

# Tidy Towns Competition 2017

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Milltown** Ref: **202**  
County: **Galway** Mark: **323**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **08/07/2017**  
**30/07/2017**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2016</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2017</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	47	47
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	47	47
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	40	41
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	20	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	63	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	28	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	35
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>323</b>

### **Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:**

Many thanks for your entry in this year's Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for participating in Ireland's biggest community project. Congratulations on submitting a top-class entry this year. This was pleasing to the eye as well as filled with much relevant information that was meticulously illustrated. A special word of praise for the map-maker: excellent work, the very model of clarity. The adjudicator tried not to create this too much during use. Thank you for submitting your 5-year plan. This seems to be very focussed and is well laid-out. Thanks for all of the additional information and a succinct but informative covering letter.

Well done to Milltown and Belmont national schools for their work throughout the year. On behalf of all at Tidy Towns we salute the great efforts of pupils and teachers towards bettering our common environment. Your participation enriches the competition for us all. Thanks for all the super photographs of your work. Its great to see before and after pictures of what you've achieved and how you did it. You really do have year-round colour in Milltown. The adjudicator loved the photographs of the monster pike and the remarkable close-up of the pine marten, both remarkable. The Taste of Milltown event looked like a great success and it is always valuable to get groups together and talking. Over the nearly 60 years you have participated in the competition, you have achieved much. It's good to read how much positive impact your ongoing work has on the natural world around you. Be assured that your work - such as that on the Clare River - has long-term benefits downstream.

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

Your new signs were noted. Older ones were seen to be kept clean - a simple thing perhaps but often overlooked. The new sewage scheme will have long-term positive impact on water quality in your area. The church looked as good as ever, its grounds so well kept. The Top petrol station / shop was as neat as a pin. Not an easy feat. The hardware suppliers was very neat too and a little wind-blown packaging here was surely only temporary. The white-washed window and door beside the takeaway didn't look so good. Sheridan's Bar/Restaurant was immaculate and so well-painted but the adjacent premises - the former shop and petrol station could be better. The pumps here were dirty. The tubular steel signage is damaged and really unsuitable for this setting anyway. Finns pub looks very sharp in black and grey. Mullarkey's was spotless. What future might the old handball alley have? Could this be put to use? The pump has benefited from your attentions.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

You have reported on the tree-removal and replacement as shown so well in your photographs. You have also tended to existing trees and their well-being. Removing signs from the trees is a good move. Extensive tree-planting has been a key feature of your work for the year. The park looked amazing on day of visit - a sunny

one, as luck would have it. The information board looked well but was perhaps a little low on detailed natural heritage information. There were many examples of careful and considered planting. You have done much to bring colour to hard spaces and relieve the impact of the busy national road. Well done. Your wall-top planting is a great example of this. Some more native or bug-friendly perennials at Millbrook would help your overall biodiversity aims. The planting at the pump looks great. Businesses have played their part with some great and well-tended displays.

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

The stream enhancement projects are big news and such initiatives are of great value for Atlantic Salmon and Brown Trout, both protected species. You are monitoring your bird boxes for use. What about the bat-boxes? Have these been in use? Clondroon Lake has received attention from you over this last year and angling has been a key activity. The adjudicator visited the lake and admired the biodiversity signage here. Mr D'Arcy is a highly respected writer and thinker when it comes to Irish wildlife and it's great that he was there.

Your biodiversity-focused signage was very much admired. Would you consider an addition to the information board that informs the passer-by on how you are going about this and what species they might add to their own garden or village? It was noted that one of the tree trail signs is missing. Your ongoing work with both statutory (e.g. Inland Fisheries Ireland) and local (e.g. gun clubs) is applauded here. The Clare River is a Special Area of Conservation and a designated salmonid watercourse and yet this is not mentioned in your entry. There is no doubt that you are aware of this but there is no harm in stating this in need of place your work in context.

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

Thank you for the great level of detail provided on the Food Waste Prevention project. My goodness how those figures add up! Over 3 tonnes of food waste prevented? Amazing. The savings to Ryan's Daybreak shop just by using LEDs are also remarkable. Solar water heating panels were noted on Sheridan's premises. You have 'ticked the box' for reuse with your book-swap scheme, simple but so sustainable, it seems. Low energy building and even passive housing looks set to be the norm. It is interesting to note that geothermal is now so widespread. You are harvesting rainwater for your own uses and that is a major saving.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

You've been busy in this category as is right for one of the tidiest villages in Galway and indeed Ireland. Congratulations on your inaugural parish clean-up as well as on the Spring Cleans by the national school. Clondroon Lake is lucky to have John's care and attention.

Signage could be looked at more critically by yourselves in Milltown, it is felt. On premises alone had four signs on the northern approach - probably unnecessary. Placing free-standing signs must take into account the visual impact this can have. The takeaway signage affixed to an outbuilding is not in keeping with the high standard set elsewhere. By all means have a sign if it is permitted but a better quality one would cost little.

The bottle bank and surrounding area were spotless. All of the signs, litterbins, bicycle rack and lampposts were all gleaming. A little litter - no doubt car-borne - was seen, but nothing significant. All in all, it was a very tidy village on the day.

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

Millbrook has seen some significant work over the last year and this will benefit many, including the businesses here. The entrance looked well and all was neat and tidy within. The new house referred to in your entry was admired for its presentation and the high quality of the landscaping here. Items related to the playground should be described in Landscaping and Open Spaces. Well done on your tenacity with the unoccupied house. The house opposite Sheridan's was sharply painted and highly decorated with hanging baskets. Old School Fields was spotless.

