

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Coney Island** Ref: **1232**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **295**
Category: **A** Date(s): **16/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	40	40
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	36	36
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	39	40
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	62	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31	31
TOTAL MARK	450	289	295

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Your entry form makes exceptionally absorbing reading, and the work you are doing to rehabilitate and interpret what was a dying community and way of life is quite inspirational. It is so different now, with phone, e-mail, social media, TV reception, to what it must have been even 50 years ago; but your task is none the less challenging for all that. Certainly it is difficult, in your special circumstances – especially on account of what you describe as “the transient nature of the community” – to make a conventional 3-Year Plan, and that is not expected. It is good to learn of your association with the NPWS and An Taisce and of course the County Council, with which you clearly have a very positive relationship. Any exhibition or leaflet that you produce from your current Summer Project will be greatly looked forward to.

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

It is equally difficult to comment on your work in a way that makes sense in the context of this competition – for example, the ‘built environment’ is largely residential (see below) and there is no church or school or public utility buildings. What was seen impressed greatly – the pub, for example, is very well presented. Some inevitable dereliction was noted, including the dominant two storied property that overlooks the landing-place and can be seen from many quarters, for which you probably have aspirations. The brightly painted pump and the post-box have a greater visual impact than was anticipated from reading your notes before the visit. Stone wall repairs have taken much time and energy and are ongoing. The remains of the star-shaped fort are fascinating – can it date back to the 16th century? (more likely the Napoleonic period), there must be a military reason for it being built facing Sligo Harbour rather than the sea entrance to the channel. The boat-house and pier – with the wonderful view across to Rosses Point – were seen to be well maintained. Clearly you are doing everything in your power to enhance the ‘built environment’ in the proper traditional style.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Conventional ‘towny’ flowerbeds would be out of place; it is appropriate that you concentrate on wild flowers and, at certain salient points, container planting. Well done on the planting of spuds among other vegetables in the community garden. Fuschia and escalonia make attractive hedging, flowering for many months, as well as wind-breaks. This adjudicator was (ignorantly) surprised to see roses doing so well.

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

You are clearly much concerned – as are other maritime communities – with coastal erosion and it is good to read of the initial steps you are taking. The planted wild-flowers sheltering behind the road wall were noted, poppies at

first catching the eye. As one walked one was conscious of a myriad of indigenous flowers – celandine, vetch, clover, cow-parsley, etc, and semi-wild like montbretia, as well as an abundance of grasses and ferns. The excellent illustrated interpretative signboard for flora and fauna was consulted. Thank you for letting us know about activities such as the demonstration of marram-grass planting, the organised bat walk and the Tread Softly festival: good luck for a repeat of that and a probable increase in the number s of walkers. You should certainly read Whittled Away, Ireland's Vanishing Nature, by Padraic Fogarty, Collins Press 2017, if you haven't done so already; its conclusions are not as pessimistic as the title suggests. We will be greatly interested to see the results of the survey/collection of plants.

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

You are mistaken in thinking that of the island community can not participate satisfactorily under this heading; the activities that you list are in fact quite central to its objectives. Composting, for example, and making use off your own created compost; rainwater harvesting; water conservation; car pooling; solar lighting – these may come so naturally to you that you do not consider them as relevant. The County Council is probably right in asserting that it is not viable to install recycling facilities. There being no school it is not possible to assess any Green Flag projects, but – a shot in the dark – the young people must be at school somewhere, and those schools will be participating in GF sustainable waste and resource management (a wide-ranging topic), the children therefor absorbing GF principles and bringing them back to the island.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

A pity about ruinous structures: should they be demolished or left as they are? A fine line of argument is certainly drawn. (Ideally, under the right economic circumstances, they should be rehabilitated.) It will surely be a relief when work is completed on one of the cottages and the ugly metal barriers removed! At the time of the visit litter did not seem to be a problem due no doubt to the diligence of your voluntary helpers. (Have you applied for the assistance of a TUS worker?) It is unfortunate that residents have to clean up after the anti-social littering by visitors; it is astonishing to read that rubbish was dumped at the intertidal lake and other places – have you been able to identify where this rubbish originated? There has been some success elsewhere with well publicised prosecutions reducing the outrage, however the steps needed to do this are wearisome and can be expensive. The strand facing the Atlantic appeared to be as nature left it and this is probably on account of you taking part in the annual National Spring Clean. The bring-a-bag scheme is obviously effective.

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

It is noted that you have only three permanent households, so the evidence of much activity seen on the date of the visit may be accounted for as due to summer residents in the very charming houses, one of which must be the derelict house you mention that has been rebuilt. Three lovely new (or renovated?) cottages were seen on the Green Road. Cement block frontage walls at a house on the Green Road is presumably destined to be faced in local stone in due course. A very fine two-storey house, very much in the correct tradition, was admired. Residents look after the curtilages of their homes. Strong colours of woodwork, bright red or yellow, is most effective. It is good to read that you removed two abandoned mobile homes.

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

This adjudicator had no difficulty in locating the way to the island and signage was perfectly adequate. An immense amount of traditional stone wall building was seen immediately on arrival, and also at the tidal bridge; in several other places fine stone walls were apparent. Congratulation to those who are undertaking all this difficult reinstatement work. There is no point in alluding to 'road surfacing and marking' as this would be inappropriate in the island context. It would be a mistake, for instance, if intensive weeding were to take place on the road to Carty's strand.

Concluding Remarks: