

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Boyle** Ref: **290**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **284**
Category: **D** Date(s): **15/07/2016**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	41	42
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	33	35
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	41	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	48	49
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	39
TOTAL MARK	450	274	284

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome Boyle to the 2016 tidy towns competition as we appreciate your participation. It is noted that your hard-working committee of 9 members is comprised of representatives from each of the residents associations. This organisational structure is effective as it ensures that your committee is representative of all parts of the town. We are also pleased to read that you have built up partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce and the Town Team and voluntary groups like Men's Shed, the GAA and Boyle Celtic. Well done also on establishing new links with the Scouts and Foróige. This approach is commended and we urge you not stop there and to continue to seek out new partners. We wondered if there are any other community or voluntary groups that be approached by your committee in Boyle – such as an active retirement group or the local historical society? We are pleased to read that you work closely with Roscommon County Council, Tus and the Community Employment Scheme as these organisations are important for completing many of the projects that you have identified for your town. Consider also approaching the County Roscommon Leader Partnership, as they have been a source of valuable assistance to other committees in your county. Your communication strategy appears to be quite comprehensive. We note that you use the Una Bhan newsletter, the Church Bulletin, the Roscommon Herald as well as text, e-mail and social media. Has any thought been given to developing a web presence, such as your own dedicated website? We were delighted to read that you have representatives on the green school committees and that you are working to promote projects in the schools and clubs. Involving the scouts in your landscaping projects is an excellent idea and we wondered if you had collaborated with the school children on any projects? Perhaps you could provide us with some examples in 2017. Thank you for your comprehensive application form and map as they were very helpful during adjudication. We agree with the adjudicator in 2015 and you are urged to give serious consideration to developing a tidy towns action plan over the next few years. This will enable you to identify projects under each of the tidy towns categories and assign priorities to them. An action plan will also help you to schedule your work and it would be a great help to your environmental officer during meetings with the schools and clubs – as they could select the actions from your plan that would make good school (or club) projects. A plan could also help you to earn extra marks under this category.

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

The adjudicator had a very enjoyable first visit to Boyle. The town is fortunate to have a range of historical features and structures that provide plenty of interest for the visitor. We marvelled at the wonderful Abbey which dominates the approach to the town from both Sligo and Carrick on Shannon. The scale of the structure demonstrates that your town has been a settlement of considerable importance in the past as well as today. The modern interventions to the structure (comprising new glass sections) are considered to be practical, sensible and cognisant of its significant heritage value. They also enable this wonderful feature to be enjoyed when it's raining! Kings house is also an incredibly impressive building and it is great to see that it has been fully refurbished and that it now

accommodates a diverse range of desirable uses, including a library, a restaurant, craft shops and artists studios. It was noted that the courthouse is behind scaffolding and we wish you luck with your funding application to the Heritage Council to cover the costs of its restoration. The clock tower is also a most impressive structure but some attention needs to be given to the small landscape bed at its base, which was attracting weed. We should also point out that we very much enjoyed the heritage trail of the town as it provides an excellent overview of your many impressive historical features of interest. Of course, there is much more to Boyle than just your heritage buildings. We had a very pleasant time exploring the centre of the town and we were impressed by the number of traditional buildings and shopfronts that were presented to a good standard. On Main Street, the Bank of Ireland Building impressed and Mirelas, Magees looked very well. Sloans is a most attractive period style shopfront and we admired the recessed entrance of Logan Knott. Patrick Street also had a number of good traditional style buildings and shopfronts with Herons, the Patricks Well Pub, Lavins, Costigans and Sheerins all standing out. Further out, the modern building of the Roscommon Herald building a refreshing contrast to the traditional design structures here. While it is not possible to list all well presented buildings on Bridge Street, Shop Street and Elphin Street, a number stood out. Boles, the Stone House and Dalys on Bridge Street all drew positive attention. We admired Ryans, Total Healthcare, Taylors and the Post Office on Shop Street while Better Buy Elphin Street, Taylors and the Londis caught our eye on Elphin Street. On the Crescent, the Open Table deserves praise for its attractive appearance. The adjudicator has no doubt that the good standards of presentation of commercial buildings are influenced by your excellent annual awards. Aside from buildings, there were also some nice features of interest to be seen. We would like to commend you on your excellent new engine feature at the junction of Chapel Lane. This is a very impressive piece of work and we look forward to seeing the information plaque unveiled in time for next year. Some work was still to be done on the feature as paving stones had yet be laid behind it and one of the landscaping beds had not been planted. Nonetheless, we very much enjoyed seeing it. Well done on your projects for 2016 – such as putting scenes from the local area in the windows of empty shops in the town and painting the street furniture. It is noted that the sale of the Royal hotel has been postponed and as a result, no improvements in take place for the time being. Hopefully, this central building can be acquired and renovated and returned to productive use soon.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

A range of good quality landscaping projects could be seen in Boyle on adjudication day. We loved the large bed of pink roses in full bloom at the public art feature and also at the stone seat opposite the wonderful Abbey. Great work was underway the landscaping bed adjacent to the courthouse as it was been planted on adjudication day. We look forward to seeing this scheme complete in 2017 as it will help to draw attention to the courthouse and the clocktower as well as enhance the centre of town. It was noted that a number of the beds around the parking bays in the present or in need of a revamp and we wondered if they are on your schedule for next year? We were pleased to read that many of your landscaping projects are now collaborative affairs – with Fas responsible for the beds at the entrance to the town adjacent to the Abbey and Foroige looking after the beds on Bridge Street beside Taylors. This part of town was particularly bright and cheerful during adjudication with the hanging baskets on the bridge providing plenty of summer colour. The approaches to the town also looked very well with attractive planting provided beneath the town name signs on the Carrick on Shannon approach road and the Sligo approach road. A special mention is also necessary for the residents of both Station Road and Plunkett Avenue for their excellent planting schemes. Well done also on engaging the scouts and men's shed group in your efforts as we note that they were responsible for growing summer bedding plants from seed for your landscaping schemes. You are highly commended on introducing a mix of evergreens, perennials and annuals into your schemes as this will enable your planting projects to provide year round colour and interest. It is noted that you enjoy a good relationship with the new engineer and that schedules are being set up for grass cutting, weed control and road sweeping. Well done also to the residents associations who mow lawns for elderly neighbours.

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

Well done on securing funding for a nature trail from the lawns to the pleasure grounds. This sounds like a very good project and we would love to know more. For example, do you plan to provide signage of the route of the nature trail? Will finger post signage be provided so that its location can be identified? Please let us know in 2017 and be sure to mark the route of the proposed nature trail on the map that you submit with your application form. We are pleased to see that both you and the schoolchildren have followed the advice of the adjudicator in 2015 and are carrying out a survey of the flora and fauna along the route of the nature trail. Be sure to record the findings of this survey as this information could be used to prepare wildlife information panels along the route of the nature trail. We also suggest that this survey should be repeated every year or two by the schoolchildren in order to monitor biodiversity levels in this part of Boyle. It will also be great if the findings of your survey could be entered on the national data bases that can be accessed through websites like Birdwatch Ireland. The Annual 'catch and release' Easter Pike fishing competition sounds like a great event and there is no doubt that it helps to raise awareness of your local river and lake. However, we are interested to know if you have given any further consideration to the suggestions made in 2015 about wildlife or birdlife talks? These are very effective for raising awareness of local biodiversity and we would encourage you to consider organising one to take place on the weekend of the fishing competition next year.

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

We are pleased to see that your committee has been very busy with good quality projects under this category for 2016. Well done on organising a pay by weight information evening and we would encourage you to record the names and contact details of the participants so that you can schedule a follow-up event to see what proportion of the participants are engaging in waste reduction. This information could also help you to identify new projects and new ways of raising awareness of this important issue. We are pleased to read that the shuttlebus between Boyle

and Lough Key is proving successful and the bike rack has been set up in the Abbey Community School to encourage more children to cycle. However, don't forget that there are other factors that would influence someone's decision to use their bike and we would encourage them to carry out a survey to see what other practical steps can be undertaken in Boyle to increase the proportion of children cycling the school. Your workshop on warmer homes in the Autumn sounds like another good initiative and once again, take note of the contact details of the participants to enable you to get in touch with them later to see if the event has been successful. We note that the adjudicator in 2015 suggested that you should explore some ideas for 'greening the arts festival' in Boyle and we wondered if any work had been done in this area? The work of the Parochial School and St Josephs boys national school on water awareness is most impressive and we would encourage them to think of innovative ways in which valuable water resources can be used efficiently in their town. Don't forget to tell us about how the need to minimise waste generation and sustainably use resources influences the way in which you carry out your tidy towns projects. We would like to hear if you make your own compost, harvest rainwater or use recycled materials in your landscaping schemes. Please let us know in 2017.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

