

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Listowel**

Ref: **345**

County: **Kerry**

Mark: **329**

Category: **D**

Date(s): **13/06/2017**

25/07/2017

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	49	50
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	43	44
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	43	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	40	40
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	21	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	39
TOTAL MARK	450	325	329

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Listowel is more than welcome to the 2017 SuperValu National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your fine submission and excellent map cross-referenced to projects achieved for this year's adjudication as detailed in your entry form. The committee has created a strong Tidy Towns structure with a healthy number of core members plus volunteers and strong working relationships with other groups and bodies with an interest in the future of Listowel. The "Look After Your Own Place" initiative is excellent. It is a pleasure to note the benefits of participation in the Tidy Towns Competition that has accrued to the Listowel community, thank you. Well done also on the organisation of a Drop-In Centre where members of the public were invited to put forward their ideas for a better Listowel.

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

Congratulations on the reopening of vacant retail premises within the town, it is always a pleasure to witness such developments; improvements to the old mart are noteworthy too. The survey of the built environment noted in your application is invaluable and your awareness of buildings in need of refurbishment is acknowledged. It must be acknowledged however that the majority of premises and their shopfronts are beautifully presented and the Heritage Trail continues to impress favourably. The side and rear facades of the old cinema look bad and negatively impact their streetscape hopefully remedial action will soon be possible. Work accomplished at the Youth premises looks well the murals here are eye-catching. The roadside boundary wall of the old Telecom premises and indeed the utility building itself look poor. Congratulations on work accomplished for this year especially along Tae Lane and well done also on securing funding for future projects under this heading. It is good to note improvements in accessibility to the Sport and Leisure Centre with its extension. Has the committee looked at universal accessibility throughout Listowel? Check out the publication "How Walkable is Your Town" published by The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (universaldesign.ie)

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Well done on the replacement of storm damaged trees, the implementation of your tree planting program is laudable and will ensure a wonderful heritage for future generations. The emphasis on native species is noted favourably. Large containers planted with trees might be considered for the perimeter of the old mart for further enclosure and visual amenity as an interim measure pending redevelopment of the site. The area within the environs of the Fire Station looks well with its landscaping; it was surprising to note that the public space at the Library Square was not landscaped, is there a missed opportunity here? Container flower displays throughout the town and on entrances to Listowel are colourful and profuse and 'lift the spirits'. Congratulations on the installation of your handsome sculpture reflecting your past success. As always, the Garden of Europe is a joy to experience together with The Town Park in general and the 1916 Memorial Park in particular. It is good to note that summer bedding plants are

grown in your polytunnel.

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

The Fruit & Nut Garden together with the Herb Garden created last year as part of Listowel's Pollination Plan are wonderful in concept and execution. It is good to note your Biodiversity Project Plan and the popularity of the Biodiversity Area in Gurtinard Wood. Projects designed to heighten awareness of nature and its role in our lives are invaluable both for the local and wider community. We acknowledge your significant work in the management / eradication of invasive species and wish you every success. We will continue to watch out for the 'cut-outs' planted with clover behind the Listowel Arms Hotel. The Famine Graveyard is beautifully presented and the newly planted saplings along the path leading into it will enhance the visitor experience as they mature; the cross monument in memory of the poor together with the Stations of the Cross and other features are a poignant reminder of the difficult times endured by our ancestors.

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

It is now time to start quantifying savings made by good water and energy management practices even if these are simply well informed 'guesstimates', the results can be a great motivator. Getting children involved in growing their own vegetables, producing preserves from them and bringing them to market is wonderful! Your adjudicator enjoyed many delicious locally grown vegetables at mealtime in Listowel. Pupils are to be commended for their participation in the Green Flag programme; the 'greening' of festivals is a noteworthy endeavour together with the myriad of other initiatives especially composting. The recycling point in the Bridge Street car park is well maintained however the Clear Glass receptacle was overflowing and the one for Green bottles was catching up on it.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Litter control in Listowel is excellent and no dumped materials of any descriptions were noted; graffiti management had been successful, well done! Weed control was good too however do try to keep the perimeter of the courts at the Sport and Leisure Centre free of weed growth; keep us updated on the success (hopefully) of your dog fouling initiatives. The 'Cache In Trash Out' initiative is a 'first' for this adjudicator, again so let us know how this works well over time. It is good to note that the 'Look After Your Space' initiative is beginning to bear fruit! No doubt collected litter is segregated for recycling. Are statistics on the type, frequency and source of the litter collected available from your litter survey? If so let us have these together with details on the success of litter awareness activities in reducing the amount of litter to be collected as these can attract additional marks also.

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

Many poor roadside boundary walls to dwellings within the environs of the old Telecom utility centre were noted however most dwellings themselves looked well. The residential area near the Fire Station looks very well with its well managed landscaping. The terrace of single storey dwellings along Courthouse Road could feature flower displays in window boxes to add colour to the streetscape. Residential developments in general are being nicely managed and presented, no doubt the Annual Best Kept Garden and Hanging Basket Competition can take at least some of the credit! The availability of a local horticulturist to advise residents on wildlife friendly gardens and open green areas within estates is invaluable.

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

Signage throughout Listowel was clean, highly visible and in most instances bi-lingual; it was a pleasure to note volunteers at work maintaining road signage. Road and footpath surfaces throughout Listowel are good in most instances and roads are clearly lined; street furniture, particularly bus stops are being well managed also. New pedestrian crossings will enhance safety and it is good to note your success regarding the improvement of the roadside boundary wall of the convent. The entrance from the Tralee Road is beautiful with colourful flower displays, sculpture and neat margins in addition to the good footpath. Car parking opportunities throughout the town appears to be ample with many Free car parks and well organised on-street parking.

Concluding Remarks:

Listowel is a wonderful town in which to spend time for any occasion and has a wide variety of experience to offer the local and wider community. Thank you for a fine presentation this year.

Second Round Adjudication:

We were delighted with the opportunity to visit Listowel to complete the second round adjudication and the reasons for your success in winning the tidiest small town award in 2016 were clear to see in the exceptionally high standard of presentation of your buildings, open spaces, town parks and amenities. The careful attention that has been paid to upholding high standards of litter control and tidiness with respect to signage, public areas and parks was also noticeable. It was clear that this performance has required a great deal of hard work on the part of the committee, volunteers and others and we are in agreement with the views of the first round adjudicator who was convinced that your innovative approach of 'look after your own space' is proving effective.

We enjoyed seeing the many projects that you have completed for this year's competition and like our predecessor earlier in the summer, we loved the heritage trail which aptly captures the many sites and buildings of historical

interest in the town and provides informative and attractive plaques on each one. The many historic buildings of your town are a significant attraction and we loved seeing wonderful structures like the Castle and the Big Bridge while numerous historic buildings like the Carnegie Library, the Seanchai Literary centre, the Listowel Arms Hotel, the National Bank and St Mary's Church were admired. The cluster of community and public buildings around the Courthouse was most impressive. We would also like to compliment the many business and shop owners for the careful attention that they have put into the upkeep of their buildings and business premises. While good examples could be found throughout, we were very impressed with a range of buildings on William Street, Main Street, Church Street, Charles Street, Market Street and the Square. The work undertaken to William Street was particularly appreciated and St Patrick's Hall, the Saddle Bar, Mike the Pies, Mags, Browns, Dillons and the Bar all stood out. On Charles Street, Dillon Prendiville and Carmodys looked very well while the Credit Union, Glamorous and Mamma Mia caught our eye on Church Street / Main Street. The Square is packed with lovely buildings but the Listowel Arms Hotel, the AIB and MJ Carrolls all drew positive attention while the magnificent Maid of Erin and its excellent plasterwork was admired. We also took time to view the attractive new limestone monument across from the writers well to commemorate your winning of the tidiest small town award last year.

Your town has a number of high quality natural amenities with the Town Park, capturing and showcasing many of them. This first class amenity provided the setting for a most enjoyable hour long walk during which we appreciated the impressive 2016 monuments and seating area (complete the landscaping), the magnificent European garden and the informative biodiversity area. The splendid urban Orchard and stunning Riverwalk were also admired. It is also necessary to compliment the efforts that have gone into the eye-catching floral displays which could be found throughout the square in colourful hanging baskets and planters, at the entrance to the Town Park and in the lovely rose beds along the Riverwalk. Memorable landscaping schemes could also be seen on key approach roads.

The standard of litter control and tidiness on adjudication day was second to none and we salute everyone who was involved in this supreme effort. The standard of tidiness was no less impressive with a pleasing attention to detail given to signage, litter bins, substation boxes and seating areas throughout the town. Whilst a very high standard of tidiness was achieved, a small number of improvements are possible. The no entry road sign at St Patricks Hall is faded and an untidy bin was seen at the entrance to the Carnegie library. A yield sign in need of attention was spotted at the golf links entrance to the Park and the most untidy and rusted soil pipe with weeds at its base could be seen between the McHale premises and the entrance to Kerry foods. The bus shelters in the square would also benefit from some attention prior to next year.

We were pleased to see that many good sustainable waste and resource management projects have been undertaken and are underway in Listowel but we wholeheartedly agree with the assessment of the first round adjudicator and recommend that the focus now needs to be on monitoring and assessing whether these actions are working and affecting a change in behaviour. We were delighted to see that a high standard of presentation has been achieved in residential areas throughout Listowel and we urge the committee and all residents associations to keep up this fine work while the appearance of the key approach roads into your town was very good during adjudication. However, we concur that continued vigilance is required against temporary signage on roadside verges as a noticeable number could be viewed on the approach to the Cahirdown Road. We would like to commend the tidy towns committee and everyone else involved on another fine performance in 2017 and we look forward to returning next year.