

# Tidy Towns Competition 2017

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bray** Ref: **256**  
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **296**  
Category: **H** Date(s): **26/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	46	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30	31
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	17	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	48	49
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33	33
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>296</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

You are very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2017. Well done to your committee for all the work undertaken by Bray Tidy Towns (BTT) over the last year, as set out in your Submission and Application form, which is highly commended. Thank you also for your very clear and well-presented and comprehensive Entry Submission which included before and after photos. You really did heed the comments made in last year's Adjudication report and the specially designed Map submitted with your application form was very clear and well put together and made the adjudicator's job identifying places of interest in the Town so much easier. It is noted that you have 7 Committee Members on your Committee at least a further 25 local residents who volunteer to carry out your works programme on an ongoing basis. It is great to see your Committee has established strong links to other agencies and bodies (25 plus) who are assisting you in your objective to make Bray 'A great Town even better'. Your Committee has clearly worked very hard over the last year to complete high profile improvements around the Town which hopefully will encourage other groups and individuals to get involved with Bray Tidy Towns - this is a worthwhile strategy. Your Committee has also performed an important role in highlighting to Local Authorities particular issues of concern such as litter enforcement, shopfront improvements, unauthorised signage and the proposed establishment of Architectural Conservation Areas in the Town. We wish you well in your future endeavours in building further cohesion amongst all those bodies involved in improving the Town of Bray and in expanding your volunteer base, which is crucial in protecting what you have and also implementing ongoing improvements.

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

The Harbour Area was visited and the painting work carried out by Bray Tidy Towns on the Harbour Bridge was noted positively. Also prominent here is the railway bridge which is rusting badly - perhaps Irish Rail might be willing to paint this structure too? The nearby booyard security fence detracts from this area and could be improved by the planting of a hedge on the roadside of the fence. The fence might also be painted on completion of the nearby footpath improvement works. The architectural quality of many of the residential streets in Bray is superb and this is recognised in the designation of substantial areas of the Town as Architectural Conservations Areas as part of the Bray Town Plan. The Quinsboro Road flanked by lines of mature and semi-mature trees particularly impressed. The avenues of lime, horse chestnut and ash along this road adds to the sense of grandeur in this part of the Town. Some seating in this area would benefit from cleaning and re-painting. The Manse building erected in 1850 is a real gem set back from the road and adds greatly to the architectural quality of the streetscape here. On the Main Street, the canvas screens erected on the frontage of a number of disused properties caught the eye and were effective in screening potential eyesores - however, it is hoped these can be removed before too long as development of these properties commences. The quality of the buildings and the surrounds at the Municipal District Bray Civic offices was excellent. The hanging baskets and window-boxes along the Main Street really did brighten up this part of the town. The Tiger shop, Gamestop, Paddy Power and Euro saver premises have generic modern shopfronts which are

generally not in keeping with the quality of the streetscape in Bray. Perhaps the owners could be requested to review their shopfront designs to see if they can be better integrated into the overall character of the Main Street. The Pink bicycle feature and flower tubs outside the 'One Oh Nine' premises were greatly admired. The newly completed dwellings along the Seapoint Road impressed and they complement the architectural quality of existing residential properties in the area. A section of wall along the Seapoint Road is broken down and could be repaired. It was a particularly warm and sunny morning when the Albert Walk was visited and it was a pleasure to sample the 'ambience' created here through the quality of the shopfronts, walkway and planting and the ongoing maintenance all of which was very impressive. Ragwort (a noxious weed) was noted in a section of the planting here and could be pulled by hand, when the opportunity arises. The new cantilevered walkway and cycleway erected as part of the River Dargle Flood Protection Scheme was admired. This is a fabulous amenity although one wonders whether any provision has been made for reinstating natural vegetation along the edge of the river here, as the river margins and mudflats are now quite bare, having been cleared of all the natural riverside vegetation during construction work? The Bray Tidy Towns volunteers have done a terrific job this year painting over graffiti in doorways, on junction boxes, walls, shutters, shelters etc. – well done to everyone who was involved with this work as it really improves the overall appearance of the Town.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

The work carried out by Bray Tidy Towns at the Train Station, a high-profile site in the Town, has really enhanced the presentation of this important building and its surrounds, for the benefit of visitors and local residents alike. The before and after photos show how much of an improvement has been made here, with this significant building in the Town, once again brought into view from the public road. However, it is noted that the work may not be fully completed here, as some discarded clippings and remains of trees etc. are awaiting removal off-site. Timber kerbs may also need to be re-instated and tree stumps levelled to complete the improvement works along the frontage. Some littering was noted at the Cash and Carry site opposite the Train Station, although the new painting scheme and partially completed wall mural has significantly enhanced the presentation of these premises, when viewed from the opposite side of the road - well done to Bray Tidy Towns volunteers and all who co-operated in the completion of these enhancement schemes. Road surfaces and markings in the vicinity of the Train Station would benefit from upgrade and repair works. The site adjacent to Bray Cabs was noted for the extensive growth of weeds here, significant littering and a proliferation of unsightly advertising hoardings. A large metal Kiosk at the entrance to the station with torn posters falling away detracts from this area. The newly paved Plaza and entrance to the People's Park was greatly admired. However, some weed control is required in the planting beds here and also around the new trees in the park – these newly planted Lime trees appeared to be suffering from moisture stress on the day of the visit and it is suggested that these would benefit from regular watering. It was a sunny Summer morning when the Strand Road and Bray Seafront was visited and the whole area was a hive of activity and with the beachfront and wonderful views of Bray Head, the whole scene was a joy to behold. It was noted that scaffolding and a canopy had been erected over the 'iconic' railings along the beachfront. It is presumed that this was to facilitate restoration works on the railings which are now quite old and rusted. The large number of 'Big Belly' litter bins with their 'Full Notification System' along the seafront was noted positively. There was a complete absence of litter along the Seafront walk - very well done to all concerned with maintenance operations here. The attractive ornamental low railings on the landward side of the Seafront walk would benefit from restoration and re-painting work and it is presumed this is in the pipeline. The Children's Playground was a great attraction and was well maintained. The newly paved Plaza surrounding the Bandstand on the seafront with its tiered flower planters was a very impressive public space. A small group of schoolchildren were using the bandstand as an outdoor classroom during the visit! One wonders whether there are future plans to continue the cycle way along the seafront where it is interrupted by car parking in the vicinity of the Bray Sea Life premises?

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

It is noted that the important sites in Bray with regard to the protection of wildlife and natural amenities include Bray Head, The Seafront, The Dargle River, Kilruddery and the Harbour Area. It is great to note that a Management Plan has recently been prepared for Bray Head and the Flood Protection works along the Dargle River has provided an opportunity to further document, promote and enhance the richness of the ecology along the river here. It is good that a member of Bray Tidy Towns sits on the Environmental Committee for the Dargle Project – perhaps earlier questions regarding the re-instatement of natural riverside vegetation cleared during construction works can be addressed by the Committee. It is noted that Bray Seafront has been awarded a Blue Flag again this year and Bray Tidy Towns amongst others, has been involved in securing this award. You organise beach clean ups in conjunction with other interested parties. The colonies of seabirds present in the Harbour area are closely monitored by member of Bray Tidy Towns on an ongoing basis. It is also noted that a Biodiversity Officer has been appointed in Kilruddery Estate in conjunction with the 'Neighbourhood Initiative' in the Demesne. Thanks are due to the students of Presentation College Bray for the great work they have carried out producing 20 Bird Nest Boxes which were erected at the school and at various locations in the Town. Congratulations to the Edible Bray Group who received the KBC Bright Ideas Award and Community Gardens Award, for their work at Albert Walk and elsewhere.

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

Thank you for using waste hops from the nearby 'Wicked Wolf' brewery and your own green waste for mulching the planting beds at Albert Walk and elsewhere - this encourages strong plant growth and aids non-chemical weed control. It is noted that you are re-using cigarette litter bins at Albert Walk in consultation with local businesses. It is good to see that a pilot scheme is being put in place by Bray Municipal District to install waste segregation bins at Bray Seafront- we would be interested to see how the public responds to this. The 'RIO' Fish Sculpture piece produced for Culture Week using waste metal collected from Bray North Beach looks great and fits well into this

category. The use of recycled pallets to provide planters at the Train Station and the erection of LED lights here is noted positively. Well done to Bray Recycling Centre and the many charity shops in the Town such as Castaways, which are supported by Bray Tidy Towns and which encourage up-cycling, re-use and recycling of previously owned goods. For next year Bray Tidy Towns could consider further initiatives under this category such as ; encouraging local people to engage in further sustainable waste, water, energy and transport actions e.g. promoting the use of low carbon electric vehicles, promoting the installation of e-car charge point(s) in the Town, extending cycle parking facilities in the Town, developing a 'Bray Bike Scheme' in the Town, the development of further greenways and cycle routes in the area, encouraging the greater use of solar panels on building roofs, heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by households/businesses, promoting greater use of water butts for watering in private gardens and for town plantings, organising stop food waste seminars etc. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website has good information in relation to the development of Better Energy Communities. You could also speak to the Environmental Officer at the Council on possibly participating in the European Week for Waste Reduction which takes place in November each year. Visit [www.ewwr.eu](http://www.ewwr.eu) for more information. [www.stopfoodwaste.ie](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie) is a website that you may also find helpful. The Green Home Programme may also be of interest to residents living in Wicklow ([www.greenhome.ie](http://www.greenhome.ie)). Grant funding may also be available to provide energy efficiency upgrades for community and commercial facilities.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Tidiness and litter control was generally good in Bray on the day of adjudication. Some litter was noted on residential streets between Strand Road and Vevay Road and graffiti was prominent at a limited number of locations, including the Dublin Road approach (on a gable wall) and on the Bray Wanderers F.C. perimeter boundary wall. Broken kerbs were noted at the junction of Wyndham Park and Quinsboro Road. It is noted that a plan is being drawn up in relation to signage in the Town including a review of redundant signs and poles. The Dog Fouling Prevention Stickers produced by Bray Tidy Towns are very imaginative and get the message across very well to dog owners in relation to their responsibilities in relation to this ongoing problem. As stated previously the Seafront Area on the day of adjudication was spotless and it is great to see so many Big Belly bins now in place throughout the town. The 'full notification' sensor on the bins no doubt assists greatly in the overall litter management operations and scheduling for the Town. It is noted that you have replaced widespread litter picks with advocacy and making representations to the Council in relation to litter enforcement etc. With a Town the size of Bray this is probably a good strategy and enables you to deal with other pressing issues such as graffiti, landscape maintenance and specific targeted enhancement schemes.

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

The Seacrest Estate was visited and the estate was well-presented. However, there were some weeds along the kerbs here which detracted somewhat from the general appearance of the estate. Phoenix palms are seldom seen and it was good to spot them growing vigorously at the apartment complex at Mountain View, off Putland Road. The overall presentation and landscaping of this development was admired. The Headlands Estate was visited and the presentation and maintenance of the entrance railings, open spaces and trees in the estate was excellent. The Community Garden on the main open space was inspected and this adjudicator was very impressed with the wonderful garden and polytunnel created here – congratulations to all the local residents for the hard work done to date in progressing this great Community project. The garden maintenance was excellent with fruit trees, vegetables and perimeter willow planting growing strongly. The fruit trees were laden with fruit and I'm sure a great crop will be available for harvest at the end of the season. Some green waste material was noted on the boundary of the open space, which it is presumed will be shredded to provide a mulch for subsequent use in the garden. Swanbrook and Earlscroft estates were visited and were found to be very neat and tidy with well-maintained gardens and communal spaces. The well-established street tree planting in both the estates was admired and this added to their mature well cared for appearance.

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

Consideration could be given to installing an herbaceous perennial planting scheme around the 'Welcome to Bray' sign on the Dublin Road. Exposed geotextile was noted in the planted area along the frontage of Topaz Garage which could be topped up and covered with gravel as this can be unsightly. Road markings on the Dublin Road particularly at road junctions were very faint in places and could be renewed. What looks like a mature Stone Pine situated just inside the grounds of Ravenswell Primary School at the junction of Dublin Road and Dargle Road was admired – it would be good to request the School to remove the vigorous growth of ivy from this tree, as it is a very unusual and rare specimen in Ireland. The small roundabout at Briarwood could be considered for a landscape and enhancement scheme, as this is an important roundabout at the entrance to Bray. Some littering was noted in the vicinity of the bus stop near the roundabout and perhaps a litter bin is required here. The wildflower meadows at the entrance to Kilruddery House and Gardens were most attractive. The presentation of the Southern Cross Road was impressive with good litter control. The old and defunct bus shelters are unsightly along this road and might be replaced. The grass edge along the road kerbs could be cut back to provide a neater presentation along the road. It was good to see the long grass retained along the roadside footpaths, as this encourages increased biodiversity. Along the Upper Dargle Road, the frontage at Egan's Business Centre is rather unappealing and would benefit from some tree planting installed just behind the front boundary wall, if this is possible. Painting of traffic light posts at the Fassaroe Road junction would also be beneficial. Discarded clippings and organic material on the roadside margin outside the Nurseries housing estate detracted from this area and the planting bed here also needs some attention.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It was a great pleasure to visit your lovely seaside Town on a warm summers day in June and Bray Tidy Towns

Committee can be justly proud of all your achievements this year. You have been successful in completing a number of headline and high-profile projects this year, which will hopefully lay the foundations for improving participation amongst the Community and strengthening your connections with other like-minded groups working in the Town. You have set out an ambitious works programme as part of your multi-annual plan and due to the unique features of the Town, you have a great capacity and potential to progress well in the Competition. We hope you find the comments in the report helpful and wish you well with your endeavours for the coming year.