It is great to see that a range of organisations (such as the GAA, the soccer club, the primary schools and the Parish Council) are involved in litter picks in Boyle as this is a very effective way of raising awareness of the importance of litter control and for spreading the workload! We are pleased to report that the standard of litter control in the town was very good on adjudication day with the key approach roads and the central streets of the town centre appearing very clean and tidy and litter free. Litter was present in a small number of places but it tended to be in less visible locations, such as the access lane from King House to the car park (accessed off Shop Street), in corners of the car park itself, to the rear of the untidy Royal Hotel site and on the N61 approach road where roadworks were taking place. Therefore, this is considered to be a good performance and it is encouraging to see that your hard-work is paying off in this area. It was noted however, that the areas beneath the seating areas on Shop Street (at the entrance to the car park) and on Elphin Street (close to the Crescent) seem to have an accumulation of small items of litter, cigarette butts and other debris. Therefore, it is recommended that these areas get extra attention during your cleanups. We note from your application form that programmes are now in place for weed control, removing grime from the base of shopfronts, removing unused poles, cleaning directional signs and signs, cleaning graffiti, street sweeping and more frequent grass cutting. This is a highly organised approach and its benefits can clearly be seen in the appearance of your town centre. However, difficulties with signage seem to persist as untidy signs and sign poles were spotted in a number of centre locations – such as the Crescent where a very untidy stop sign and damaged and dirty parking sign can clearly be seen. It is recommended that the committee (in association with the town engineer) carry out a signage audit in order to identify what signs need to be washed, repaired or replaced. Also be sure to maintain the sign pole and the back of the sign when carrying out maintenance as these parts of the sign are just as visible as the sign itself.

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

The residents associations are commended for signing up to the national spring clean event and for organising cleanups in other areas. The standard of presentation of residential areas in the town was generally good, but there appears to be significant variations from one estate to the next as there are examples where standards are high and others where improvements can clearly be made. Will it be possible to organise a town wide 'estate cleanup day'? This could be organised in conjunction with all of your project partners (the schools, the sports clubs, the Chamber of Commerce) and it would also help to raise awareness of your awards for best presented and most improved estates. We are pleased to read that projects have taken place under this category that have resulted in improvements to the appearance of a number of estates such as Cnoc na Raille and Cnoc na hAbhainn's during adjudication. A number of residential estates stood out with Station Road and Plunkett Avenue looking incredibly well with a wonderful array and diversity of well maintained and attractive landscaping schemes. The Famine Memorial here and surrounding green area also looked very well, although the railings around the Memorial may need a fresh coat of paint in time for next year. Warren Road and Warren Drive achieved a good standard of presentation with their nicely maintained green areas, good planting and neatly presented homes and gardens. The planting and hanging baskets at Marian Road and Hanly Ave also looked very well.

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

It was clear from adjudication that a considerable amount of effort and attention has gone into the approaches from Sligo and from Carrick on Shannon. On the Sligo approach in particular, the standard of presentation was very high with very neatly maintained verges, clean and visible signage and attractive landscaping at the base of the recently painted green town nameplate. This approach could be further improved by removing the very untidy looking brown Lough Key sign as it detracts from what was otherwise a very impressive approach. The approach from Carrick on Shannon is also quite nice with good verges and a well maintained footpath to be seen. The town name sign and landscaping also help to enhance this entrance to the town. We were surprised to see that the approach from the Rockingham Arch was so understated and we wondered if it is proposed to improve the signage at this location? We note that work is ongoing on the new wall and footpath on the N61 (from Roscommon) and we look forward to seeing this completed in 2017.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done to the committee for a very good performance in this year's competition. Be sure to persist with your partnership approach with other voluntary and other organizations as this is working really well for you. We look forward to returning and seeing further improvements in 2017.

