

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathlee** Ref: **2207**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **250**
Category: **A** Date(s): **19/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	31	32
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	31	32
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	30	32
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31	33
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	41	43
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31	31
TOTAL MARK	450	237	250

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

This adjudicator passed through Rathlee a dozen years ago and does not recall anything about it! Perhaps there was little to recall – but things have changed. Certainly, from reading your interesting notes, it does appear that you did the right thing with an Eskexit, to the administrative benefit of both communities. You are masters of your own destiny now and are doing well. When finalising your 3-Year Green Plan be sure to give deadlines for individual projects rather than a simple wish-list or statement of intentions: there is nothing like a proposed deadline to create action and enthusiasm. You have an unusually high number of professional helpers as well as dedicated volunteers and the support from official and commercial interests demonstrates confidence in your work. Thank you for your helpful and attractive map.

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

The domestic and business streetscape owes nothing to village planning in the past but has grown organically and that is its real attraction – its naturalness. The shop is bright and inviting. The church, with its attractive belfry, is splendid in its cream paintwork with fawn rustication; the school is also exceptionally smart. The signalling tower surveys sea and land with a grim countenance, alleviated by recent paving and the plangent memorials. The painted pumps add visual spice.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The visual integrity of the local landscape was destroyed by ESB poles half a century ago – very noticeable because of the comparatively flat terrain – and there does not seem to be any way of correcting this. The village is very strong on planted tubs, those at the church door particularly effective. More permanent planting (elsewhere, such as on roadsides), of evergreens for example, and berry-bearing shrubs that provide food for birds in winter, are recommended; also roadside beds of perennials which give a look of permanence that containers can never do. The Marian shrine was well tended. This adjudicator is not entirely convinced by the water feature at the church, but it certainly is ingenious. Thank you for mentioning that you plant bulbs for spring showing: this is one of the elements that are 'invisible' to the adjudicators and should be taken into consideration.

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

It is very good to learn that the cuckoo has returned: in fact this may be taken as a symbol of the regeneration of the natural world that you are so concerned with. You mention bees too. An Bóithrín Glas is far more important than might at first appear to the casual visitor; let it remain 'glas' and never allow the verges to be trimmed, where, in passing, meadowsweet, yellow iris, vetches, nettles, thistles and all manner of grasses were seen. The farmer

who contributes so much to the wellbeing of the natural amenities is to be congratulated. Do you know what species have taken up residence in the bird and bat boxes, and if so are you keeping a record? It is good to read that the Heritage Officer is helpful – congratulations to her as well. Do request a copy from your local library of Whittled Away: Ireland's Vanishing Nature by Padraic Fogarty (Collins Press 2017) which deals with the above concerns though in a slightly more optimistic way than the title suggests.

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

You are already doing well under this heading – the mark may appear low but the county average is 17. No green flags were seen flying at the school so thank you for stating that there are no less than six awarded! These are also for projects 'invisible' to us, so thank you for listing them, they are most impressive and heartiest congratulations to the pupils, the teachers and the parents. Recycling of packaging, harvesting of rainwater, adaptation of the school toilet system, collection of driftwood to create a bug hotel, involvement in the WEEE programme, are all admirable. Good that the planters are created from recycled wood. It is very encouraging to see vegetables in the school garden.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

It is good that you have taken executive action prohibiting bonfires on the seashore. Unfortunately our seashores are becoming overwhelmed by flotsam and jetsam and your volunteers are doing an admirable job in clearing their own space of coast. Well done to those who regularly collect and correctly dispose of litter in the village: do you know where most of the litter originates and is there any possibility of preventing it at source? This adjudicator has a mission to try and influence the removal of ugly poles and overhead wires and is pleased to see that this has been achieved in Easkey so perhaps you will be able to convince the Local Authority likewise. The makeover of the vacant cottage is effective and eye-catching..

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

Homes are well looked after, both in and around the village, many of them with pleasant roadside gardens. Good luck to the householder who is in process of cladding the cement block frontage with stone. No housing estates were seen.

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

Roads surfaces and markings were very good, as last year. Side roads are reasonably well tended. An Boithrin Glas is a special case that must defy tidiness. The church car park was spic and span.

Concluding Remarks: