. Clover Well has vandalism and litter. Many cap stones on wall beside the footpath have been dislodged and thrown in the grass. Grass clippings and litter under hedge.

Auburn Park has a name sign. Also vandalism. Entrance pillar and part of wall broken. In all three estates the residences were well presented. St Patrick's Terrace – no name sign. Mature neighbourhood. All residences well presented, some with well stocked gardens. Extensive raised beds of flowers and shrubs. Tidy Towns sign at entrance. Your entry form tells us that Devine Crescent (beside Church of Ireland) came 2nd in Longford County Councils "Better Estate Competition 2015". It is a mature neighbourhood of single/two storey houses. It has a name stone in a cobbled area. Hanging baskets and flower containers on walls. Residents clearly take great pride in their neighbourhood. Laneways, garages also well presented. Well done to all involved. Chapel Lane apartments are well presented.

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

Approach roads are important because they help to create the first impression of a town or village. You have a planting and replenishment programme for the bypass and other locations on approach – 500 daffodils and other bulbs on the bypass and other planting at town signs. Also, you maintain shrub beds on the roundabouts. The approach from Ballymahon has a blue and white bi-lingual town sign standing in a raised bed. It is on a gravel area close to a railway crossing. The verges are narrow and the road is narrow and twisting. It is difficult to create a good first impression. By contrast the Bracklin Road approach has a similar sign in a raised bed on a wide, well kept corner verge with a post and rail fence and mature trees. A good first impression of Edgeworthstown. The Granard approach has the usual sign in a raised bed on a good verge and a footpath on the other side of the road. Another good first impression but the approach from Castlepollard has the sign on gravel/weeds. No verge either side. There is also a large green and white town sign. Average first impression. The Dublin Road has a well kept verge with a number of signs, including the blue and white town sign. There is also an official Longford County Council 1916 sign "Remember, Reflect, Reimagine". There is also a commemorative Maria Edgeworth feature with a carving of a young girl, arch and flower beds. A good first impression.

Concluding Remarks:

Edgeworthstown Tidy Towns has made further progress in the Supervalu Tidy Towns competition. We look forward to receiving your entry into the 2017 competition.

