

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tubbercurry** Ref: **721**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **266**
Category: **C** Date(s): **18/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	37	38
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	35	36
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	25	26
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	30
TOTAL MARK	450	260	266

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

A very well set out and comprehensive submission, thank you. You have an unusually lengthy list of supporters, both from the public and private sectors, but also, which is even more telling, from local sports and social groups: this demonstrates the confidence in which your work is viewed in all quarters. The South Sligo Tourism website was temporarily unavailable but it was good to learn that you are included in its brochure (perhaps you could enclose any such brochures next year.) Best wishes for your forthcoming 3-Year Plan: please be sure to give yearly targets (rather than simple 'wish lists'): there is nothing like setting annual deadlines to create enthusiasm and action. It would appear from your analysis of the query 'How has your community benefited from involvement in the competition?' that, in a nutshell, it brings together all interests that might not otherwise meet; in other words, people from all 'arts and parts'. Marks are awarded for projects completed rather than for those in planning or development – for example the exciting proposal for rehabilitation of the Railways Station is not yet in line for marking. There is certainly a natural overlap of categories but please try to place your replies under appropriate headings – for example, 'potential allotments' should not be noted under 'Streetscape'. Your engagement with schools is applauded and the sight of your entry for the Youth Award at Teach Laighne impressed tremendously: the entry will be now passed to the award judges with photographs taken on the date of the visit. Does the IBP Pride of Place duplicate Tidy Towns initiatives, does it complement them, or is it totally separate? Thank you for your very helpful map – but be sure to name all locations mentioned in the text, as well as giving reference numbers – such as Swift's Lane; and thanks too for the photographs which disclose year-round activities.

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

In spite of a few vacant or neglected premises the traditional core of the town is reasonably well maintained – Emmet Street, Teeling Street, Humbert Street, Wolfe Tone Square – particularly the latter, where there are exceptionally well maintained business houses; the central triangle adds considerably to the visual interest (see below). Tubbercurry townscape benefits to a greater extent from its individual buildings than from its vistas or perspectives. Those among the former that caught the attention were the RC Church and the Convent opposite that combine to provide dignity and grace to that section of Emmet Street; the inviting-looking Family Resource Centre; St Attracta's Community School; the Church of Ireland church; St Brigid's Hall, scene of the Republic's earliest drama festival; and the splendid Library now adorned by the imaginative mural. The majority of these buildings are surrounded by well-tended curtilages. The central building of North Connacht College could do with freshening up; how about a bright eye-catching colour for the railings. The Giblin Stone premises was admired: here is a traditional craft continuing in the town centre in exemplary fashion. The Basta factory is well presented. In the Industrial Estate, Alpha Precision impressed by the smart unadorned lines of the main building. Similarly, An Croí's plain design attracts the eye for the same reason: no overstated advertising slogans or unnecessary decoration

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Much small-scale planting enhances streets, roadsides and housing areas. A profusion of well maintained planters at so many locations certainly gives a 'lift' to the overall appearance of the town. The co-operative effort that has resulted in the planted area at the Charlestown road junction with its fine wooden fencing is a distinct success. Planting at the centre of The Square is attractively laid out with seating, paving, sculpture and imposing lighting standards. The Famine Graveyard is a poignant reminder of what was happening about 175 years ago; the built-up rockery nearby was in need of thoughtful regeneration; perhaps a particular group would take it on as a challenge. The graveyard itself was much overgrown, with grasses growing up through the fine seating; it would not be necessary to trim the whole area, simply the section where the public are expected to walk, and leave the rest as meadow for annual mowing. Though in its early stages, and perhaps not appropriate to comment upon yet, the Ballyara graveyard project with its eclectic mix of sculptural monuments deserves much praise and encouragement: quite a number of committees in the county are now reaching out to include historic sites and this movement is highly commendable. Sporting clubs do themselves proud with their well maintained pitches such as the GAA on the Sligo road and the football field on Mountain Road. The children's playground is colourful and clean; an immense amount of work has clearly gone into this. It is good to learn from the photographs that you plant bulbs for spring showing.

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

The Loop walk is a most pleasing amenity so near to the centre of the town; the informational notices must cause considerable interest. It is good that you have the advice of a member of BirdWatch Ireland to advise you about the migratory swifts – this adjudicator used to see them at his family home but not for several years now. It is good to learn that you are in communication with Coillte to obtain funding for extending the forest walk, through Leader.

