

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Sneem**

Ref: **349**

County: **Kerry**

Mark: **325**

Category: **B**

Date(s): **27/06/2017**

26/07/2017

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41	42
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	41	41
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	37	38
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	22	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	39	40
TOTAL MARK	450	322	325

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

It was a great pleasure to revisit Sneem for the SuperValu National Tidy Towns 2017 adjudication, thank you for your continued participation in the competition. A good map was included in this year's submission however the mandatory Tidy Towns Plan was missing, (we note that there is one from your entry form) hopefully it will be included next year. The map of local attractions on the wall of the public toilet facility makes for a greater understanding of your lovely village by visitors. As in previous years there is wonderful engagement between the Tidy Towns committee and all sections of the community resulting in increased public involvement in the enhancement of quality of life and the future development of Sneem. Liaison with the schools is a significant investment in the future wellbeing of the community. It is a pleasure to note the value placed on Sneem's participation in the competition and the benefits accrued. Communication methods appear to be effective.

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

The streetscape of the village is enhanced with the charming and creative use of public art from delightful murals of bees on the gable wall of the Stonehouse Restaurant to deer in 'flight' and footprints of animal and man and of course the Sean Egan Memorial in South Square. Public buildings all look well and the Garda Station, National School, Resource Centre, Day Care Centre and Fire Station were admired for their presentation as were both churches. Freshly whitewashed walls with red capping leading down to the tennis court are visually appealing. Most shopfronts look well too and many were admired as always for their creative use of colour. Remember it is easy to spoil a good shopfront presentation with the indiscriminate positioning of posters in windows and doors. The canopy over the petrol station awaits refurbishment. There has been some improvement in the presentation of back yards / areas to buildings. We wish you every success in the creation of the new digital hub at the old dance hall premises.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Landscaping on the Caherdaniel entrance to Sneem is visually appealing however there is an over reliance on Montbretia which is an invasive plant and ideally should be kept in check. Good Hedgerow and other planting on the Kenmare entrance to the village is a good introduction to Sneem for the travelling public and the display of roses on the Caherdaniel entrance is eye-catching. Both village greens are as beautifully presented as always and the display of love??? is a nice Touch. In future landscaping keep the focus on native species to enhance biodiversity and don't forget the needs of pollinators; prioritize permanent planting over summer planting. It is a pleasure to note the fourteen native Irish trees recently planted along the river walk. The enclosure of the sewerage works site with hedgerow appears to have been successful, the Community Hall car park is beginning to look quite well now with its landscaping

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

The birds of Sneem must be very happy with their very own pubs courtesy of the Men's Shed! Do keep us updated on visiting species and numbers. It is good to note the guidelines on managing biodiversity in Sneem provided in your Biodiversity Action Plan. The ongoing eradication of Japanese knotweed is an invaluable initiative for the biodiversity status of the village. The willow twig hedgerows are as valuable as they are novel and are only outshone by the willow maze. Keep us updated on the progress of the beehive initiative. The hosting of the International Falconry Event earlier in the year and the involvement of Sneem's youngsters is a life enhancing experience. The entrance to the sports grounds looks quite well however some resurfacing is necessary within the general environs. The playground in the Seaview residential development enjoys good maintenance

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

The recycling point is very tidy and container flower displays here are a nice touch. The poly-tunnel, community allotments and composting initiatives make a significant difference to the amount of waste generated within the community. Try to quantify energy savings achieved by the use of the L.E.D lights; similarly try to quantify the amount of water saved by rain water harvesting; it is this type of thinking that can attract more marks. The 'scarecrow' initiative sounds like a lot of fun and it is good to note that this will be an annual event!

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

McCarthy's Motors looks reasonably tidy notwithstanding the many derelict vehicles within its curtilage area. There are unfortunately still some untidy areas particularly behind buildings within the environs of the river. Is it large roadside site near the housing state on the Caherdaniel earmarked for development? It appears to be quite overgrown which suggests neglect. If it's biodiversity status has been established and is being managed for wildlife then signage / interpretation should be provided. Overhead service cables and timber poles are surprisingly still a feature of the village centre. Well done on the spirit of tidiness and pride in the village by volunteers who participate in regular local and county clean-ups. Keep us informed of the success (or otherwise) of the dog fouling initiative. The public convenience block is beautifully maintained.

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

Pairc na Sonas looks reasonably well notwithstanding its unfinished state. An unoccupied estate on the Caherdaniel Road is beginning to look a little weather stained and weeds feature along some stretches of curbs. An area to the rear of the residential development beside the recycling point appears to be a work in progress, we look forward to its completion. Green areas in the Sneem Leisure Village were overgrown in some instances. Some roadside boundary walls in the Seaview development need improvement, many gardens here were admired. Well done on the painting of dwellings on the Sportsfield Road and the painting of the boathouse. The completion of the stone wall at the Old Convent House is laudable.

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

Good road surface good footpaths and signage on the entrance to Sneem from the Kenmare Road are a good first impression of the village. The Sportsfield road is less well finished and the same can be said of the road in the Seaview development. Hopefully the car park at the Community Hall will be resurfaced soon. Red field gates are a nice touch and the public toilets are very well presented both inside and out. Work achieved at the pier car park and for Sneem Bridge is invaluable. Continues work at the grotto is acknowledged.

Concluding Remarks:

Sneem never fails to delight and surprise; from public art to the development of a digital hub to the hosting of an International Falconry Event while at the same time maintaining a high standard of presentation for its buildings, natural amenities, landscaping and biodiversity and all with a seeming effortless!

Second Round Adjudication:

We enjoyed our visit to Sneem for the purposes of second round adjudication in late July. The layout of the village was considered to be most interesting with its attractive north and south squares which are very well maintained and landscaped to a high standard. The public artwork that could be seen here was examined with interest and we were somewhat surprised to read of the association of Charles de Gaulle and the people of Isreal with the small village of Sneem. Perhaps a heritage trail with information plaques could be considered? This would enable you to share the history of your village and its buildings and structures of interest with the many visitors who pass through. The natural stone bridge which links both parts of the village serves as the natural focus to Sneem and the addition of the new walkway which separates pedestrians from traffic and provides a wonderful viewing platform over the river was appreciated by the adjudicator and many others during our visit. High quality buildings of traditional design and well presented facades were in abundance and they made a very positive contribution to the attractive appearance to Sneem. Were pleased to see that the tidy towns committee is leading by example as the community buildings such as the public toilets, St Michaels school and the Garda station all looked exceptionally well during our visit. While occupancy levels are high, it is acknowledged that some challenges remain and we urge you to continue to work with NAMA, Kerry County Council and the Department in order to ensure that all buildings are maintained and returned to productive reuse.

The hard work that has gone into landscaping in the village was appreciated with the landscaping of the north and

south squares standing out. In both instances, the mix of shrubs, trees, roses in bloom and neatly trimmed grass ensured that the spaces were most attractive and inviting places to visit. The landscaping on the triangular area on the approach from Waterville also impressed. We applaud the many projects that you have undertaken under the wildlife category and the garden of the senses is a wonderful place to visit. Here, we are pleased to see the poly tunnel and the composting area in operation but we were surprised to observe that a tap and hose were in position. Why not capture the rainwater that runs off the poly tunnel? Is this a missed opportunity? 'Sraidbhaile na nean an t'Snaidhm' is a wonderful amenity with its scenic riverside location, information boards and diverse wildlife and we wondered if some fingerpost signage could be provided to point out its location from the village. Please include it on your map in 2018 to ensure that the adjudicator doesn't miss it.

The standard of litter control was particularly high with virtually no litter to be seen anywhere. Well done also on achieving a good standard of tidiness as weed free roadsides and pathways, clean signage and very well maintained public areas could be seen everywhere during our visit. As always, improvements remain possible. On the Waterville approach, a number of untidy field gates can be seen in the vicinity of the welcome stone and entrance landscaping. Just beyond the 50 kmph signs on this approach, a sign pole with no sign was observed and like the first round adjudicator, we were surprised to see that the maintenance of the Sneem Leisure Village was variable, with some areas overgrown. The base of the natural stone wall in the car park in front of the church was somewhat weedy and weed and grass was creeping into the landscaping bed at the universal access ramp leading into the church.

The standard of residential areas was generally high and we were pleased to see that residents have worked hard on the upkeep of the properties for this year's competition. Approach roads were generally in good condition but the surface on the Waterville approach road and the road in the sea view estate would both benefit from some attention. Well done on your work to the natural stone walls as they looked particularly well during adjudication. You are commended on another strong performance in this years competition and we look forward with great anticipation to when we return in 2018!