

# Tidy Towns Competition 2017

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Thomastown** Ref: **908**  
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **286**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **25/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	40	41
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	39	40
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	29	29
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	26	27
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	37
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>286</b>

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

We are delighted to see a return of Thomastown Community Network (TCN) to the 2017 Supervalu Tidy Towns competition. Your participation is important – we read with interest the background history of the town. Thank you for your entry form, which was very well laid out and included some helpful photos. The ‘before’ and ‘after’ photos show the significant improvements that have been made. You also included a comprehensive 3 Year Plan after each of the eight categories – it is preferable if it is a separate document. Thank you also for your 2016/2017 work summary. We loved the colour coded key on the map; however it was a little difficult to follow due to its small size. Also some numbered projects are missing from it.

You lost three members of your committee recently but perhaps you can encourage others to join? Luckily you have a wider pool of volunteers to call on as required for specific tasks. We like the concept of the ‘Two Hour Gang’ – very catchy. You enjoy good support from local community groups, clubs and businesses. It is wonderful to hear that you are involving younger residents in some of your more enjoyable activities. You are forging strong links with schools, kindergarten and newly formed Youth Group. You liaise closely with your Area Engineer, Kilkenny Co Co. You utilise a variety of communication channels to relay your messages so that all sectors of the community area reached. This includes your increased use of Facebook. Keep up the good work.

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

Phase 1 of the CYMSI restoration has been completed and already there is a marked visual improvement. Please keep us updated on any further developments. There are also exciting plans to convert the old Court House into an Arts Centre. We assume the delay is funding related? Ongoing maintenance at the graveyards is noted as is your funding application to repair a boundary wall there asap. Newly painted buildings give a lift to the streetscape – well done to all those who have made improvements. We were particularly impressed by the building and surroundings of the Community Centre. It is most inviting and nicely landscaped – it appears to be a community hub with people sitting around the tables outside. We must commend also the high standard of the wall murals – well done to the No Name Club for these. Thank you for information on your Heritage Trail map – is this new for this year? You have many derelict buildings to contend with – no easy challenge. In terms of this competition, you are taking the right approach in liaising closely with Kilkenny County Council and in the meantime ensure that they are presented to an acceptable standard. It is encouraging to see that one of these, Brookside House is now undergoing renovation. We look forward to seeing the completed project next time. The upstairs windows of the Blackberry Café could do with cleaning. It is encouraging to see that a new café/book shop is to open shortly. Some buildings that caught the eye for their fine presentation included Tim’s Bar, O’ Hara’s (nice shopfront but a lot of clutter detracts), Ryan & Son, Healy’s Pharmacy, The Salon, Simon Treacy’s Hardware, Eddie Murphy’s bar,, Amen Barbers and Murphy Butchers. Both Centra and the Menswear shop are neatly presented. L Mullins is another attractive building (although vacant)

The library is fresh; however the window box needs attention.

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

You are making good progress in this category – Please be clear as to what's new since last year. We are impressed that you have a Landscaping Team. You have a strong focus on year round planting for colour and interest. The new stone wall planters blend in nicely with the surroundings. Landscaping at the Community Hall and Quay Car Park was of a high standard. We admired the excellent landscaping against the backdrop of fresh white buildings at the Veterinary Clinic on the Gowran Rd. Lidl was nicely landscaped. St. Mary's N.S. has a mix of attractive tree planting and shrubs. A lovely flower bed was observed at the nearby junction. Effective planting provides screening at the Garda Station. The Sportsman's Bar has a neat outdoor seating area where colourful flower displays brighten up the streetscape. Grennan College has attractive grounds. The bed on Ladyswell Rd was admired. The public toilets were in neat order, with the surrounding area nicely landscaped. We wonder if the wheelbarrow feature is a bit lost here under the shade of the tree and if it would be more effective elsewhere? The Church of the Assumption has well maintained shrubberies for year round interest, although the upper car park is a little weedy. Fine mature trees were admired here.

