

# Tidy Towns Competition 2017

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mallow** Ref: **656**  
County: **Cork(North)** Mark: **283**  
Category: **F** Date(s):

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2016</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2017</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	43	44
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	42
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	25	25
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31	33
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>283</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to this year competition. It was a pleasure to read through your very well laid out submission. The structured approach of category, location, stakeholders, dates and a few small lines of a description was very easy to follow. It would benefit from some more "before" photos to contrast with the finished pictures which was very effective in highlighting the results of your work. For example the Bowling Green rockery project. Your use of the Mallow tourist map with the projects highlighted is a great use of a resource from another area. Some groups find doing a map difficult and this is a very good way of providing a bright clear indicator of projects. Just for the future if you could include a small legend to the side that would be even more helpful. Your submission highlights the "Many Hands make Light Work" philosophy. You mention how different volunteers give different amount of time and all are most welcome whenever they can attend. This is a great way to create environments in which people feel like helping out. The "Early Bird Group" who start at 8am on a Saturday morning for an hour are all to be commended. That cup of tea is well earned we're sure! The "Adopt a Patch" group is another great example of community involvement. The Gasice awards are a very effective way to get students involved. Well done to all who helped out. Your increased Facebook posts looked great and we hope that they helped spread the news of the amount of work you have undertaken. You mention that volunteers contacted shop owners, traders and businesses mentioned in the 2016 Tidy Towns report. Teamwork is so important in this competition.

In addition well done to all your Tidy Town volunteers who got involved in the Darkness Into Light walk. Everybody benefits from having a stronger community and it is always good to support work to highlight this.

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

The completed Clockhouse project is one to be proud of. It provides a wonderful imposing structure in such a prominent location. It should hopefully provide the impetus for completing more of the upgrading work as part of your Town Centre Appearance Improvement Scheme completed. It is easy to imagine how much improved this street would look with more of its features restored. For example some of the windows could really be a stand out feature.

The plaza area in front of the Clockhouse provides a delightful open public space. The library with the lovely Celtic script "Leabharlann" had a very bright inviting display in the window. The buildings of DNG and Buckley brothers are lovely examples of well-kept buildings in the centre. Some other notably examples were Dan Joe Fitzgerald's Mallow Ltd both the new and the older building opposite. It is nice to see life in older buildings still being utilised. Food Capers cafe and restaurant stood out well.

Your Mallow Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Plan is very comprehensive. It is great to have a plan to work to in order ensure a more cohesive overall finish. This is captured very well in the report with the proposed Design Code to ensure, for example, that future developments of road and street improvements works are all consistent

with the palette of materials and objectives of the Design Code

Your community led project for refurbishment of the interior of the town hall would be enhanced by the external improvements on the street. We wish you well in your plans that this will help regenerate extra cultural activities. Your updating of the derelict building at the end of David Street does improve the area here.

The new dragon sculpture at Mallow Castle is truly amazing. From dragons in the child-focused popular Harry Potter series to those in Game of Thrones this themed sculpture should truly appeal to all. The artist was not mentioned that we could see but he/she should be extremely proud to have created such a landmark.

The setting of Mallow Castle is amazing with laid out lawns, a wonderful fountain and bookended by two impressive old landmarks of the original castle and former stables. We really hope that your newly improved access to these grounds leads to more people enjoying this area. While we noted an information sign at the old castle which referred to the stable house, we didn't see an information sign at the stable house itself which would have been nice.

Some signs were in need of upkeep including the pole and sign for the energy advice centre near Tip O'Neil Park, the back information signs at St. James Avenue. The lights at the pedestrian crossing outside the St. Vincent de Paul Centre should also be cleaned.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

Your River Bank walk is a fantastic amenity. You are making very good use of this impressive natural resource. We especially liked that it has made the town much more walkable by providing the link under the bridge. Walking from the grounds of the castle to the river walk currently is disjointed as the bridge only has a path on one side. Crossing from one side of the road to the other can be very difficult. Making the city more walkable can only improve the visitor experience for local residents and tourists alike. We note in your proposed plan for the addition of a separate pedestrian/cyclist boardwalk and we would see this as a major improvement. We in Tidy Towns support and applaud your plan for the Mallow Castle River Walk to link the castle grounds to this area.

Mallow Castle grounds are simply stunning. A small number of weeds were spotted at the edge of the hedging path from the fountain to the stable house on day of adjudication but other than that they are very well kept. We noted that these are used for a Christmas fair. We hope that they are used by the community very regularly as it would stand out in any area.

The Bowling Green rockery project is one to be proud of. Thank you for including the "before" picture. The area just before the newly planted area still shows what an amount of work was needed here to get it to prepare it for planting. This area will only improve with time as the plants spread out to increase the amount of coverage. We noted some fencing around the grotto further down the street. We were not sure if this area is to be upgraded. The newly planted area at the Gilbert centre also stands out.

