

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Donard** Ref: **262**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **280**
Category: **B** Date(s): **04/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	43	44
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	34	34
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	41	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31	31
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	24	25
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	31
TOTAL MARK	450	275	280

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

You are very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2017. Donard Tidy Town Association are commended for participating in this year's Tidy Towns Competition and for all the great work undertaken over the year. Thank you for your very clear and concise Application Form. The very well drawn Maps of the village including Hill Walks map, Heritage Map and Tidy Towns Map with alphabetical listing of projects and places of interest, enclosed with your application, were very helpful in the adjudication of your village. In last year's Adjudication Report reference was made to the preparation of a multi-annual Tidy Towns Plan for Donard. It is not clear whether such a plan exists? . A plan of this kind is very useful in that it provides a blueprint for tackling priority issues which you have identified under the various Competition Categories and for the effective implementation of projects and maximising the use of scarce resources. Your committee meets regularly and you have 12 Members with 5 volunteers for various tasks. You have strong links to a range of local bodies and groups and you work with the Local National School in relation to litter collection, walk-to-school and recycling initiatives. You have achieved substantial infrastructural improvements in the village over the years through your discussions with the Area Engineer, Wicklow County Council, Wicklow Rural Enterprises and through various Grant Schemes. It is noted that your work is primarily focussed on improving the aesthetic quality of Donard Village and the physical environment with the emphasis on the village being 'Tidy'. This is laudable - a tidy well-presented village will give rise to many other benefits both economically and socially for the entire Community. You meet on the first Tuesday each month and you use local newspapers and Church announcements to communicate with the community. It may, however be good to set up a Facebook page which can be a quite simple way to keep everyone informed of your ongoing activities.

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

Donard is a very beautiful village set in rolling hills and surrounded by tall trees and impressive stone walls and has a rural charm all of its own. The streetscape in Donard village with its traditional Irish building lines and frontages has unique character and aesthetic quality. Nailor Byrne's cottage was admired as was O'Keefe's Country Store and Post Office, and Moynahan's Pinnacle Bar and Lounge. The canopy above Moynahan's is a little stained. The old bike and petrol pump with the flower planting here was a great addition. The Community Hall was very well presented with appropriate floral displays. The high perimeter stone wall around the graveyard at 'Heighington Burial Ground' and site of a former Monastic Enclosure with native plants growing from the crevices in the wall was admired. It would be good to have an information sign at the Monastic Enclosure and graveyard here explaining the history of the site and the Church ruins contained within. Donard National school was well presented although, signage would benefit from cleaning. It was good to see the Green Flag and Active School Flag flying in the school grounds. However, the flags themselves are somewhat frayed showing the signs of age and may need to be replaced at an early date. The Michael Dwyer Trail sign located opposite the school has deteriorated in condition

and could be renewed. The Moat Farm Camping and Caravan park which was visited and was very well presented. The village setting here is particularly impressive. The formal planting, seat and stonework along the frontage of the Ball Alley really enhanced the area and was greatly admired. It was good to see some new development taking place in the centre of the village. No doubt the external treatment of these new premises will be in keeping with the rural charm and character of the village. The 'High Spout' water feature was noted and the adjudicator was intrigued to know more about its history and would be delighted to see it sensitively repaired in the future. We wish you well with your Grant Application for this work. The Church of Ireland Church in Donard which is located on a prominent site outside the village and the Roman Catholic Church were visited and both were found to be very well presented and maintained. Some storm damage was noted on a Tulip Tree located on the grounds of the Catholic Church.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The Central Garden area with Marian Shrine and commemorative seat looked very well on adjudication day and the standard of presentation and maintenance here was excellent. Floral displays in the village core were also presented to a high standard. The Hazelnut Tree Grove and Willow plantation on the approach into the village were noted positively.

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

The natural vegetation and fern planting situated along the stream between the Childcare premises and the Mountain Rescue Base were admired. To create local awareness of wildlife and natural amenities, a survey of the wildlife and plant life in this area by local school children (under guidance of an expert) could be a worthwhile future project under this category. A similar project could be carried out on the High Spout feature in the village.

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

The WOW sign at the National School was noted and it is good to see efforts being made to reduce transport-related carbon emissions in Donard. As you know, this category aims to encourage Tidy Towns groups to move beyond recycling, to reduce the amount of waste produced by the community in the first place, and to best manage the resources used by the Community. Donard Tidy Towns might therefore, consider initiatives for future years under this heading such as encouraging local people to engage in sustainable waste, water, energy and transport actions e.g. car- pooling and extending walk- to-school initiatives, providing cycle parking facilities in the village, greenways and cycle routes to upland areas, encouraging the development of small solar farms on appropriate sites, the use of solar panels on roofs, heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by households/businesses, use of water butts for watering gardens and Tidy Towns plantings, composting and grow your own, 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 for more information. www.stopfoodwaste.ie is a website that you may also find helpful. The Green Home Programme may also be of interest to your Group (www.greenhome.ie). Grant funding may also be available to provide energy efficiency upgrades for community and commercial facilities. A 'Free Wee Library' project could also be considered for an appropriate site.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The old sign for Toomey's Bar on the Hollywood approach road has seen better days and could be renewed. The entire village was walked on adjudication day and was found to be very neat and tidy with no littering noted – great thanks is due to all those who engage in litter picks and weed control throughout the year.

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

Palladius Park was visited and the presentation of the estate and standard of maintenance of gardens and Communal open spaces was found to be good. There is a pump-house site near the entrance to Palladius Park which appears to be the site of a serious infestation of Japanese Knotweed – you are recommended to consult with your Heritage Officer regarding eradication and control options here. Residential streets in the village core were generally presented to a good standard.

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

The approaches to Donard were generally found to be very well presented, characterised by stone boundary walls, natural hedgerows/field boundaries and tidy roadside margins. Road signs were generally clean and well presented.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a great pleasure to visit Donard village and the positive impact of Tidy Towns activities was clearly evident throughout. The village has great potential to progress well in the competition and with some focus on the low scoring categories, this will no doubt reap dividends. We wish you well with your future endeavours and hope you found the comments in this report helpful.