

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Coolagown** Ref: **649**
County: **Cork(North)** Mark: **328**
Category: **A** Date(s): **10/06/2017**
24/07/2017

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	42	43
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	36	37
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	46	47
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	42	43
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	40	40
TOTAL MARK	450	323	328

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Congratulations on your well earned Gold Medal in 2016. Well done on another impressive and well laid out submission including a very easy to follow map. What makes this all the more impressive is how far you have come. We noted the comments from winning the award in the Cork County Mayor Community Award Scheme award which was given in recognition of the work done in Coolagown for bringing the village from a very low base in the 1990s, when there was no community spirit, to an award winning village with a vibrant and involved community. Looking through the list of people and groups involved in your projects it is fantastic to see how far you have come. We noted that new residents to the village even from last year soon become very committed members of your Tidy Towns group. It is a testament to all involved that you have created a welcoming atmosphere combined with an effective hub to harness everyone's strengths.

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

I noted that Coolagown is anglicised from Cuil an Ghabhann ...Nook of the Blacksmith. The use of the horseshoe symbol provided a link to the past which was reflected so well in so many aspects of your village. I noted many gates have the horseshoe symbol on them, the welcome sign from the Fermoy side and many more. There seems to be an effort to have signs as Gaeilge where possible. This was beautifully highlighted in the Four Seasons feature.

Pride in your former resident Thomas Kent is evident and reflected well in a lasting monument.

For a small village you have taken on some mighty projects and this year was no exception. The restoration of Moynihan's Forge is very impressive. If you gave the approximate figures of how much time was dedicated it would probably demonstrate to more people just how big an undertaking it was e.g. number of people multiplied by no of hours worked.

High attention to detail is evident throughout the built environment in terms of cleanliness. This was seen from the more obvious street furniture to less obvious manhole covers.

Your school site is very well kept with the bright bench setting it off nicely.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Your Nature Trail "for the Soul and Spirit" really ties together a lot of your open spaces and projects. The lovely poems which inspire in addition to a children's challenge on each one is a lovely combination to ensure interest is kept high.

The Life park shows all the main points of interest on view on the information sign but the most impressive of all is the view itself, WOW. The details here are lovely including the wooden signs showing the names of the trees in Irish & English

The beautiful array of wild flowers was noted throughout.

Throughout your submission you point to donations of gifts of time, money and labour from residents and businesses. For example all of the wild flower seeds for the impressive display at Cool Holy Well sourced from the garden of one of your members. It was mentioned more than once in your submission that this is well worth a visit....and you were right. It is an oasis of tranquillity. There is so much in it with bat boxes, wooden signs, beautiful funky seating, but yet it doesn't feel busy. The stone walls just blend effortlessly into the landscape.

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

As one of your Nature Trail signs reminds us "nature is your great restorer". You seem to have developed a wonderful co-ordinated effort towards this in creating both spaces and plants for pollinators. You have done this in an attractive way such as the wooden signs in the shape of a butterfly, carved with "butterfly corner" to show that the plants are pollinator friendly. The beautiful array of wild flowers were noted opposite McDonnell Bros., they were beside a kept verge on the roadside which complement each other.

The Forever Blooming area on the Long Road is maturing nicely and very well kept expect for a very small section of curbing on the right at the end. The sand mound was a simple construction and yet provides a potential home for bees. The "Owl parking only" ledge showing the times of the year it can be expected to be used as well as a warning to rabbits was extremely innovative.

We really enjoyed Kilbarry wood. A lot of bird boxes were spotted especially near the sign. The new Red Squirrel sign and feedback boxes were admired. The welcoming sign reminding us to sit and enjoy was a nice touch. Sometimes when one is going for a walk in the woods we see it as exercise so a reminder to the busy that the aim is to enjoy is sometimes needed. The little fairy door was noted. The magic of forests can and should be appreciated at all ages!

Your Apple tree project of planting 100 trees throughout village is bears witness to the standard you set yourselves in a project. Garnering interest, (which fell on fertile group), and supplying not just the trees but stakes, ties and rabbit protectors and following on with a text reminder to water demonstrate a well organised efficient and effective group..

We look forward to seeing your proposed Mini Orchard and wild flower meadow near the school.

Your biodiversity approach is very impressive and we can see from your 4 year plan that much has been achieved. However it may be easier for a future judge if the Timing column had a bit more detailed of actual times.

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

Bring Bank was extremely impressive and on day of adjudication there was no litter around it. The message of rethink/reduce/ rescue/ recycle (ably complemented by your horseshoe motif). The snake made from recycled materials was very bright and appealing.

30,000 litres of water collected and distributed throughout the village is an amazing feat of engineering in a community project. Your map of pipes laid highlights this very well. I checked a few taps on our visit (only briefly) and the water came gushing out so they are obviously very effective.

Your reuse of old horseshoes in the making of your Horse Sculpture is an amazing piece of art that any community in Ireland would be proud of. Doing a project that reflects the heritage of your community is to be commended. The fact it was made by school children (obviously ably supported by some fine craftspeople) is a true work of awe inspiring art that should be enjoyed by many and a wonderful monument to how your community came together.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

I really liked the signs of "Please don't litter our town, keep us clean in Coolagown". There were minimal pieces of litter in the entire village. From your Facebook page I could see that you were taking the Cork Litter Challenge seriously. Showing residents how you are faring and telling them exactly what was found is very productive.

The "How long Litter takes to break down" sign at Kilbarry wood is a great idea.

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

Not many houses had names so it is difficult to point out which ones we were extra impressed with. Most are extremely well kept. A resident was out in well kept Cill on Oir housing estate on the day of adjudication tending to some trees on the green area.

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

The speed signs in the village were a lovely wrought iron complete with horseshoe emblem. It looked like these might be also used to hanging baskets but they weren't there on day of adjudication, however this did not take from them.

The approach roads on all sides were cut back along with an edge but left wild behind to create some pollinator corridors.

There were some lovely features on the roads. The green gate on the corner of the Long Road on the way to Fermoy was lovely and bright as were the red painted flower boxes.

Concluding Remarks:

You set out clearly in your 4 year plan what the objectives of the Coolagown are from awareness building to being more socially inclusive to "continually improve the quality of life of our residents and business community". You set high objectives..... and are achieving so much. Well done.

Second Round Adjudication:

Coolagowan's second adjudicator concurs with all the points and observations of Coolagowan's first adjudicator in 2017.

The map was good and easy to follow, colour coding of projects in addition to their numbering and cross referenced to details in the entry form would have made it perfect.

The church looked wonderful again particularly at its boundary with the roadside and the flags were a nice finishing touch. Farrier's Bar and curtilage area is nicely presented and hanging baskets at the entrance to the Stud look well too.

Landscaped areas including sculpture are impressive and show much creativity and imagination particularly in relation to the Nature Trail which features a Children's Challenge and poetry which impresses on the traveller the significance of nature for our soul, spirit and general well-being. Perhaps an appropriate addition to the habitats and bio-diversity in Coolagowan display would be information on the dangers of invasive plants such as Montebretia and Fuchsia which although naturalized in Ireland are highly invasive and if left unchecked can diminish bio-diversity eventually. Some information on hedgerow habitats and dangers to these if cut at the wrong time of the year might also be highlighted and worked into the Children's Challenge Nature Trail.

The statistics for water harvesting and associated savings are quite staggering, well done; we look forward to something similar on energy in the future. The 'snake' feature is a real fun element of an important issue.

Congratulations on attracting new residents into your lovely village and eliciting their help and co-operation for the Tidy Towns task, that is a fine achievement.

Road surfaces approaching and within the village are good and signage together with nameplates make it very easy to negotiate the village with its relatively dispersed elements.

It was a great pleasure to revisit Coolagowan and be positively surprised and impressed on each visit. Once again congratulations on your success in Entente Florale 2016.