

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mountmellick** Ref: **416**
County: **Laois** Mark: **290**
Category: **D** Date(s): **25/06/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	45	47
Streetscape & Public Places	50	39	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	38	40
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	29	30
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	19	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	48	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	28	30
TOTAL MARK	450	279	290

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Mountmellick (Mointeach Millic) chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais.

Welcome Mountmellick to the Super Valu 2018 National Tidy Towns Competition. The list of agencies and bodies that you work with continues to impress. It is also worthwhile noting from your submission the type of assistance each gives to you. Your budding relationship with the Further Education Centre and Tidy Towns could really bear fruit in the next few years. Well done to them on raising funds for you, but of even more importance is their willingness to work with you in the future. Using their woodwork skills to provide you with bird boxes, tubs etc. is a great start. We look forward to seeing further results in the future.

Well done on also inspiring the residents of Irishtown Mountmellick this year to look after their own area. Many hands make light work.

Your map was bright, colourful with the main points and projects highlighted well on it. Many thanks for this.

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

It was this adjudicator's first visit to Mountmellick and your town square certainly impressed. The three buildings you mentioned that were newly painted last year; the heritage green on Nora's Cake Shop, the vibrant red on Victor Cox Drapers and the lovely new McElwees pharmacy had the place looking well. In addition T.M Sheils looked bright. The effects of signage to the overall look of an area cannot be underestimated. The signage on the adjoining buildings of Chamber Lane against the more modern signage next door gives a comparison. In addition other modern bright red plastic signs take from this old planned Quaker Street.

O'Horain looked well on the Main Street.

The area behind the main square is a wonderful example of utilising older buildings to new use. Fetch Pet Care and The Physio & Acupuncture Clinic are bringing life to this area that could easily be a derelict back street, instead of the wonderfully renovated area it is.

The town hall project is in full swing and it's going to be very impressive when it's finished. The facade behind the scaffolding looks in need of a major facelift. Be sure to include a photo in next year submission of the current state of the Town Hall. "Before" and "After" photos are so effective in highlight the amazing results. The renovated building will help uplift the street here. It is adjacent to the wonderful old Methodist church which is followed by the well maintained Bank of Ireland, then the stone cut shop buildings including the Druid Inn. These building will form a wonderful streetscape.

Country Life looks well. The bright green sills really highlight this building. It is nice to see the country scenes. The orange building next door to this after the arch seems to be uninhabited at the moment but it is delightful to see the children's art in here.

Unfortunately it is hard to cross the street between the town square, walking down towards the river. We look

forward to seeing the results of your Age Action survey which deals with accessibility amongst its remit. Your Community Arts Centre obviously is one of your Star projects this year. The “before” picture here helps to illustrate how far it has come.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your bridge walk area is beautiful. If we didn't have the map from your submission we may have missed your amazing Owenass Riverwalk. This must be your pride and joy. All those involved in this project should feel proud to be part of such a legacy. It is an amazing amenity to have in the centre of your town. We note that signage is due to go in and hopefully this will encourage more to use this facility. Literally steps from the main street you are transported into a different world. A feast for the senses; from the sound of fish in the river, the budding flowers on the blackberry bush, the old stone wall. What a place! The newly extended area from the MDA centre is glorious. It's lovely to see such a wonderful result from a joint Tidy Towns project. Ensure to pass on our congratulations to the Mountmellick Angling Club also. The river at the MDA end was clear. Funding is obviously an issue for you to extend this further. It has so many benefits; social, health, environmental, biodiversity. One point that soured it slightly was that the life buoy on the bridge side was obviously taken. The one at the MDA end was in place. Overall this is a very worthwhile project. We wish you every success for in this. The seating area opposite the children's playground could benefit from some wedding. The green seat here in also in need of repair. The stone style leading to the river walk looks well.

It's nice to see the planter boxes interspersed throughout your town. A lot of thought has obviously gone into the placing of these. The blue planter box at the roundabout opposite the country scene screen fits perfectly. The screen itself is very successful in hiding a derelict site.

The area near the monument would benefit from some softening. There are some derelict buildings here but it is a lovely wide street and tree planter boxes would look well here. The paths themselves should be wide enough to take the boxes.

The new footpath and stone wall across from Graigue cemetery enhanced this area. It is always a positive project that provides more connectivity in a town.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

The importance of ensuring that we support nature's pollinators cannot be over emphasised. You seem to take this message further than most groups. We noted the awareness campaign posters you had displayed on the derelict garage at Emmet Street. You highlighted that this led to a member of the public reporting a nest of honey bees in the Town Hall where it was decided to postpone the work. It demonstrates that it is not just lip service being paid in the town of Mountmellick. As your sign says “Don't bee afraid”!

You seem to be continuing to utilise your enclosed Biodiversity Action Plan 2013. Your planting of the fruit trees at Derryguille Amenity/Community Garden shows your plan in action. If you are looking for some simple yet effective extra steps to improve your area as a pollinator area, you can find some helpful information on <http://www.biodiversityireland.ie> pollinator plan.

We await the results of your participation in the Laois Swift Survey with next year's submission.

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

In order to score maximum possible marks in this category please ensure that you include as many projects as possible that were carried out in your area even if a member of Tidy Towns did not directly participate. You mention that Saint Joseph's National School has achieved another Green Flag. Green flags require a lot of work and these are not awarded lightly. It would be great to see some of projects that the national school is involved in. A few bullet points would be sufficient.

Remember to include any initiatives that local businesses are taking. Being environmentally friendly doesn't have to always be a cost for businesses.....it can be a help in driving revenue, reducing costs or a mix of both. Many are moving to more energy saving plans as a result. They also might be involved with Repak.

Helpful information can be found at <http://www.epa.ie/begreen> and on the Tidy Towns website.

We would welcome data on Water butts projects. Do they provide sufficient water for certain areas?

The townlink bus was observed, “5 trips a day each way”. More information on this could be included under this category in your next report. Does this help reduce the number of cars journeys?

The Bring Centre in the Supervalu carpark was very well utilised.

Well done on participating in World Awareness No Plastic Day. The reduction in the use of plastic is a great area to focus on for the future. Small steps make big differences.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your weekly litter pick-ups in addition to the work carried out by members on your Community Employment Scheme are having very good effective in a town of your size.

While there was very minimal litter spotted on the bridgeway itself, it was unfortunate that at the Bridge Street town side there was a good bit of litter in the water. This was especially noticeable because the water was low at the time as the weather was so dry.

We look forward with interest to the research one of your committee members is conducting into how dog fouling is dealt with in parts of Ireland & England. Litter thankfully is not the huge problem it once was in Ireland in general but dog fouling continues to plague most areas large and small. Well done on being involved in the programmed sponsor by Dogs Trust Ireland to create awareness of dog fouling. Your “pick up or pay up” signs were observed but as you mention these appear to have made a little difference currently.

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

The children's playground is a wonderful modern well used facility. Certainly on the day of adjudication it was a hive of activity. The trees were providing shelter from the elements.

Ashgrove estate has only a small little time on the wall; you might consider a bigger sign here. There is a beautiful stone wall just as you come in. Clearing some of the ivy here would help highlight a lovely feature. Some of the shrubbery here could also be cut back but in general the houses in this area are very well maintained. There was a good mix of houses. The shrubbery in Manor court estate was particularly attractive. Patterson's Estate had a nice seating area and some very colourful planting. It is great communal seating areas in estates. The uniform trees surrounding the green area gave a nice uniform facade

There seems to be a lot of occupied residential units in your town which is good for the vitality of the area. There are a lot of cars parked up on the footpath which was unfortunate. These town houses were built at a time when car parking space weren't needed.

Special mention must go to Tom Westman and the residents of Irishtown who stepped up this year to take control of their area. It was looking well on day of adjudication.

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

The new improvements to the Derrycloney Amenity Area on the approach road from Portlaoise delivers a very good first impression.

The residents at Derrycloney are to be commended for their work in cleaning up their seating area. It provides a very nice welcoming effect. The fact that it is "As Gaeilge" is to be commended. The verges on the approach road here would benefit from some cutting back.

With the addition of the new stone wall on the Tullamore road, this approach road looks much improved. The welcome sign was clean and brighten by some planting. The traditional red pump looks like it might need some minor repairs. The verges here were very well maintained.

Some wonderful old restored farm machinery was viewed on the way in passed The Monument.

Concluding Remarks:

Your community seemed to suffer a lot from the floods in 2017. It is testament to your resilience that you continue to make positive improvements to your town whilst also to creating the better sense of community. As you said yourselves on one post "The Community that Works Together, Plays Together". We wish continued success to all involved in Mountmellick Tidy Towns.