

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballintogher** Ref: **862**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **307**
Category: **A** Date(s): **17/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	45	47
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	27	28
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	62	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36	36
TOTAL MARK	450	298	307

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Your historical/cultural/architectural introduction was read with much absorption – this adjudicator wondered if information on Joseph Welland, for example – of great interest to him – would gain extra marks and the answer is probably No but in the overall assessment it would definitely contribute to a Yes. In fact, it was wished that other committees would provide this kind of accumulated background knowledge. Thank you for your essential enclosures and for the map – which, incidentally, only marks one church and is a bit vague on the various Kingsforts in English and Irish but that creates no difficulty if one keeps one's eyes open. It is very good to read of your involvement with the schools and young people. Ballintogher of its nature is visually attractive but clearly it needs the work of a dedicated committee such as yours to draw the elements together and make whatever approaches are necessary – to the local authority, for example. Your Development Plan 2015-2020 is much more than a wish-list and it is very interesting to see that you specify projects by year and note what has been achieved each year, indeed it seems that you are ahead of yourselves in some instances.

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

What is rather grandly referred to as 'streetscape' on the entry form heading may perhaps be better described here as a cluster of vernacular structures based on the meeting of four roads with religious, educational and commercial buildings interspersed. The mix is most attractive visually. The disguising of vacant houses has been done with considerable flair and is successful. The amusing recreation of the butcher's shop caught the attention. The Church of St Therèse is very well maintained and is a fine example of the ecclesiastical architecture of its period; the school next door is equally well presented. The Victorian Church of Ireland church with its typical belfry and original cobblestones adds immensely to the picturesque quality of the scene. The glazed Community Centre impressed tremendously and was in use for an obviously very popular event on the date of the visit. (No bleak Hall here!) The Enterprise Centre in imaginative pastel shades is unexpected and adds a vibrant tone to its surroundings. (No bleak concrete block-shed!). It is obvious that your committee has had a positive influence on all this, as it could be far less attractive.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

You do very well under this heading. There is clearly an understanding of what goes to make attractive and successful landscaping – hedging, stone walls, trees, neat open spaces – though the placing of tubs and window-boxes has an important place seasonally. The picture of the nasturtiums grown from your own seed impressed. Thank you for mentioning things that would be invisible to the adjudicator, such as the planting of bulbs for sprig showing. The seven trees for the seven signatories makes a poignant statement. The wonderfully colourful playground impressed. So did the fine football pitch with its stone boundary and parking.

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

The well placed illustrated interpretative boards give a first rate introduction under this heading. The start of the Nature Trail was walked though the schedule did not allow time for a proper exploration. The Ordnance Survey shows a Megalithic Tomb to the north: would there be a way of joining up with this at some future time? Do not consider gravelling or even weeding, this is a Nature Trail. The picture of the proposed picnic site was noted with its wild flowers and grasses and the wonderful panorama of countryside with distant mountains. (The adjudicator wondered if the track of the Sligo-Leitrim Railway – on which he travelled many years ago! – would make a viable greenway for walkers and cyclists.) It is good to learn of your ongoing practice of planting flowers that offer support to bees and butterflies, instancing the cotoneaster hedges in two locations.

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

It is clear that you are engaged productively with composting and nurturing your own planting in this way. Segregation of litter is another important activity, and an emphasis on recycling. The bring bank is accessible yet attractively bordered by tree and shrub planting with heathers predominant. It is encouraging to read that you have arranged for talks on this topic in local schools. Green flags were not seen at the only school shown on the map but that does not mean they have not been awarded. In next year's submission please give any information there may be on GF activities: we have found that those centres that have an active GF programme gain by far the highest marks in this section; if you find there is GF participation please list the undertakings and give a brief summary of the achievements.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Untidy fencing and untended shrubs were seen at the Dún an Rí entrance to the composting area, in fact the well maintained landscaping deteriorates here. Weed growth in front of several homes in the Kingsfort area was seen and also some fencing needs to be replaced here. (Perhaps this should be mentioned under 'Residential' below.) Dereliction did not appear to be a major issue and you have dealt with some of that in an imaginative way. It is very good to learn that you are in communication with organisations such as the GAA to keep their areas of activity litter-free and to clean up after events. You do not mention how often you undertake litter picks or if you take part in the annual National Cleanup but it is most probable that you do because the village was virtually litter free on the date of the visit; so, congratulations to those, especially the young, who give their services to such good effect. The anti-litter essay competition seems to be an excellent innovation and the examples given of the poster competition are quite brilliant – there is no other word; these are exemplary works of graphic design by artists of any age. (Apart from the lettering, the picture top left might be taken to be by a mature French artist of the 1940s!)

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

It was favourably noted that you support three Residents' Associations with window-boxes and that you encourage each householder to keep their curtilages tidy and painted. It was not ascertained if the single storeyed terrace on the Sligo road is part of the Enterprise Centre or if it is residential, but either way it was looking great. This adjudicator thought he had discovered a forgotten terrace of fashionable 18th century homes off-street but on consulting the documentation it emerged that this is Kingsfort House and is now a guest house (though it looks like three) and it is beautifully presented. Kingsfort Manor is superbly situated; some weed growth and a stained boundary wall near the entrance could be dealt with by residents without much difficulty. At least one house has been painted to advantage in a different shade and others could consider following suit when the next time comes for repainting. Another Kingsfort appears to be in two sections; the houses at the back benefit from the design of their gables and the use of colour. There is a pleasant small estate with beech hedging, lawns and paths on the left as you enter the village from Riverstown. Modern housing at Ballincourt fits well into the traditional street.

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

Surfaces of all the approach roads were seen to be of an acceptable standard. The extensive stone wall rebuilding along the Riverstown road is highly impressive. It is so good to find the restoration of stone walls is now a priority in many centres where a few years ago concrete replacements or post-and-wire fencing were considered sufficient. The effect of strimming verges gave a sense of care and it was good to see that this was confined to the roadside and the inner foliage was left to nature. It is hoped that you will succeed with your applications for new footpaths.

Concluding Remarks: