

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Pullough** Ref: **2103**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **271**
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	40	41
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	36	37
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	36	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	23	25
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	46	47
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31	31
TOTAL MARK	450	263	271

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Thank you for your application to the 2017 Tidy Towns Competition. We are delighted to see Pullough continuing with the competition and submitting such a high quality application form and map. You consulted with a wide range of experts and organisations in relation to your work, which is to be commended. Congratulations on your Silver Village Award from Tullamore Credit Union and your Endeavour Award, well deserved. The canal is a focal point for the village and it's great to see you are working with Waterways Ireland in relation to this important heritage feature and natural habitat. The community in Pullough seem to have really embraced the Tidy Towns ethos, which really is about community spirit, as well as protecting and enhancing your environment. Pullough is a model for other towns and villages that are considering entering the competition.

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

It is a good idea to use the adjudicator's report to focus your efforts. The Gallaghers Pub, Devery's, the School, Church, Grotto and old pump are all presented to a high standard. I was delighted to peek inside the church to view the beautiful Harry Clare window and painted interior. It really is a gem. The mooring posts etc. along the canal look great. Hopefully Bracken's shop can be opened as a community/ shop café. The bogman sculpture is an interesting feature reflecting the cultural heritage of the area. This is a busy area with the sculpture, signage and flower bed. Keep the planting in front of the sculpture simple so as not to detract from it. The heathers were noted but other summer bedding was included. It might be better to keep it to a block of heathers or other similar perennials. In my opinion, the litter bin adjacent to the canal is an eyesore. Is it really needed there? It detracts from the beautiful waterway. The Community Centre looks better without the broken lamp and rusty pole and the mural of the barge is great. A couple of large planters in front of the centre with perennials could soften its appearance.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Planting 'the right tree in the right place' is essential when planting trees. It's great to hear you had Diarmuid McAree out for a visit and to read about your focus increasing the number of trees in the area. I would add Pedunculate Oak to the list of suitable species. Unfortunately there are a couple of issues with the trees planted north of the bridge over the canal. The choice of trees is good but many of the trees are being strangled by the tree ties. These should be loosened or removed immediately. Trees should only need stakes until they are well established and then the ties should be removed. The open area at the base of the trees on the tarmacked footpath is far too small. There is probably not much you can do now but it may cause issues in the future as the trees start to grow in girth. It's good to have filled in the gaps in the hedgerow behind the Bogman sculpture but pipes look a bit unsightly. Maybe they can be removed once the plants are well established. The planted boat at the head of the Cush Road looked very colourful as did other planters around the village. The sloped bed across from the church isn't working well as you

pointed out. I would suggest picking two or three hardy ground cover shrubs to plant in this area. Get advice on species selection from your local garden centre but keep it simple. Choose low-growing shrubs that will grow outwards, covering the soil and blending together. As it is close to the canal, a more natural style of planting would suit this area better i.e. avoid variegated or copper-coloured leaves. The planters adjacent to the church looked very well but the boxes on the adjacent stone wall didn't add anything to the area. The old pump is beautiful. I'm not sure it needs a hanging basket although it was very colourful.

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

It's really good to read that you are running events that raise awareness of the wildlife and biodiversity in your area, and attending relevant talks. This is so worthwhile and just as important as doing projects. Not mowing grassy roadside verges is great for pollinators, where you have the room to do so. Even small strips of long grass are valuable. You may be able to identify other patches of grass that could be mowed less. Expanding your hedgerow resource is also very valuable for birds, small mammals and pollinators. Hedgerows are also great for screening and providing shelter. There may be other boundaries you can plant with native hedgerows. The pollinator-friendly beds in St. Manchan's estate were also admired. It's a great idea to consult with Fiona Devery, BSBI recorder for the area. Perhaps you could apply for funding to have a nature walk along the canal during Heritage Week? The Heritage Officer may be able to advise. The school were lucky to have a visit from Dale Treadwell during Tree Week. It's good to see your emphasis on involving the school. The edge of the canal is well-managed with the native, riparian plants left to grow luxuriantly. It is important not to mow river or canal edges at all in order to protect water quality and aquatic habitats. The bog garden in St. Manchan's estate is wonderful. Well done to all involved.

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

You have many clever initiatives in this category, which is really impressive for a relatively new Tidy Towns Group. The school are obviously committed to working on the green schools programme and taking an innovative approach. It's good to see the playschool are also involved. Clothes collections can be good fundraisers and they can be run annually. The Colour and Style workshop was a great idea. Many more sustainable options are cost effective too and this is a great message to get across. The approach to planting and composting is one that can evolve over time to become even more sustainable and environmentally-friendly. It's great to have the use of a polytunnel.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Pullough was more-or-less litter free and very tidy on adjudication day. There was a small bit of litter near the pub but this was the only place any litter was spotted. Paths and kerbs were mostly weed free apart from a small bit on the tarmacked path, north of the bridge. Your weekly litter picks are obviously doing the job. It's good to identify any litter black spots. The bring bank was very tidy on adjudication day. Bins and signage were clean. It would be great if you can do something about overhead cables etc. but this is a longer term project to keep working on.

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

Residential areas are presented to a high standard reflecting in Pullough. There are many nice private gardens and well-maintained houses. Congratulations to Brosna View for their award last year in the Tidy Small Estates Competition, well deserved. The new bog garden in St. Manchan's Estate is really lovely and reflects local heritage and landscapes. This connection with your place is very striking and to be admired.

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

I do hope your village name plates are installed soon. Their absence is really noticeable. The new curbing at the head of Cush Road looks very well, complementing the lovely planted boat. Despite issues with tree ties, the planted trees and hedgerow on the approach from Turraun look well and provide a gateway for the village centre. I didn't notice the junction of the footpath of the approach road from Rahan being particularly untidy but I think I was admiring the wetlands on either side of the road.

Concluding Remarks:

Pullough have made great progress in a short space of time, keep up the excellent work.