

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Letterfrack** Ref: **201**
County: **Galway** Mark: **273**
Category: **A** Date(s): **14/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	39	40
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	34	35
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31	33
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	17	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	28	28
TOTAL MARK	450	267	273

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Many thanks for your entry in this year's Tidy Towns Competition and thank you for participating in Ireland's biggest community project. You submitted a most complete and interesting submission this year. You have a revitalised committee that very obviously takes its work seriously. What was most impressive about your entry was the levels of co-operation with other groups and agencies. This was very well summed-up in your entry in this category. Thank you for your plan, your Biodiversity Action Plan and for the very well-illustrated material on events and happenings. It must be said that you have a gifted designer on your team as this was some of the best laid out material that this adjudicator has seen this year - really lovely material. It is felt that your approach and ethos are a great fit for Tidy Towns and that going ahead in this manner, you are only going to improve. Well done.

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

A really great example of co-operation and to be honest, opportunity seizing, the Tidy Towns group have worked with gifted furniture makers to make some fantastic pieces for Letterfrack Village. A really great collaboration. The Cluid housing scheme is a great addition to the village too, like another chapter opening in its built and social heritage. It's great that you had some input into this.

The building beside the church (a former school?) is losing its roof slates and is dangerous. At the GMIT campus, the blue Portakabin is rotting and should be dispensed with. The library looks a little shabby. The Seafarer Bar/Restaurant looked great with many flowers. The window pictures at the Indian restaurant looked really poor and not in keeping with the surroundings.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Another really good collaboration may be seen in the tree-planting of the Community Native Woodland in the National Park. In other areas, you have assisted with maintenance and your CE staff partnership with Connemara West allows you to maintain green areas and roadsides. The grounds of the campus at the front are lovely and yet got no mention in your entry form.

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

Well done on organising the second Connemara Green Festival. This is an excellent initiative and one that the adjudicator hadn't been aware of until now. This may have to be tried out! There were many great events at this. This is exactly what Tidy Towns groups and indeed National Parks should be doing! You also had a well-known ecologist discussing invasive species control at the National Park. Excellent stuff and very relevant.

While being absolutely open to correction, the author believes that there is no directional signage for the Connemara National Park Visitor Centre. This was found by accident on a 'I wonder where this lane goes' cycle-ride. It was wonderful to find and lovely to explore. The buildings, courtyards, pools and low-key interpretation were lovely. The mountain trails were busy with visitors and so pleasant. But: on returning to village, there was still no sign for this lovely facility.

Invasive species need to be on your radar, it is felt. With the National Parks and Wildlife Service as near neighbours, efforts to rid the area of Himalayan knotweed, Gunnera and Montbretia should be in train. Japanese knotweed is abounding, including in roadside areas. It has been dumped in a field on the Renvyle Road.

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

Well done on the annual Spring Clean, these are important events. However, it is not thought that you have fully risen to the challenges of this somewhat technical category.

The Tidy Towns Unit sent out a guidance document on this category two years ago. It is available from www.tidytowns.ie if you didn't yet see it. This has literally dozens of project ideas which won't leave you short of things to do to manage waste and save resources. Focus on waste prevention rather than recycling or litter. Draw heavily on the Green Campus status of GMIT here, this is a rare and great thing. The fruit and vegetables growing here should be mentioned too.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done on the various anti-litter initiatives. It is in this category that you should be reporting Spring Clean etc. along with any other community/voluntary anti-litter initiatives. The bottle banks were neat and tidy on the day, well done. The Connemara National Park sign on the Lenane Road is in need of repair. There are too many commercial signs here too.

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

You have written to all householders and invited them to your AGM. Well done. You grasp well the role that Tidy Towns groups should be fulfilling in this category. You also work with the Cluid Housing Association. Very good. The terrace of little single-storey houses at the rear of the campus is lovely. An art studio appears to be among the small businesses here.

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

You raised a grant to help get a road re-surfaced. Well done. In this category you mention your SAC status (mention this in the Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities category in future entries!) and the Wildlife Act. That's great. The Poetry Trail is an excellent project. The Waterfall Walk is a really unusual and really worthwhile initiative. The adjudicator really looks forward to one day walking this.

Watch out for the quality of the commercial signage on the way into the village. It detracts from the surroundings and to be frank, diminishes the experience that is arriving into Letterfrack.

Concluding Remarks:

This was a truly fascinating visit and was much enjoyed. For a relatively new group, you appear to have got firmly to grips with the competition and what it requires. The author predicts that you will go far in this competition and add much to it as you go.