

# Tidy Towns Competition 2017

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Boyle** Ref: **290**  
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **285**  
Category: **D** Date(s): **16/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	42	42
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	35	36
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	42	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	49	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	39	38
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>285</b>

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

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2017. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area which is very good but while the map is useful for tourists it does not take in enough of the town for adjudication purposes. For example, the link to Lough Key is missing and also the cemeteries. We suggest that you aim to make it as an A3 page which can be folded into the application, or be divided into two pages for viewing side by side. With nine members on the committee, another 20 to 30 who volunteer and seven from the men's sheds and the GAA, you seem to have a good level of representation within the town. You receive funding from Roscommon county council, Town team and the chamber of commerce and many local shops and businesses have donated equipment and sponsorship. You communicate through the Parish newsletter the Roscommon Herald and Una Bhan newsletter. The local scouts club is very active with the tidy towns committee and you have representatives on the green schools committee. We applaud your participation in the competition for the past 18 years and we are pleased that you find these activities add a sense of pride and ownership. We note that your action programme includes focussing on the centre of the town for the past two years and now you are planning to develop the river walk. Well done on your success in being the overall national winner for the Bank of Ireland Enterprising Town Awards. We have noted the list of proposals included in the press release. We encourage communities to aim for a 3 year plan because it is not possible to achieve everything in one year and it is good to aim for targets over a period of years.

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

Boyle is such a historic town that it is easy to get lost in exploring the old buildings and reading the plaques. The historic Boyle Abbey is such an important asset for the town; it is great to see it being open to visitors; well done to the Office of Public Works. Your application mentions the courthouse development which is in progress and your hopes to have open in late summer with the model railway in situ. We enjoyed walking around the Crescent and we admired the planting schemes located there. It would be great if the pedestrian element of the Crescent could be expanded by reducing the amount of car parking. In that regard, we explored the rear of the courthouse and discovered plenty of empty parking spaces. In fact the larger area fronting Tangier Toys is a valuable space that is under used. Have you explored improving the access to this area and encouraging people to use it for parking and freeing up the Crescent to enhance the town further? The old courthouse is fine granite structure and the tower is another valuable part of your heritage. Paving here look very well. Elphin Street has some nice buildings, Feely stone is an interesting frontage to the street. Super Valu and Joe Simon supermarket and hardware complex is very busy. The sign at the entrance needs to be upgraded and while the car park is very busy we would still advise on introducing some trees to soften the impact. Some untidiness noticed at galvanised structure and access to same adjacent to the site. We noted the construction works underway at the nursing home; the grounds are well planted and well maintained. The winding Patrick Street with terraced houses some commercial some residential; unfortunately some are vacant and awaiting a new development. On Mill Road, the Stewarts fuel complex is a large

site which was clean and tidy. Green Street has a mixture of buildings for to when men tend and others in a derelict condition. Main Street and the Military Road goes around by the Kings house, a very historic area; the buildings are in good condition and the high stone wall is impressive. Saint Joseph's resource centre complex is neat and tidy. We suggest the oil tank be screened

Saint Joseph's church is a modern style reminiscent of Newgrange. It looks very well and the Grounds are well planted. The bell tower needs painting. The church of Ireland is a fine heritage building. It is enclosed with a stone wall and the gates were well painted. Well done to the many traders and businesses throughout the town who have taken good care of their buildings and painted them to enhance the town's appearance. These included traditional shopfronts such as the Open Table, Visionary Studios, The Moylurg Inn, Margaret's Café, the Hospice Shop, The Patrick's Well Pub, P. McGrath's Butchers and we also admired the modern styled Spool Factory and Green Street Garage which looked very clean. This effort is particularly striking when we see a number of premises that are no longer trading and some buildings in need of attention. Considering discussions in the media this summer about increasing the retirement age to 70 years, it is interesting to learn that Boyle is the first age friendly town in the county.

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

This section deals with the design, planting and maintenance of trees, shrubs, hedges, annual and perennial plants in open spaces, cemeteries, floral displays, containers etc.

The Crescent area is the most prominent and important area of the town and quite rightly, you have made a special effort there with a mixture of perennial and annual planting in several beds which we greatly admired. We admired the small planting schemes on the Station Road and across the way the stone with 'Cnoc an Raillie' caught our eye. The seat alongside is not inviting because it needs cleaning and painting. The small square open space would benefit from more planting. We admired some planting schemes around the town which have trees and under planting of herbaceous plants such as Hostas. The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and while you have some mature trees planted by past generations, there is a need now to focus on planting for future generations. In planting new trees it is best to use a single species on a road or street for uniformity. Also, it is important to ensure that the base of new trees is maintained free of weeds and grass and also flower beds to ensure early establishment. We observed some newer planting of street trees on Green Street and in one or two locations elsewhere. Unfortunately a number of these trees are flowering cherries which are not native and while they provide a good display of spring flowers, they usually disappear in a week or two. These non-native trees are less suitable for your environment because they support very little local wildlife and therefore, we advise that they be replaced with more suitable species such as maple, lime or hawthorn. We also saw trees planted in concrete pipes and sunken into the ground and suggest that the pipes be removed as soon as possible because they will limit root development. The grounds of the Community college has some nice trees but the newer ones are not thriving. We noted the interesting pleasure Grounds beside the Topaz station. Guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible. There is an old cemetery on the side of the hill and a newer cemetery across the road slightly lower down the hill. It is striking how the new cemetery has been designed and built compared with the old one. The old cemetery is enclosed with a stonewall and the new one is enclosed with a dashed concrete wall. There are mature trees in the old cemetery and there are no trees in the new cemetery. It is a pity that the new cemetery in terms of boundary treatment and tree planting is not as well done as the old one. We suggest that in your future projects that you aim to improve the new cemetery and have it relate better to the old one. In doing so, we suggest that the large carpark which is an extension of the road could be further improved by demarcating positions for car parking and planting some trees in between. The impact of the dashed wall could be improved by planting some climbing plants such as ivy in front of it or going one step further and facing it with stone. A container outside the wall with mixtures of green and white colours should be painted one colour or removed if possible.

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

Boyle town is surrounded by a rich natural area and it is important to promote an awareness of its many traits and to map these habitats. Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to achieve under this category. In this regard researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages. Biodiversity is under threat globally and sadly Ireland is a part of this trend. Habitats of value include specimen trees, hedgerows, treelines, streams, woodlands and wetlands. List the plants and animals to be found in your natural environment and recognise their significance (native, protected, or alien invasive?). This would be a very useful project for schools. We note you are still in the process of setting up the wildlife nature trail from the lawns to the pleasure grounds and there is a catch and release policy on the water ways.

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

This category is becoming more and more important and the available marks are now increased to 50 to highlight the need for communities to address the issues involved in tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. Actions mentioned in your application include a shuttle bus in operation around town and linking to Lough key. You also have a number of second hand shops. There are two recycling facilities for bottles, the local schools are very committed green schools and have been very successful in attaining green flags. The GAA are setting up a health and wellness with the schools for walking and communicating with all ages. There are a number of other measures that your town can take in regard to sustainability. Contact your waste contractors and try to find out what is being thrown away and armed with this information you can start to think about how waste can be reduced. Examine the waste pyramid and note the recycling is only the fourth most preferred option after avoidance, reducing and re-using. One third of our waste is organic in nature, such as grass clippings. You can avoid collecting mown grass by more frequent cutting and using

mulching mowers which shred the clippings and facilitate faster decomposition. In regard to water usage, self-watering hanging baskets are a help in reducing the amount of water used and also the task of watering. Other waste minimisation projects might include working with retailers to cut down on packaging, reminding people to re-use shopping bags, discouraging junk mail, encouraging the re-use of water bottles and coffee mugs at school and at work. In response to an over use of chemicals for weed control, many useful products of the past are no longer available and therefore communities are encouraged to use other means such as hoeing to maintain weeds. In some cases, allowing wildflowers to develop is an acceptable alternative. These activities will highlight the fact that you are focussing on this category and when you develop more projects in the future your marks will increase.

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

Boyle is a large area and therefore, the task of controlling litter is a significant one. We are pleased to report that we found very little litter during our visit. We note your spring cleaning is carried out and continuing and you are working with the council and TUS regarding the painting of railings street furniture. Well done to the many local businesses for painting their premises. The pole for the railway station sign on Elphin Street needs painting. The Railway station carpark was neat and tidy but we suggest a little area at the rear of the building be screened. The Laurel hedge is in need of pruning. It is doing a great job of screening the adjacent builder's yard. The car park behind the courthouse has moss and weeds. On Mill Road, Stewarts fuel complex is a large site; it was clean and tidy. The historic information sign about the Fairgreen has some graffiti. It was disappointing to find some very untidy premises in some locations; no doubt you are very familiar with them and because they are private, you have very little control in implementing any improvements. Added to that are the number of vacant dwellings and some in a bad state of repair on various streets. We recognise that these are major challenges for you which you hope to resolve in the years to come. In that regard, we note the success a derelict house in Green Street has been demolished and rebuilt.

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

You mentioned there are many active residents association keeping the green areas mown and tidy. Termon Road, Plunkett Avenue and Station Road is a complex of housing schemes where many of the residents have taken great pride in the care of the houses and gardens. The open space could be further enhanced with a line of trees. St Joseph's terrace has single story houses which are well painted but there is untidiness opposite. Forest View is a small estate with loads of greenery in the gardens. Warren Road and Warren Drive housing schemes look very well. We admired the planting on the road margins and open spaces and in the gardens. There is a problem with supporting stakes on established trees especially the Liquidamber (Sweet Gum); they should be removed before they cause damage to the stems. Across the road, another estate has just a few houses and well finished. Trees in concrete here have no future and should be removed, the pipes taken away and the trees planted into the ground. For Saint Joseph's Avenue housing scheme, we suggest tree planting on the open space. In Marian Road estate we admired the hanging baskets. It is suggested that a garden competition within and between these four estates would encourage greater community support and enhance your community.

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

We admired the lighting on the side of the road on the way to the cemetery and the reeds and various other wetland plants on the edge of the river. The Sligo Road looks very well with its wide grass margins. The view of stone wall boundaries, the GAA grounds and also the ruins of Boyle Abbey all complement each other on this approach. There are many examples of road signs that need cleaning on the approach and in the town. Both sides of the sign on Termon Road are used in a very clever way. However, it needs cleaning and we noted a small untidy site just beside the 50 KPH signs.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Well done on your efforts to keep Boyle looking its best. You have done a good job especially in the Crescent. We hope this report provides some guidance for your continued work.