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

This is such an important category for you as so much of your 'operational' area falls within it. You were not found wanting. The approach roads were wonderful. There are excellent floral displays and many bug-friendly plants were seen among these. Green areas were so well kept. The entrance to the GAA grounds was in good order. Fences and walls were painted and clean. The differentially coloured wall on the western roadside is very clever. The recent works at the waste water treatment plant were noted. Your tree-planting project will have long-term positive impacts on your roadside areas but looks good already. New planted areas were also admired. All the way out to Dawros Upper, good use was made of space for the addition of colour.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

A truly enjoyable experience and it was great to see improvements since the adjudicator's last visit. You have wildlife and biodiversity firmly in mind and co-operation seems to be your watchword. Sincere congratulations on all your work.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

The adjudicator has passed through the village of Milltown over the years in transit to different destinations and has

noted the improvements that have taken place during this period of time.

The village has always looked pristine in its presentation a fair feat considering the heavy volume of traffic that is constant on the N17.

It was a pleasure to take time out and traverse all parts of the village as part of this 2nd adjudication.

The application submitted was very comprehensive and covered in great detail the work that you have undertaken and have planned for the future.

The adjudicator was impressed the level of interaction that you have with relevant agencies and Galway County Council.

These contacts have been developed over the years and obviously have served you well in terms of getting work done and resources allocated to various projects that were critical to the development of the village.

The adjudicator was also impressed with the new action plan for 2017-2021 much of which was very practical with some ambitious projects included as well.

The maps included were very detailed which was great benefit to the adjudicator who would not have been that familiar with the village layout.

The pictorial records included were akin to a story narrative of the day to day happenings of what your community is all about.

Well done on this type of approach and commendations to those responsible for putting this excellent compilation together.

There is a strong evidence in your submission of the involvement of both schools in your activities and its is suffice to say that this was noted.

Well done to both teachers and pupils of both Milltown and Belmont National schools and to the committee members who liaise with the schools.

Good road surfaces and footpaths add enormously to the look of a village or town and Milltown is fortunate that both the road surface and the footpaths were top class.

Not all of the N17 is up to this standard!

Street lighting was also of top quality and the fact that there were no overhead wires gives a clear view as one looks down the street from either end of the village.

Sheridan's Bar and Restaurant was in pristine condition and was packed on the day in question – not a good day for Galway football fraternity.

The local GAA grounds Fr Conroy Park was very well presented with boundary walls at entrance painted in blue and white.

Mullarkys and Quinn's Pub and Restaurant at the southern end of the village were also very well maintained with tidy frontages.

Glynn's Hardware, which is a rather large premises with an expansive yard, looked very tidy and clean on the day. Top service station was neat and tidy and the business premises in the newer development of Millbrook were also well presented.

The Industrial Park on the Kilconley road junction was well managed with business premises well presented.

St Joseph's Catholic Church, which is of modern design and deceptively large inside, was very well looked after as were the surrounding grounds.

The retention of the font of the original church of 1831 creates a link with a past generation.

The Community Centre at the Ballindine end of the village is an excellent multipurpose community building, the front area was complemented by colourful planters with the usual combination of annuals.

Both schools, which are more than a little distance from the village proper, were in good condition.

Landscaping and planting is very much a strong point of Milltown.

As was stated in the first adjudication you have done quite a lot to bring colour to various spaces in a village that has a heavy throughput of traffic.

The adjudicator was pleased to note that those very colourful plants crocosmia and campanula were prominent at a few planting locations in the village

The Village Park was excellent with some unique stone features commemorating local residents and also had informative heritage and wildlife panels.

The tree information panels were particularly interesting and now this adjudicator, who had Latin as subject at school back in the day, knows that the Latin name for Ash is Fraxinus Excelsior no less.

One learns something new every day of life.

The River Clare, which flows through the village and all the way down to Lough Corrib, looked very clean on the day in question.

It is noted as a salmon and trout river according to one of my fishing friends.

Well done on the various bio diversity projects that you mentioned in your submission and these have been dealt with in detail by the first adjudicator who would be qualified more than most to make a critical assessment on such matters.

The projects included under sustainable waste and resource management were very much in line with the main objective of this category that being the reduction of the production of unnecessary waste at source.

The village was virtually litter free on the day, a few wrappers were seen at the Community Hall car park and near the Top Service station, but overall the standard was very good.

General tidiness was also very good, Sheridans Shop and Petrol was a little out of sync with the rest of the village. A few free standing signs in a business premises on the outskirts of the village on the Tuam exit were a little untidy looking.

Replacing these in an orderly fashion would suffice.

One or two signs, including a Failte sign, were slightly obscured by shrub overgrowth.

Millbrook is a mix of residential and businesses and the area was very well maintained and presented on the day.

There were many fine private residences, some with exceptional front and side gardens, observed during the walk about.

Congratulations to these residents on keeping their homesteads in such top class condition. Approaches from both sides of the N17 were well managed with traffic calming signs clear and visible well in advance of entering the village. There are two roads in from Kilconley and one from Dunmore and these were in an acceptable condition also. It was a pleasure to take time out to second adjudicate the charming village of Milltown on the N17. You are wished well in the future.