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

Tubbercurry now appears to have taken on this comparatively new yet increasingly important subject very well. A refuelling point for electric cars was noted. The charity shop was seen where you say a range of second hand articles may be found. It is encouraging to read that recyclable materials are collected from businesses and households, taken to the Enterprise Centre, sorted, and brought to the recycling centre. This was closed on the date of the visit (a Sunday) but the bring bank at its entrance was seen to be popular. Your allotment project is impressive; it is hoped that many homes that do not have garden space will take sections. Heartiest congratulations to the pupils and staff of Holy Family national school for its green flags. It is splendid that St Attracta's secondary school has been awarded its first green flag. In some other centres in the county as many as six flags were seen: there is a real challenge here to follow suit. We have found that the GF programme is the surest way of spreading the message of sustainable waste and resource management into the homes and businesses.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

It is interesting to read that you intend to install CCTV as a means of tracing anti-social behaviour that includes littering. Perpetrators of littering and dumping are very hard to identify though in some cases elsewhere, where this has been achieved, well-publicised fines have influenced a decline in the practice. Litter control was seen to be good on the date of the visit with only a small amount seen at the Famine Graveyard and in the side road by North Connacht College. It is encouraging to read that you have a Fás and a TUS operative and that volunteers cover dates and times when they are not on duty. A word of thanks is always due to local volunteers who selflessly clean up after their less civic-minded neighbours. (The obvious answer is to stop littering at source: but how? No one, anywhere, has yet come up with an entirely satisfactory solution. In Switzerland, which this adjudicator recently visited, there is never any litter at all! Education?) A possible change in the future of the competition's organisation may be the splitting of the Tidiness & Litter Control category into two separate categories because it can happen that a town where litter control is first class marks can be lost under the same heading for other kinds of untidiness. In regard to the latter, some small points may be raised: the signature structure at the GAA needs freshening up. The murky cement block walls and bleak car park behind the Library create a dreary space in contrast to the splendid frontage. Several exceptionally unpleasant 'backs' on the by-pass were seen. There is some dereliction on Mountain Road; an all-too prominent business premises on a corner near The Square catches the eye, as, unfortunately, such sites tend to do. You will be all too aware of these blemishes and are no doubt taking steps to eradicate them, a slow process of its nature.

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

In basic competitive terms, it is seen that one poor element, such as a single housing development that fails to come up to standard, can reduce the marks under this heading to the detriment of those that do well; this is one of many topics that will come up for discussion when the Tidy Towns Unit considers the future organisation of the competition. As almost everywhere, it is the traditional houses of the town centre that give Tubbercurry its particular character; the estates of the 20th and 21st century are mainly of a design that could be seen anywhere. Here almost all of them are maintained with pride. It is interesting to read that you have sixteen Residents Associations. Among those that impressed one way or another were Summer Hill which benefits enormously from the pastel shades of some of the houses and also from the well laid out green with its seating. Spring Vale is a spacious well-appointed development with attractive variation in the colour of door canopies; just a pity that it is approached via a well-designed enclave where two vacant premises are prominent; this will change. By the same token the approach to well-kept Parklands is spoiled somewhat by the derelict site by the entrance. Dormers, high gables and porch roofs make Highfield fairly unique – this is a most attractive and well looked after development. Coill Dara, with its tennis court, is pleasantly secluded and enhanced by foliage. The extensive beech hedging that is an essential

feature of Cnoc na Sí was in need of attention in some places where it was becoming smothered in weeds. Congratulations to the residents of Whitethorn Place for keeping this small estate so well. Connolly Park is very mixed; some smart homes, some in need of a little TLC, and some noticeably derelict.

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

Work on the verges all the approach roads, and the provision of planting on some, is warmly acknowledged. Whoever came up with the idea of the by-pass some years ago to alleviate town-centre traffic needs to be remembered with thanks! Does it have a name? and if not can some local hero or historic event be commemorated? The improvements at Swift's Lane are truly significant. Space markings were clear on most car parks. Ideally the kind of street lighting admired at The Square should be extended throughout the main streets: extremely expensive, but the result would make a huge difference to the skyline with the removal of overhead cables and outdated poles.

Concluding Remarks: