

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballisodare** Ref: **749**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **265**
Category: **C** Date(s): **18/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	43	44
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	32	32
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	34	35
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	25	25
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	22	22
TOTAL MARK	450	262	265

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

It is many years since this adjudicator was in Ballisodare and the changes are immensely interesting, in line with the social and economic changes throughout the country. There has been much new development, some of it of an impressive nature, others not so; there has been the enhancement of many original features and the erosion of others. Clearly you are taking up the challenges energetically and it will probably be a couple of years before a good balance is achieved. As shown on your entry form you are well supported by official and commercial bodies. It is very good to read that you actively encourage new members and that you welcome people 'of all ages, creeds and colour'. You mention your involvement with the schools: have you considered setting up a Junior Tidy Towns group? – this has proved to be popular and effective in other centres and of course assures the succession. Increases in marking are for work achieved rather than work planned or proposed. The tone of your submission is very positive

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

The original central streetscape from the bridge to the Sligo road with its offshoots is quite well presented due to the care of the business people whose premises are situated there. It is earnestly hoped that a redevelopment in suitable style of the landmark location that was the Dun Maeve will not be long in forthcoming. This adjudicator admired the strong colour of the fairly recent SuperValu development. The charming Holy Trinity church with its unique belfry and beautifully maintained churchyard gives a sense of grace to the town centre. St John's school was admired with its well kept grounds and beech hedging – this needs to be extended to cover the place where an old post-and-wire fence is in need of replacement. St Mary's College is unpretentious and well maintained. St Brigid's church was admired for its plainness and well kept curtilages.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

It has been decided to include the work being undertaken at St Feichin's graveyard, which embraces obelisks, Gothic memorials and vaulted tombs, under this heading rather than under 'Streetscape' – in future years there may be a category named 'Heritage'. This is a spectacular project and will take some time to assess and develop; in the meantime well done on in your efforts to draw attention to this site, where your signature urns of pansies were noted. Planting at the Grotto and at the Ball Alley was favourably noted. The attractively designed garden and seating area beside the smart Pharmacy was admired; on the date of the visit some of the beds were in need of watering. The colourful and clean playground was noted. The sports field near the composting facility is impressively well looked after. On the road from Collooney flower planting was favourably noted. In general, give emphasis in your planting to perennials and shrubs; of course annuals do also have their place in adding seasonal colour in tubs and baskets.

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

Not a great deal seems to have been achieved under this heading since last year but your plans for the future are impressive. The salmon fishery created much interest with this adjudicator and it was seen to have the support of Leader and the Fishing Club. Do you have access to a local wild life enthusiast, as was suggested last year? An initial Interest in wild life can be created in a simple way in the schools by the provision of bird feeders. Is there a Conservation Ranger at the local authority? she or he would certainly give admirable advice appropriate to your particular environment. Best wishes for your consultation with the same authority on the reopening of the old path to Colooney, an imaginative proposal; perhaps the Colooney committee would have an input. Also best wishes in your consultation about a viewing point at the ancient graveyard.

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

Your composting facility at Young's Quarry is certainly the most picturesquely situated ever seen; it is good to read that green composting comes back to you to nurture your own containers and hanging baskets. It is most encouraging to note three points in your submission: that you always separate recycling materials from refuse collected during the annual spring clean, that water used for floral displays is harvested from rainwater or the river, and that the national school promotes walking to school. Green Flags were not seen flying at the schools but that does not mean they have not been awarded. In your next submission can you give an account of any GF initiatives, not merely to gain an increase in marking but to let us know how much this programme has impinged on the thinking of the schools and homes. It has been found that where GF projects are pursued there is an extraordinary increase in the general understanding of sustainable waste and resource management that permeates to local households and businesses.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

In spite of the problems that you underline, litter control was good on the date of the visit. This must be due to the diligence of the Beaver and Cub groups and the sporting organisations whom you mention and to whom heartiest congratulations are due: one would prefer to see the young people engaged in more creative pursuits than cleaning up after less civically minded people. Have you tried to identify who the culprits are? It seems incredible that you are not being provided with sufficient litter bins! Presumably you have consulted with the local authority on this issue? Well done on the clearing of rubbish from the Dun Maeve site. In regard to general tidiness the poles and clusters of overhead wires on the main street give an unbecoming visual effect: have you applied for the kind of public lighting that is seen in, for example, Colooney? A building with board-up windows opposite the bridge as you come from Colooney is hardly of significance yet it gives a poor impression at this important intersection. There is an obtrusively ugly corrugated iron structure near St John's school. Other forms of untidiness, such as kerbside weed on the road up to Kilboglashy, should perhaps be considered under Residential Areas, below.

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

The homes around St John's school have a pleasantly neighbourly feel about them. Silver Falls, so delightfully situated, will need freshening up with paint before long. In the equally superbly situated Knockmuldowney Park leading to Salmon Court the homes are presented with real pride; a termination fence at the latter is in need of freshening up and a broken wooden fence elsewhere is undoubtedly on the way to being repaired but these are very minor matters. The variety of house styles here was admired. The dormers, bow fronts and porch canopies give visual interest to the houses of Cloondara. Willow Wood is well presented in its park-like setting with the kind of planting that looks well and is comparatively easily maintained. Carraig Abhann estate appears to have some unoccupied homes which is odd at a time of housing shortage; this estate suffers somewhat from some neglected frontages. There were also unoccupied homes in the very large estate above the shopping centre, but it is understood that this is a new development and has some way to go before completion. Houses here in strong colours impressed though boundary walls should match the buildings. The adjudicator wonders if this is not overwhelmingly out of scale with the rest of the town but comment is reserved until it can be viewed in finished form, including planting which will soften the outlook. Certainly the existing residential blocks on the Sligo road seem somewhat out of scale with their neighbours, such as the charming Crescent, and at least two of them are already in need of external cleaning. An enclave of bright traditional-style houses adjacent to the charming Hair Studio provides a truly pleasant 'villagey' scene. A most attractive and beautifully presented thatched house was seen on the road from Colooney.

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

Road surfaces and markings were adequate on all approach roads. It was seen that the motorway syphons off much of the traffic that used to go through the town; perhaps a further by-pass is planned to remove the Sligo to Ballina through traffic? There does seem to be considerable congestion coming and going from the car park to the back of SuperValu and this will undoubtedly increase as time goes on. Traffic lights were not in operation on the date of the visit. You spend a deal of time and energy on keeping verges and entrances tidy: well done. Undoubtedly due to your watchfulness, gravel from the quarry was not seen anywhere.

Concluding Remarks:

