

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Gurteen** Ref: **1162**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **244**
Category: **B** Date(s): **21/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	42	43
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	30	31
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	26	28
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	18	18
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	29	30
TOTAL MARK	450	236	244

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

This year you had an adjudicator new to Gurteen who found the experience positive and cheering. The entry documents, studied earlier, gave a good advance impression, especially the hand-drawn map which, while providing essential information, gives a sense of enjoyment as a bonus. Your 3- Year Development Plan, now in its final year, shows that you have already achieved some of the 2017 projects. The support that you receive from official and private bodies demonstrates the confidence of these organisations in your work. It is very good to read that you are in communication with Carn National School and that you have a young member on your committee. It is appropriate now to congratulate you on your County Sligo Endeavour Award, something which could not be mentioned in advance in last years' report.

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

The main street was looking well with some buildings recently painted. It is the uniformity of scale and style of the traditional street houses, with their individual choices of decoration and colour, that give Gurteen – and many other towns and villages – their true character. Amongst these there are several outstanding public buildings, in your case principally An Ceóláras Coleman which gives a real sense of grandeur and sophistication, and the fine off-street Gothic church (in which, incidentally, the stained glass representing biblical scenes must surely be unique in design and execution, whenever that was done). The Parish Hall will need freshening up before long. Carn National School was seen to be spic and span, as indeed were its grounds. The well-presented Green Isle factory impressed – many factories do not. The Busy Bee premises are delightful. It is understood that you await the painting of some other structures.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Colourfully planted corners are a distinctive feature of Gurteen. A judiciously chosen selection of shrubs and perennials, with some bright annuals, were particularly noted at the entrance of Rathmadder estate. The same may be said for planting in the church grounds. The planting on the corner of Moydoo road is notable for its unusual drystone boundary. The shady mature park opposite the school is a superbly kept public amenity. Recently planted trees appear to be doing well – be sure they are kept irrigated in their early years – and the Tree of Hope is a sensitive and imaginative idea. The cemetery is well looked after. Planters named 'Gurteen' were admired.

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

It is well to keep the wild life sanctuary in its natural state rather than to try to 'improve' it by landscaping or planting wildflower s – the latter should come of their own accord. The Bug Hotel, however, is a legitimate intrusion – can its

occupation-rate be ascertained? You do not mention bat roosts though they are known to be there from last year's report, and do you have bird boxes? If not, they can be provided in the course of time. (There are certain categories which are 'invisible' to the adjudicator unless pointed out on the map.) The wonderful ivy-clad gable of the ruined church should be left alone – the berries will feed birds in winter and the foliage will provide cover for all kind of creatures. (There is a general rush elsewhere to remove ivy remorselessly but this should be avoided unless there is a definite danger from falling masonry.) It is good to read that you are making contact with your local Heritage Officer.

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

This has been left blank on your entry form but it is impossible to think that the category has been ignored – especially as a green flag was seen proudly flying at the School (so a mark for the green flag!). This is another of the 'invisible' attainments that need to be pointed out to the adjudicators : most committees include a list of appropriate activities undertaken by the schools and you may be doing yourselves out of a significant increase in marking by not doing so. In almost all centres it is the schools that lead the way, the children bringing home accounts of what can be done in resource management. Last year's adjudicator gave a list of websites that could be helpful under this heading.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

A pity about the derelict house on the Ballaghadereen road. Presumably the cement block wall above the Discount Store will be plastered and painted in due course. Well done to your two TUS workers for keeping the town practically litter free, and well done to the pupils of the National School for taking part in an anti-litter competition – were the results exhibited? Also well done to the volunteers who helped with the April Spring Clean; that seven full bags of litter were accounted for is extraordinary in spite of your anti-litter propaganda and begs the question, Who dropped it? Is it possible to prevent it at source? In some centres well publicised prosecutions have been effective.

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

The traditional street homes are almost all kept with pride. Rathmadder is a pleasant estate of small homes; there are wildly contrasting boundaries, some with very fine wooden palings, others in need of repair. Gurteen View is spacious and well kept ; young deciduous trees are making their mark. The metal hoardings near the entrance give a poor impression and, reading your notes, it is clear that you are all too aware of this and are taking steps to have the matter attended to. Cluain Dara is also well kept, and so indeed is Cois na hAbhainn though somewhat marred by several stained boundary walls. Some vacant homes were seen which is most odd at a time of housing crisis.

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

The cycle track to school past the church is warmly applauded. Much work has clearly been done on trimming verges and cutting back encroaching foliage on approach roads. Surfaces are reasonably good. This adjudicator has an issue with over-dominant lamp standards that march in two files towards the horizon! Yes, this is a main artery and needs to be adequately lighted, but does it have to be with by-pass type lamps? Take a look – if you ever raise the matter – at the lighting in, e.g., Coolaney or Easkey. And not of any urgency, but painting the concrete and wood palings on both side of the Ballymote road would give an extra visual dash to entry from this direction: not white, as that requires too much upkeep!

Concluding Remarks: