

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dunlavin** Ref: **517**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **254**
Category: **B** Date(s): **04/07/2017**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2016 | Mark Awarded 2017 |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Community Involvement & Planning | 60 | 30 | 31 |
| Built Environment and Streetscape | 50 | 34 | 35 |
| Landscaping and Open Spaces | 50 | 37 | 39 |
| Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities | 50 | 19 | 20 |
| Sustainable Waste and Resource Management | 50 | 12 | 13 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 50 | 51 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 50 | 32 | 33 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 50 | 31 | 32 |
| TOTAL MARK | 450 | 245 | 254 |

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 Dunlavin Tidy Towns over the last year. Thank you for your very clear and concise Application Form and Map which assisted greatly in the adjudication of your town. It is noted that Dunlavin Tidy Towns is operating as a committee with 9 Members meeting 8 times per year with the Town Forum meeting on a monthly basis. You are supported by 30 Volunteers and have strong links with a range of outside including Wicklow County Council, Tús, Fás, Dunlavin Community Forum, Local Schools, Dunlavin GAA, Dunlavin AFC. and local businesses. You communicate with local stakeholders through Church and School Newsletters, local newspapers, public meetings, text, e-mail, Facebook and website. We visited your Website and Facebook page and fully support your future Tidy Towns goals including as a priority 'to retain status of Dunlavin as an attractive Heritage Town'. The Tidy Towns Committee has developed very strong links with local schools including with St. Kevin's Community College, Green Schools Committee. The College has been awarded three Green Flags for waste energy and water. Mention was made in previous adjudication reports to the development of a multi-annual Tidy Towns Plan for Dunlavin and one wonders whether this has been considered or progressed? These future plans are important as they provide a blueprint for tackling priority issues in the Town over a number of years and assist in the effective implementation of projects and maximising use of scarce resources.

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

Dunlavin has a particularly attractive streetscape and the area around Market Square, Market House, Tynte House and Bank House add to the great charm of the central part of the Town. It is understood your Committee has been liaising with the Council's Heritage officer to contact owners of derelict properties to ensure their continued preservation and maintenance - it is good to pursue this on an ongoing basis. The presentation of The Hollies premises which had a copy of the 1911 Census attached on the front gate was admired. Dunlavin Fire Station was well presented. You might remove the stake and tie from the tree growing here. Arts Week was just over and the Market House library building was draped with cloth-like tapestries on the building façade, both sides of the entrance door and windows and around the vertical columns- the overall effect here was stunning. The Meitheal premises with its stone façade was admired. The wool and cloth was also attached to tree guards on Stephen Street which added great colour. Burke's Bar, Garret's Bar and the Dunlavin Inn premises were all admired. The rose bed here was in full bloom and particularly striking. The property beside Ed's Fruit and Veg would benefit from painting. St Nicholas's Primary School was visited and the frontage and school grounds were very well presented. The sign for the Tournant Graveyard and St Nicholas' Well might be relocated to a more prominent position as it is a little hidden at present. The 1911 Census information signs placed around the Town provided great interest – perhaps these were also erected as part of the celebration of Arts Week or are a more permanent feature - a wonderful idea. St. Nicholas of Myra Roman Catholic Church, a prominent building of great quality overlooking Fair Green, was visited -

the grounds, frontage and gates were presented to a very high standard. The existing the stone wall along Sparrow Road and the planting at the Village Green were admired. The residential properties situated beside the Imaal Hall are a great asset to the streetscape here. The sign on the Village Takeaway could be redesigned to better reflect the character building here. St. Nicholas Church of Ireland Church and graveyard were admired for their presentation and architectural quality and add greatly to the streetscape here. Whelan's Pharmacy and Hughe's Grocery store premises caught the eye. The premises beside Hughe's Grocery store would benefit from painting. The Turkish Hazel street trees on Stephen Street were noted positively and add some welcome green elements to the streetscape. These have a restricted upright growth form and would be suitable for planting on the other side of Stephen Street and along Main Street.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The Bun-Ditch Biodiversity bed with the backdrop of tall willow trees was admired. Perhaps you might consider using a brighter gravel such as Ballylusk Gravel along the edge of the road here. The Park at Market Square was visited the scene was very uplifting with colourful cotton wool strands attached to the perimeter railings for Arts Week. Artistic figures made from steel mesh were placed in the park possibly for Arts Week and included a Giraffe, Cow, Stork, Pig, Foxes, Hen and Turf cutter and cart etc. These figures added greatly to the Park but no doubt they were on temporary loan? Around the perimeter of the Park are placed tombstones of considerable heritage interest and it is assumed the park was at one time a small cemetery. It would be great to have an information Panel about the history of the former graveyard and any stories relating of those interred there. The large sycamore tree is a very imposing feature of the park. The Village Green was visited and the standard of maintenance here was excellent. The new tree planting surrounded by Chestnut fencing at the Children's Playground and Cow Green was noted positively. The playground was maintained to a good standard. The Lugatrina Nursing home was visited. We note that you have planted apple trees in the Orchard here.

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

The wildflower planting beside the Kelly's Spinologist premises was noted positively. The bee signs used here which were made by the woodwork class in St Kevin's Community College were admired. It is noted that you replaced roses with pollinator friendly plants at the Bun-Ditch flower bed. You are to be congratulated for considering different mowing regimes to encourage the development of wildflower plants, such as at the verges opposite the Catholic Church where there is an abundance of Dandelions. We note that you discourage the removal of natural vegetation such as ferns, lichens and mosses at various habitat locations in the town. This is a good policy and such vegetation should only be removed where structural damage is taking place.

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

It is noted that you organised an electrical recycling day in conjunction with Wicklow Council and have arranged for the recycling of plastic, paper and clothes. You have also been instrumental in the installation of a charity clothes bank in the local school. The Súil Dé Luain initiative and Whole School Walk to Tournant on 15/09/16 fit well into this category. It is good that you have a charity Book sale and return facility operating in the Credit Union. Your efforts in relation to highlighting the importance of reducing our transport footprint and encouraging the local school to secure a Transport Green Flag are to be commended. 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. Dunlavin Tidy Towns might therefore, consider further initiatives for future years such as sustainable waste, water energy and transport actions e.g. extending car- pooling and walk- to-school initiatives, possible cycle parking facilities in the town, greenways and cycle routes, 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 plantings, composting and grow your own 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:

It was great to see a Tidy Towns member or Tús worker out in the town picking litter on the day of adjudication. The traditional road signs at the junction of Main Street and Stephen Street would benefit from cleaning. It is good that you are highlighting the problem of dog-fouling – it is a scourge in many towns. Litter control was very good on the day of adjudication. The Dunlavin Heritage Sign was very informative and in good condition. The adjudicator was intrigued with the 1798 historical importance of the Village Green, the work of Sir James Worth Tyntec, and Dunlavin's association with Jonathan Swift, former honorary Canon of the Town.

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

Friar Hill and Church Hill estates were visited and the high standard of maintenance of the estates and respective open spaces was noted. The presentation of the entrance to Church Terrace from Church Road was admired. The Children's playground was well maintained. It is good that you are tackling on an ongoing basis the issue of unoccupied and derelict residential properties situated in the Town Centre, which detract from the Dunlavin streetscape.

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

The approach to Dunlavin along Station Road was admired. The roadside margins and boundaries are presented to a high standard here. Road surfaces and markings in the village would benefit from improvement as areas may have been damaged due to the installation of services. The presentation of Sparrow Road and the linear open space along this road was excellent.

Concluding Remarks:

You have gained marks this year across a number of the Competition categories. Dunlavin Tidy Towns and your support network have put a great effort in to make Dunlavin a better place to live, work and visit and your desire to retain the status of Dunlavin as an attractive Heritage Town is evident. You have plenty of scope for improvement across some categories and it would be worth giving these additional focus in the coming year. We hope you found our comments helpful and we wish you well in your endeavours for the year ahead.