We know that you have only a limited amount of time and resources but perhaps in the future you might consider the open space area at Leacha na Luatha which could probably do with an uplift. The furniture in is certainly needs some upgrading/cleaning. The grotto at the front does provide some nice colour.

The playing pitches all look in very good condition which is helped by the retention of the mature trees.

The Fairy Trail in the trees made with pallets is a very imaginative idea. It was a nice touch to have a "Well Done" sign to those involved. There is a nice amount of seating area in this park but although the ones in the front area are very well maintained the ones in the park could do with some refurbishment. Unfortunately this park did have some notable rubbish and some dog fouling.

The buddleia bush overhanging the Civil War mural brightens up this area.

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

The area in front of Tip O'Neil Park where the old spa stream would have flowed has some lovely colourful planted shrubbery. However what may be overlooked is the possibility of this place as a wildflower haven with many pollinator friendly plants. Many butterflies were spotted as well as some happy sounding bees. Some of it may need to be cut back slightly but a small information sign with pictures of the flowers and how they contribute to the biodiversity of the area might be considered here at some stage. They all provide a splash of colour in front of the park.

We did see examples of your bird and bat boxes throughout the town including here.

Part of the Tidy Towns aims is getting communities to recognise value what they have and thereby encourage its protection. Your project of Red Valerian at Muddy Hill demonstrates this. It is not always about planting of new species, sometimes simply leaving nature alone is the correct action, like you did with your buddleia plants. The signs showing the current work for the Japanese knotweed are good to see. "Do not Cut" signs show the problem has been identified and action is being taken to resolve it.

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

Well done to the EPS Group on being a finalist in the Sustainable Energy Awards 2016 for their very innovative "Home Salary Incentive Scheme" by making energy updates more affordable and accessible. We hope that all updated homes will continue to achieve energy savings well into the future.

To ensure that you get full credit for your projects, feel free to give some broad examples of the benefit that was derived from the project such as with your water harvesting system. It was demonstrated very well in the public lighting project and Civic Amenity statistics.

We noted with interest that two of your bird boxes are made from recycled car seats.

Congratulations to Scoil Aonghusa and St. Patrick's primary schools on their green flags. Your Neighbourhood scheme should have a much better chance of success with so many knowledgeable in the value of the biodiversity in their area

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Your co-ordination with Cork County Council staff in working together to introduce a more systematic way of street kerb sweeping is very effective and demonstrates how it's not always about more resources but sometimes just working more effectively.

On day of adjudication a senior and junior member of Tidy Towns were seen picking up litter on the approach road N72. Later on two more members were spotted picking up litter outside of St Mary's church on the main street. A great team in action.

There was a major clean-up of the Riverwalk noted with the bags ready for collection including an old bicycle. The result here must have rivalled your results from the Mallow 10 mile road race course clean up. These could only have been achieved with a major team effort. We hope that its results had a long term effect.

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

Your awards night for Garden and Estates competition had an impressive array of categories. It is to good effect, judging on some of the places we visited.

Harold Place has a nice sign with nicely kept grass verges. There are some lovely well-kept houses in Waters Place. No 8 Croke Place on the corner with "Raed Crocaig" on the sign was particularly well kept

Ashbrook is an impressive housing estate with an orderly green area. While the hanging baskets do add colour and the backdrop of trees is impressive some more colourful low maintenance shrubbery at the front communal flowerbeds could enhance this area more.

Willow Bank Park had a very impressive entrance; various houses gave some nice splashes of colour. The mature trees at the front add to this area. It is always lovely to see a seating area as it generally does help to create a sense of community when people have places they can congregate together.

It was lovely to note the use of the half door at no 34 Lisheen Row. That is one of many well kept houses here.

The poles of flowers leading up from the school to the pharmacy building obviously require some community effort. Well done to all involved. They are nicely interspersed with some well-maintained rockery areas. The lavender in particular was noted.

The bricked terraced houses opposite Tip O'Neill park are generally in very good repair. The colour of their window frames provide a very good impression on entry to Mallow.

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

The N20 roadway was in general good order but could be cut back a bit at the verges. The Old Spa House on the N72 road provides an impressive welcoming feature. The verges here needed to be cleaned.

The Dairygold roundabout was amongst the most impressive viewed by this adjudicator.

The Cork road flower beds were finished by adjudication and were looking well. The community put in a great effort here.

The Obertown road (on the way to the recycling centre) road could do with some attention. Some discarded rubbish was noted on the road toward the Mallow Recycling centre.

As befits a town with medieval origins such as Mallow, you have some nice examples of some well-kept lanes including the laneway between the castle and Shahi Qili Indian restaurant. Carmichael Lane was very well kept with the very bright and inviting Sheehan's Green Grocery displaying its wares

The red boxes with the trees at the "Welcome to Mallow " sign at the bridge really help to brighten this area.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

We really enjoyed our visit to Mallow. You have some notable projects that are truly lifting your town, especially the Mallow castle grounds and your new refurbished Clockhouse. We look forward to see your other plans come to fruition.