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

At the Quay Car Park, we observed the partially finished Upper Access Area – well done for securing the land above, we wish you luck in future development of sensory garden/biodiversity area. Thank you for submitting a copy of your 'Discover our Wildlife' compiled in conjunction with Watergarden staff and local art teacher. Give us a little feedback from users. The Wildflower Meadow is well established - any monitoring of bees or butterflies here? Your removal of the ivy from the castle wall is noted – in such projects you might reassure that you have sought expert advice, e.g. from your KCC Heritage Officer. From a biodiversity point of view ivy is a wonderful source of food and shelter for birds, but the trick is in striking the balance. We are delighted to read that you have a professional landscape architect on board with regard to your planned biodiversity. Unfortunately we missed this swimming area as we were working off the other map. The Riverwalk near the bridge was clean and well-maintained. Your ongoing work in relation to the infestation of Clematis Vitalba is noted. The Wildflower area with signage on the Inistioge Rd was noted. The area beyond could be reviewed soon as part of your Landscape Plan as the shrubs have outgrown their stone beds. More perennials and wildlife friendly planting balanced with year round seasonality is recommended. Any links with the local primary school in terms of Biodiversity topics? Have they completed this theme yet for their 5th Green Flag?

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

The downsizing of your committee has challenged you to implement new measures under this heading. Nonetheless you continue with some excellent measure to encourage the more efficient use of resources in the community your 'No Junk Mail' campaign is one example as is your contribution to the latest edition of KCC's Repair Directory. What other initiatives are happening in the wider community, e.g. through the Green Schools programme. Scouts groups and youth groups usually show interest in carrying out an environmental project so perhaps could assist you? (They could also enter the Special Youth Award). Any businesses involved in environmental programmes such as 'Green Hospitality' etc.? Are there any water conservation measures in place in either community buildings or in relation to your Tidy Towns watering programme? What happens to the grass cuttings? Further assistance is available from your KCC Environmental Awareness Officer, who is often looking for towns to host training events and promote them locally. This would be an easy way for you to progress here. A lot of this category is about awareness – raising so perhaps your P.R.O. could do 'Tip of the Week' on Facebook or other relevant media. All the content is readily available online through your Local Authority Environment Section, Regional Waste Management office etc. We look forward to hearing of further initiatives next year.

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

Well done to all those involved in National Spring Clean and to the organisers for making a social event out of it. You have an organised approach to your twice-weekly litter picks with the assistance of dedicated volunteers. You continue your vigilance in relation to dog-fouling and we are glad to note the situation has improved. The Green Dog Walkers campaign in conjunction with your signs assist in this regard. Hopefully your annual WEEE collection prevents these items being dumped in outlying areas.

There was minor littering on the day in one or two places including the riverside area. Thomastown presents a fairly tidy appearance. Both bottle bank sites were in excellent order – there was a little litter to the front of the Lidl car park. The entrance road was a little weedy along kerbs. The hedge will provide much needed screening in time. Items stored visible to the side of Supervalu car park give a somewhat cluttered appearance. Can these be allocated to proper storage areas? The sign at McConville's Betting Office could be cleaned, otherwise all was neat here. Opposite the library a blank noticeboard was observed. The 'Medieval Walls' sign is quite faded.

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

Residences on the whole were neat and tidy. Your efforts to develop a positive working relationship with your residents groups are commended. Encouraging and supporting the setting-up of further Residents Groups would be worth your efforts in the longer run. Some lovely work has been carried out by residents, particularly in relation to landscaping. Maudlin Court was neatly presented; however there appeared to be excessive use of weed killer at the entrance. The Belfry has good landscaping and attractive homes. We were impressed by the landscaping at the apartment complex opposite Capitol Hardware. Tree planting at Ladyswell Estate looks well. Well done to all

involved.

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

Attractive stone walls and mature trees enhance approach roads. Both bicycle racks are a good addition and hopefully will encourage more cycling. The graveyard gate (Gowran Rd) will require painting soon. Efforts to lightly manage your roadside verges are commended and already encourage wildflowers. Ample car parking is provided – all well-signposted and a couple of car parks very nicely landscaped. Thomastown is pedestrian-friendly with plenty of opportunities to safely cross the street. A small laneway to the river could be lovely; however a storage crate left there gives a somewhat untidy impression. Road markings were in good order.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Your enthusiastic committee members and volunteers have been working hard to put Thomastown on the map and make it more attractive for locals and visitors alike. Thank you for a fine presentation and we wish you well with future projects.