

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Riverstown** Ref: **417**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **311**
Category: **B** Date(s): **17/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	46	47
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	42	44
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	42	43
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	33	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	18	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31	31
TOTAL MARK	450	303	311

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

It was such a treat reading your submission in the week before the visit. This adjudicator, who had not been in Riverstown for several years, was particularly taken by what appears to be a new emphasis on young people, on the schools' involvement in the Green Flag awards, and in sporting activities. As well as this the development and continuing maintenance of physical structures was seen to be impressive. The support you attract from so many local businesses and also from official bodies demonstrates their confidence in your work. You are clearly correct in claiming that your committee is 'the anchor amongst the community groups', even to the extent of your application for funding for a Village Health Check, an imaginative step which we hope will be successful. The comprehensive 3-Year Development Plan will give you a focus for the period starting this year; do not be dismayed if some of the projects take longer than anticipated – such is the nature of 'the best laid schemes of mice and men' – and good luck for them all. It is a salutary idea to commission a memorial to celebrate those who inaugurated Riverstown's first entry to the Tidy Towns competition fifty years ago.

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

The central streetscape, which includes Church Road, the Diamond, Chapel Street, Main Street and Creamery Road, is one of the best presented examples of a traditional Irish town-centre in all its aspects: well done to the residents and to the owners of business premises. The most striking individual building is the splendid Sacred Heart Church of Byzantine inspiration which has recently undergone a process of refurbishment including painting, disabled ramp and rails and handsome steps. Nearby, the National School was looking exceptionally smart. The Community Hall, also brightly painted, including 'artistic' lettering, impressed. The Church of Ireland church with its landmark tower, fine stone boundary walls and dark green railings, extends its visual influence to the adjacent Rectory and Hall. It was good to see that the Garda Station, in stone, with brick facings, is not only well maintained but also still open. Taunagh National School was also seen to have been recently given an effective makeover, including its curtilages. The cluster of interesting buildings that form part of the Folk Park are well maintained – it would be interesting to learn their history. Do be aware that your decorative schemes do not deteriorate into olde worlde tweedy.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The Folk Park is immensely interesting. The flags create a celebratory effect as well as implying connection with the wilder world. What are the plans for the CIE carriage and has the amazing number of farm implements been catalogued? – you might mention these in your next submission. The idea of planting rowans on the hill above the Sacred Heart church in recognition of the name Ardkeeran is a splendid one; the landscaping of the church grounds below has been most successful. The colourful garden at the school is effective. Productive vegetable and

flower planting at Taunagh school was admired. The Peace Garden, with its attractive sculpture, shrubs and perennials, creates a poignant reminder of the 1916 centenary in a prominent position. The Little Buddies play area was admired. The Community Park, with its sports pitch and walkways, is splendidly laid out.

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

It is interesting to read that the two rivers that give Riverstown its Irish name has attracted the active attention of the Inland Fisheries Board and that you organise an annual event to acquaint the children with the varied riverine species. It is good to learn that this is a designated SAC area. It is assumed that the lake seen in one of your photographs is Lough Meharth which has adjacent wetland and woodland habitats that you mention that are privately owned and presumably much appreciated; the Ordnance Survey map shows a crannog in this lake. (Riverstown appears to be surrounded by a necklace of raths.) It is very encouraging to learn of the red squirrel, and also that you plan to build a hedgehog home (but how will the hedgehogs know that this is designed for them?) Thank you for naming the birds, animals and fish that create the most interest. It is fascinating to learn that a colony of long-eared bats resides in the tower of the Sacred Heart Church.

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

It is clear that this committee, and the people of Riverstown, have come to terms with this comparatively new yet increasingly important topic and are accepting its principles in a natural way. You may think your mark is low but in fact it is above the county average of 17. Thank you for your information on projects which would be invisible to the adjudicator, including the use of geo-thermal heating in some homes, the hippo placement in cisterns, the battery recycling service undertaken by the schools for WEE, the mobile phones collected in aid of charity, the re-use of school books, etc. It was good to be directed to see the pallet-originating fences in the Folk Park and the composting site near the Fort Field. Moreover, congratulations to Ardkeeran NS for their six green flags and to Taunagh NS for their three. Composting and planting from local seed are understood to have been a component. Congratulations too to Aurivo Homeland Stores for their environmental management programme. You are urged to try and keep the weekly bus service to Sligo in operation. The bring bank was seen to be accessible yet unobtrusively sited.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

A stained boundary wall at the well kept Teach Cheóil is unfortunate in the context of the very well kept local scene, and an obtrusive dilapidated corrugate iron structure nearby was noted. The Forge could do with freshening up with paint. A fence on the Soeey road was seen to need repainting. There was a surprising amount of disposable litter near the sewerage disposal plant. These are of minor importance in relation to the overall tidiness of the village. Pictures of children having successfully picked litter create admiration but also disgust that they should be cleaning up after less civically minded people. (Who drops the litter, is it impossible to know?) Litter collection should not be seen as a central component of this competition: there are more creative areas of participation that give greater satisfaction. Your mark under this heading is one of the highest in the county, and well done to your tireless volunteers.

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

As mentioned under 'Streetscape' the traditional houses of the village are presented with pride. Four particularly lovely houses swathed in foliage were noted on Chapel Street. Brookfield Close, with its high gables, old sycamores and newer planting was admired. Cherry Tree Park is of imaginative design and is well kept. Cultylough Crescent must surely be envied for its seclusion yet so very convenient to the village centre. Some boundary walls and some wooden fencing could do with freshening up at the pleasant Lisurlar. Some boundary walls also need repainting in the otherwise well maintained Brookfield. The former Methodist church was seen to have become a trendy residence.

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

Fencing and planting at the entrance to the Fort Field caught the attention most favourably. Drystone walling is most impressive and successfully continues a traditional craft that could be forgotten. It is a mistake to poison the edges of paths, as seen in one or two places, as this only causes ugly dead weeds! The 'pedestrian walkway' is innovative as well as useful. Good luck for the provision of new footpaths. Surfaces on the roads leading in to the village were of acceptable standard and, as last year's adjudicator remarked, one gets a pleasant feel from all the entry points to the village.

Concluding Remarks: