

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Boyle** Ref: **290**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **274**
Category: **D** Date(s): **26/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	41	41
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	33	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	41	41
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31	31
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	48	48
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	28	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36	38
TOTAL MARK	450	270	274

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Boyle is most welcome to the 2015 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks your application form which seems to be half on a hardcopy form and half printed in Word. It is recommended to use the electronic version for the full form in future to avoid any confusion. Nine seems to be a small number to have on your committee for a town of Boyle's size. There is little indication as to the level of voluntary support you receive from among the general population. It is most important that the town is behind you in your efforts and that people are given every opportunity to participate. This may mean getting involved in cleanups or donating whatever skills they have at their disposal. It is good to include extra information in your application and photos especially are welcomed by the adjudicator. Do make sure however that any such material is directly relevant to a project you have carried out. Have you considered preparing a three-year plan? For a large town like Boyle such a plan allows you to strategically develop actions over a longer timeframe than just year-to-year. It is very useful for tackling large problems or when outside support is needed.

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

Boyle has a long history that has accumulated in layers. The adjudicator enjoyed visiting the spectacular abbey and following the heritage walking trail that was well signposted through the town. In a general sense however it was felt that the presentation of the built heritage and wider built environment has an air of neglect. The one exception might be the King's house which has been beautifully restored and maintained. For instance the glass annexe at the Abbey is quite grubby while a bin and builders debris were stored in one corner. The court house, which commands such an important position both literally and figuratively, had weeds, a broken flagpole, a dirty rope hanging across its facade and even a torn tricolour wrapped around a pole. The Garda station, albeit a much newer building on Military road had a broken letter in its prominent name panel in the midst of a number of dead and broken trees. The nearby Family Life Centre building, on the heritage trail was deemed a suitable spot for a clothes recycling bank, and this seems a bizarre decision. And these are buildings that are used and/or of significance. Sadly many buildings in Boyle are not used and are in disrepair. It is a hopeful sign that the Royal Hotel is on the market and it would be a great boon for the town were this to reopen. In the meantime perhaps greater awareness of the value of the town's appearance among the various businesses and civic occupiers would lead to an enhanced appearance. Only by pulling together will significant challenges be overcome. The Stone House cafe is a charming attraction. This historic entrance to the Shambles is let down by a rusty and bent gate. The appearance of the health centre would be enhanced were it railings painted. The display of old farm machinery across the road is very attractive. Supervalu looks well and its car park was very neat and tidy. It would be great to get the wire railings surround repaired. It is good to read in your application form that the issue of the railings at the train station is in hand. The station itself is a lovely building and its surrounds are well-kept. It would be lovely to get the pedestrian bridge over the tracks painted. Laurel hedging on this slip road needs to be cut back. Taylor's shop was admired for its lovely presentation. The old Methodist Church on Shop Street is a fine heritage feature for the town; some weeding and a

wash of the historic panel would lift its appearance.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The hanging baskets through the town were admired. The river, with its beautiful overhanging trees is a centrepiece for Boyle and the dominant landscaping feature. The arched bridge complements this scene. The stone installation and seating area at the bridge is nice but needs to be swept. Urns of flowers on the bridge look well and are better than hanging baskets in this adjudicator's view. The Boyle Lawn is an important green space overlooking the river. It has gathered some litter however while weeds and worn seating mean that it is not the attraction that could be. Street trees are high value landscaping features and greatly enhance areas around the square. They can be maintained by keeping their bases free of weeds e.g. on the Crescent. Please do not hang flower baskets on electricity poles. This is a health and safety issue. Landscaped beds in the square looked tired and have some weeds. The Pleasure Grounds are another important green space. The river here is beautiful while there are strong hard features such as the plinth and basketball court. There was quite a lot of litter on adjudication day however including overflowing bins. Seating was generally dirty and landscaping uninspiring.

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

Boyle is fortunate to have a river that is rich in flora and fauna run through it. An awareness of the natural, even in the urban, can lead to greater quality of life for people. Random encounters with nature lift the spirit. It's great to have children involved in this category but do ensure that this is open to everyone. You maintain that you may have the services of a wildlife experts to hand. Why not start by holding an awareness raising talk or walk during heritage week? It could focus on the river and your town park. Encourage others with an interest to get involved in doing simple research projects, e.g. identifying the birds of the park?

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

It was noted that a number of the schools in the town were taking part in the green flag project. Do list their achievements and tell us at what stage in the process they are at. The adjudicator wants to see that you are involved in a number of projects at the community level. This could mean promoting a single theme among householders e.g. composting or avoiding food waste, or businesses e.g. in energy-saving. It will require a combination of awareness raising and practical demonstrations. If you have festivals visit <http://greenyourfestival.ie/> and see what can be done to make it kinder to the environment. For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You are commended for holding weekly cleanups. Do you wear high-viz vests with the tidy towns logo across the back? This is an important but simple awareness raising tool and may encourage others to get involved. Encouraging property owners to sweep their own areas is standard in many European countries and hopefully it'll become second nature here too. Last year's adjudicators report alluded to problems across the town in relation to signage. Has progress being made on this? You will need support from businesses and Roscommon county council but you could start by auditing all poles and signage in the town and work through what needs to be done. Intrusive and needless items like phone boxes should be removed. This will take time and perseverance but will be worth it. Flags are very welcome as they add movement and colour. However faded tatty flags should be removed. Low levels of litter were noted at the bridge. Generally speaking road edges and footpaths need to be swept of leaves, moss and other debris. Protruding signage at the first floor level can be both good and bad. Where it is broken or faded try to addresses e.g. the Railway bar. Remove flyposting as soon as possible especially for events such as the circus that have long passed. The bring bank was in a bad way with some dumping, litter and broken glass strewn on the ground.

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

Do be specific regarding any awards won and who was one them. We would like to congratulate the winners. Boyle has many attractive homes and housing estates. Cluain Fobhair had well-kept bungalows with neatly trimmed lawns. Communal green spaces are not being maintained however. Homes along the Lower Marion road impressed with the high standard of boundary wall and extensive greenery.

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

The 'life is good' affirmation, spelled-out in sunflowers at the national school on military road is a great way to enter the town. Approach road and primary thoroughfares are very well presented with neatly trimmed verges throughout. Road surfaces through the town seem to be of good quality and this does a lot to enhance the streetscape. A lovely raised stone bed and picnic seating area were admired across from the Roscommon county council offices but the plants are not being maintained. The flagstone footpaths in the centre of the town are strong feature and look really well.

Concluding Remarks:

Boyle has a lot to offer through its history and natural surroundings. You are urged to redouble your efforts in 2016 and try to take on a number of projects across all categories. We look forward to our return in 2016.

