

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballincollig** Ref: **661**
County: **Cork(South)** Mark: **317**
Category: **G** Date(s): **14/07/2015**
12/08/2015

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2014 | Mark Awarded 2015 |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Community Involvement & Planning | 60 | 48 | 49 |
| Built Environment and Streetscape | 50 | 43 | 44 |
| Landscaping and Open Spaces | 50 | 46 | 47 |
| Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities | 50 | 29 | 30 |
| Sustainable Waste and Resource Management | 50 | 16 | 17 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 59 | 60 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 50 | 36 | 36 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 50 | 34 | 34 |
| TOTAL MARK | 450 | 311 | 317 |

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ballincollig is welcomed to the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition for 2015. Thank you for your application and supporting documentation. You have a very active committee of 16, with a number of volunteers only too willing to help you with your work in developing and enhancing the town. The Tidy Towns unit encourages all groups to have a plan for their town or village, which allows you to set goals and objectives for the years ahead. You have found your plan most helpful and your new one will be welcomed next year. It is also positive for Tidy Towns groups to network as you are doing with nearby groups. A lot of learning through idea sharing can be accomplished. You are fortunate to have the support of the relevant agencies and businesses and the assistance of three workers. You have numerous means of communicating to the wider community in getting information out of your upcoming activities. There is good support from the schools, from primary right up to secondary. Your participation in the competition is welcomed by the Tidy Towns unit and it is also encouraging that your town has continued to progress each year. This progress has focussed the community to work together for the betterment of the town.

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

The approach to the town through the Poulavone roundabout with superb landscaping gives a good first impression to the visitor. The town was bustling with activity with traffic flowing freely, not interfering with the many cyclists' speeding along the cycle lane. Many shopping areas such as Ballincollig shopping centre were admired. Super Valu was also admired with a generous amount of planting. All the businesses throughout the town seem to have a competition amongst them, as to who would have the most colourful landscaping; it just got better and better. The Oriel Hotel too had superb landscaping. The town boasts a lot of tree avenues along its roads. It also has superb lighting with a wire free skyline. The Community School was visited and the Christ of our Light Church also had a lovely array of trees. The hurling and football club were visited and admired. Landscaping across the road however is in need of weeding. The road surface in this area where there is a lot of traffic is in need of some attention. The adjudicator travelled to Regional Park to view the various projects in this area. The Regional Park has something to offer every member of the community with all types of recreational amenities available. The allotments are very well maintained and well used which is most important.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Landscaping in Ballincollig starts at the approach roads with well planted roundabouts. This type of planting is continued throughout the town. The residents and businesses have an abundance of colourful planting brightening up the buildings and the streetscape. You have continued to plant perennials giving all year round colour to the town. Tree planting is also admired with many avenue of trees noted, creating a superb effect along the approach roads and streets. The wildflower area in the Regional Park is particularly attractive. Your continued work in the

Park and the planting of the new trees was a huge undertaking and you are to be complimented for this work. Your developments in the Park now will continue to develop and grow for future generations. Your walk along the river with the planting of the new trees is a joy. A round flower bed adjacent to the old river lock was unplanted and seemed out of place in its surrounds. Some of the grass areas next to the skate area are in need of reseeding at the edges. Maybe this is part of your on-going work in the area.

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

The town is definitely working hard to identify and include all areas in all studies carried out. The Biodiversity plan which you hope to have completed by the end of this year, which includes the entire town, will bring to light more habitats. This will add to the many areas that you have already identified. The report to date makes very interesting reading of the many different types of habitats and the types of species that live within the surrounds of Ballincollig. Do continue your good work in this area.

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

In the area of efficient resource management your group is achieving good results. Ballincollig has a number of schools with green flag status and this is a credit to the staff and students. The knowledge these schools have gained through their achievements should be used to filter through to the wider community. This will allow more efficiency in resource management been achievable. Recycling and reusing are positive measures but it is the amount of waste produced in the first place been reduced that needs to be targeted. This is an area to focus on and build on in your new plan. Make sure to record and include all results and findings. The Oriel Hotel are doing good work in reducing water and energy costs, perhaps they might look at seeing if they are producing less waste and if not look at ways they can achieve this. This could be a good pilot project for the community. You have done good work in this category.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done on your efforts in this category with the introduction of bins for cigarettes and gum. Dog fouling signs and bins are other positive means of addressing tidiness and litter. It shows good community spirit that staff from corporate organisations, use volunteering days to take part in litter picks. This helps the committee in the control and combat of litter. Litter is an on-going problem in all towns and villages and unless you have full community cooperation like you have achieved it makes the work more difficult. The town was generally tidy on day of adjudication. Some litter was noted but this was fresh litter. The bring banks were neat and tidy. There were items dumped on the street in the vicinity of Hacketts bookmakers which looked untidy. The seat at end of the link road to cloisters needs attention.

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

Ballincollig for its size has a large amount of estates which are well presented with your constant help and assistance. Rosewood has a lovely entrance and driving through the estate its presentation throughout is a credit to the residents. Many other estates visited have set the same standard. The estates competition gives great encouragement to the residents to maintain and improve their estates and get recognition for doing so. Ballincollig is fortunate to have no ghost estates with constant demand for houses in the town. Stand-alone houses on the approach roads were all admired for their excellent presentation. Town houses that were part of Ballincollig before the building boom added great character to the town.

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

The approach roads to Ballincollig are generally well maintained. The roundabouts with landscaped beds, superb tree and hedge planting make the entrance roads leading to the town very attractive. There were one or two areas the adjudicator felt needed attention. The Macroom road had an amount of weed growth along the barrier on the road centre which had been sprayed and looked untidy. The Killumney road roundabout also needed attention. Traffic flowed freely and the cycle lanes helped greatly in this respect

Concluding Remarks:

The adjudicator enjoyed visiting and adjudicating your town. The hospitality in the hotel is commended. The town is making great efforts in its constant endeavours to progress further in all categories of the competition and you are wished continued success.

Second Round Adjudication:

Traditionally the second adjudicator gives a generalised opinion on the work of the year and an overview of the position of the entry in the Tidy Towns scheme. I am very pleased to confirm the increase in marking recommended by the first adjudicator – it is unusually high for the top level of the competition – and to congratulate the Committee on its achievement. I have seen Ballincollig grow from a one-sided village of no special consequence save its military history to become the largest town in the county: what is remarkable has been the parallel evolution in astute and detailed planning and monitoring for this growth, masterminded by the Tidy Towns Committee with admirable support from official bodies, community groups and the business sector. Your candid analysis of what needs to be done and of the threats that lie in wait are balanced by the list of opportunities that you see as within your grasp. Standards are rising everywhere and you are certainly aware that, as well as undertaking new initiatives, annual maintenance of what has already been achieved is a formidable portion of the work. Here follow

some unconnected observations, some of which may be of use to you in your next round of planning and also in the presentation of your work to the adjudicators.

I walked the entire 16 km Gunpowder Trails. The biodiversity of this unique riverine and sylvan environment, as well as the archaeological remains, impressed enormously. Have you considered the commercial possibilities of developing the canals for water sports of a high order? Perhaps you have, and were impeded by the cost and local bureaucracy. Are the many military remains worth individual descriptions on site and should there (eventually) be more illustrated panels on wild life as you walk along? The sports fields on the unique alluvial plain appeared to be more extensive than those in any town known to me: ditto the thriving public allotments. At the splendid Great Island Regional Park (does the Bring Site have to be so visually prominent?) the abiding memory will be of red and purple poppies and other wild flowers as foreground to the wonderful 12-arched bridge – one of the two outstanding architectural features of the town, the other being the elegantly reconstituted Barrack Square. Very well kept spaces north and south of Main Street, mainly for parking, were noted and also excellently kept green spaces in almost all housing areas. Tree-planting half-a-century ago has proved to have been a worthy investment – such as on Community Drive: how barren would these streets be without them! Apartments in the town centre and at Lisheen-Classes manage not to have taken on that bleak eastern-European look, probably because of sensitive painting and the proximity of foliage. Certainly Scoil Choilm benefits from the improvements to its grounds: this school is not mentioned as a Green Flag recipient – can this be an omission on the list? I was much taken by the varied housing in the Inishmore neighbourhood – a real sense of community here around the church and school. You mention the numerous nationalities in the population but only one Faith appears to make its mark! Prospect Lawn was much admired, also some housing that was just a little different from the conventional semis such as Hayle Grove and The Maltings. Some estates that did well in the competition nonetheless contain a number of homes where grubby boundary walls do not match the well-painted residences. The prominent stained boundary at Flynn's Road needs attention. Several streets and some housing areas lack name signs. No picture postcards of any Ballincollig scenes are available in the shops!

The above comments are merely pointers and do not affect current marking. Some notes on report presentation which may be helpful: briefly, there is an over-abundance of paperwork. Entries from other centres in the very top of the competition manage with much less. There is repetition in regard to walks, where features of one location are described more than once because of being on different routes. Curiously, there are too many maps and yet not enough map information! Winning centres do with one or two larger maps. Six main maps, each covering a Tidy Towns category, is excessive, especially when trying to follow them out of doors all at the same time and then finding that the explanation of numbers is given in another document. In spite of this, streets and residential roads are not named! The best maps are in the Appendices – the one on p. 93 showing the Walking Routes with the numbers explained on the foot of the same page; and the small Amenity Walk map on p. 18 where all streets are very clearly named: this is really excellent.