

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clane** Ref: **368**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **291**
Category: **E** Date(s): **13/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	53
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	43
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31
TOTAL MARK	450	291

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014 and congratulations on 40 years of participation. Further congratulations on gaining 4 additional members to your committee which now has 18 members and we note that you have a school liaison officer as well as a project officer. It appears that your meetings are held at times that relate to project management to plan and direct the works programme and your activities on the ground are more frequent as per the demands of the work in hand. It is great that you have TUS workers available to help with the programme. You receive support from Kildare County Council for civil works and for advice on best practice. We note the best kept estates and premises competitions which are a great way of encouraging people to play their part for the community. You make good use of local media such as KFM, The Leinster Leader and The Liffey Champion to promote your work and you also avail of Clane Community Council's website for highlighting activities. The promotion of Tidy Towns activities on St. Patrick's Day is a good initiative as well as the table quiz. Many thanks for attaching good map of the area with the project locations clearly marked. However, the map was too small to read and the project numbers so cluttered that they covered parts of the map. It would be worthwhile preparing a much better map for next year and we advise that perhaps an A3 size folded into A4 would be more suitable. This would be very helpful for the adjudicator who most likely is unfamiliar with your town. The Clane Tidy Towns Plan 2012-2014 is an impressive document so well done on its production and we note that it is an update. For future years please consider listing the various projects on one sheet with a comment on their stage of completion.

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

The town of Clane is a very busy place with constant traffic passing through from all directions during our visit. It is good to see the town centre being vibrant and no doubt the existence of the Clane Relief Road has helped to reduce the volume of traffic on the Main Street. We noted some trees on the street but they make little impact and perhaps as mentioned by last year's adjudicator, it would be a good idea to explore having more trees planted there in association with some traffic calming measures. The playground in the town centre is a major attraction both visually and functionally as evidenced by the large number of children and parents in this area. We also admired the specimens of trees such as Cedars and Beech in this small open space. Some buildings opposite dominate with strong colours and excessive signage. The Westgrove Manor Hotel and Supermarket is a fine complex. The buildings, car park and surrounding area looks very well and helps to show off the old Abbey ruins. Jaz Manzor, the Village Inn was very impressive on the corner and the Lawn Tennis Club building was in good condition. The view to Tesco Metro is quite open; some trees planted along the boundary would enhance this area and help to soften the impact of the car park. J.P. McKenna, the DIY/Garden Centre is clean and tidy and the plants on display provide added interest. At Autolink, the fence needs painting and the excessive signage takes from the view. The Maxol service station on the Kilcock Road looked very well. Clane Garden Sheds at the entrance to the industrial estate

set off this estate which appears in very good condition. On the Celbridge Road, Lidl is fine, the landscaping here is still young and it will take some time longer for the plants to make an impact. The adjacent empty site is awaiting development and meanwhile it looks quite clean. It is a pity to see some buildings not in use in the town, especially commercial properties; the apartment/shopping complex on the Prosperous Road being one example. We noted that the trees and shrubs in the raised plant containers here are established and provide some softening. Sports grounds are well maintained; the GAA grounds were fine as were the grounds of the two schools on the road to prosperous. Clane Hospital was clean and well maintained and we admired the fine specimens of trees in the grounds. The same comment applies to Hazel Hall Nun's Home. We note your actions plans under this heading to improve the site near Alexandra Bridge and the plans to stabilise the Friary ruins. The Village Green is very impressive with the large cross being a focal point

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and you have many good examples in Clane. We were very impressed with the standard of tree planting in residential estates and we liked the established line of trees on the new ring road. They provide an interesting avenue effect and the mature trees near the playground are an important feature in the town. As mentioned above, there may be scope to enhance Main Street with additional trees in association with traffic calming measures. 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. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the stems can get damaged from the ties or stake. Opposite the College Wood estate the young boundary hedge is almost overcome with weeds. It is important to reduce the competition for moisture and nutrients to enable the young plants to establish quickly. Yew Tree Square has some nice trees. The boundary of Scoil Phadraig is well finished with established trees and a strong hedge. We admired the circular beds in Scoil Mhuire planted with flowers for summer colour and also noted the two Green Flags. Well done on the continued maintenance of the Holly and Cotoneaster planting along the relief road and the roundabouts at both ends of the road provide interest with floral planting. Sometimes communities focus too much on the use of plant containers for seasonal bedding plants which are costly and time consuming to maintain. A guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible so be careful not to provide too many plant containers. It is better to have fewer well planted containers than a large number in which the quality of plants is inferior. If considering more seasonal flowers the use of permanent planting including herbaceous perennials for floral displays is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming.

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

We note your actions under this heading for the promotion of wildlife interest in your community by continuing the nest box scheme, installing bee hives, local bat boxes and the removal of Himalyan Balsam (Impatiens). Well done on these initiatives. You have a rich natural area surrounding your community and it is great to note that you have a high level of awareness of this need. 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. We note that you have surveyed Clane for birds and found 50 species and other wildlife surveys were conducted since 2007. The "Wild About Clane" initiative started in 2008 and its follow up in 2009 is a very appropriate action. 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. The provision of a native tree by the local priest at every baptism is a novel idea and we note your proposal to plant 40 native trees this coming winter to celebrate 40 years of Clane Community Council.

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. Many thanks for providing the tonnage information on glass and cans recycled for an 8 year period in Clane. It is interesting to see the dip in cans compared with the larger volumes of glass being recycled. The spring clean rubbish is being segregated. Do you have information on the volumes collected and recycled? It is good to see the green waste being used by a local landowner and it is interesting to note that mulch from Christmas Trees in Kildare is used by your community. The Scrap Saturday initiative with the support of the GAA is another useful exercise. Do you have information on tonnages collected? We look forward to an update on the green homes initiative when it is available. There are a number of other measures that your town can take in regard to sustainability. 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:

Your many actions listed under this heading as previous accomplishments, recent initiatives and ongoing efforts are numerous and too many to list here. Some of note includes removal of tie-wraps following the recent election, we

didn't see any so well done. Also, no kerbside weeds were in evidence. A derelict house near the unnamed apartments on the Sallins Road was noted. Some graffiti was noted on a sign near the sports grounds and on a traffic light sign and some litter was noted there as well. Some small amounts of litter were noted at some recycling bins. near Westgrove. Opposite Aldi weeds in the gutter of buildings look untidy.

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

The unnamed apartments on the Sallins Road look well and the landscape maintenance is to a high standard. An Crocán housing estate with the open space at the end was admired. College Wood Manor estate has houses and open spaces in good condition. There are plenty of trees here but some supporting stakes need attention before they damage the tree stem. The Scout's Den looked well and we were pleased to see no weeds or litter in the area. Meadow Court estate also looked well; we admired the significant hedge of Escallonia which was in flower during our visit. The Birch trees in "The Lawns" also caught our attention. The grass was well cut at Hillview a dead tree at the entrance needs to be replaced but the other trees here were fine. A pole needs cleaning. Hillview Heights and Loughbollard estates also looked well as did Mainham Wood estate where we noted the housing design is quite different from most other estates. We admired the garden railings here and the planting is well cared for. Other estates visited were Bellview Heights, The Elms and College Grove where appropriately enough there is a lovely grove of trees at the entrance. The Oaks, The Cloisters and Abbey Park estates were also visited. It is important to check the tree stakes in Abbey Park where we observed that some tree stems are in danger of being damaged. The large timber plant containers are an unnecessary distraction from what is a well maintained open space with nice trees. If there is a desire to add shrubs and flowers it would be best to place them into the soils where they can establish more successfully and be less trouble to maintain. Abbeylands Manor has a nice wall and railing. No doubt you are anxious to have the vacant "Lodge" building restored and to have a new use. Butterstream Lawns estate was very good. It is evident that the "Best Kept Estates" competition is a great success in your community. We note that you have more plans in store for future improvement within these estates.

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

We were impressed with the various approaches to Clane and note from your application that your success can be attributed to past achievements in tackling signage issues, identifying black spots for action in clean-ups including laneways, removal of poles that are no longer needed, tackling graffiti, cleaning streams ditches and several other actions. On the Sallins Road, the Livestock Mart looks clean. However, the evergreen boundary hedge here is failing and it is time to plan for its replacement. A more suitable hedge would be beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) which is doing very well on the opposite side of the road. On the Kilcock Road, the Tourist route sign is almost concealed