

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Knockananna** Ref: **247**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **283**
Category: **A** Date(s): **04/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	40	41
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	39	40
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	21	22
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61	62
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	30
TOTAL MARK	450	275	283

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

You are very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2017. Well done to Knockananna Tidy Towns for participating in this year's Competition and for all the hard work carried out this year. Thank you for your very clear and concise application form which following last year's comments is set out with bullet points and accompanying Village map. The map included a numbered legend which assisted greatly in the adjudication of your village. You have 7 very active members of your Committee with a further 5 volunteers who assist with specific projects. You have a Junior Tidy Towns group who are to be represented on your main Committee. You continue to have great local support including from the Naomh Bríd National School, Coláiste Eoin, Wicklow County Council, CE workers and local businesses. In terms of communication and fundraising, your methods are varied and very positive including events such as the Coffee Morning at Teach Fáilte, monthly Car-Boot Sale, Annual AGM, word of mouth, village noticeboard, Facebook, e-mails and group texting etc. Your focus over the years has shifted from concentration on litter control prevalent in the 1970's, to the current focus on preservation of your natural and built heritage and sustainable use of resources. It is clearly evident that you have a very inclusive approach to the work of Tidy Towns. It is great to know that entering the Competition each year keeps your momentum going in the Community across all age groups, who are spurred on get involved and make Knockananna a better place to work, live and visit.

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

A real gem in the village of Knockananna is the replica phone box which has been transformed into home for recycling books. It was noted that the nearby noticeboard is used to detail work carried out by Tidy Towns in the village – this is also a great idea. The bright yellow water pump in the village was admired as was the group of thatched cottages which add to the heritage character of this part of the village. The change of colour on the newly painted Wagon Wheels public house was pleasing – this work was in progress on the day of adjudication. The Jacob's Pub licensed premises opposite would benefit from re-painting, whenever this is possible. The new bright red seats at the crossroads were admired as was the 1798 and 1916 Memorials and tree planting to the rear. The vegetable patch on the open space was well -tended. The Col. Commandant Tom Kehoe memorial which is well signposted was visited and admired and it was noted that the Old Church appeared to be no longer in use? One wonders if this building could be used for another purpose in the future? The site of the new Church was well tended and presented to a high standard. The flower tubs and planters at the entrance to the Church were admired. The colourful tree planters containing the replanted Eucalyptus trees at the Community Centre were noted positively. The area around the Centre is a little forlorn and would benefit from resurfacing possibly with a Ballylusk gravel? The presentation of the Credit Union House building, which is a thatched property, was excellent. The painting of windows, walls, doors, piers etc. here really added to the character of the building. As a future project, you might consider (if not already in your plans) pushing for the under-grounding existing over-ground electrical cables in the

village and also providing for new Street lighting. We wish you well with your plans in consultation with the owners for the renovation of the Old Forge building.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The planting schemes in Knockananna were all admired and added interest to the village streetscape. Of particular note were well tended planting schemes under road signage with stonework surrounds, the colourful planters at the Community Centre and the roses and vegetable garden near the Community Garden. Serious consideration should however, be given to reducing the height above the road of the walled-planter located in front of the Wagon Wheel's premises. It is felt that this feature in the village is a little too high above the road and if it was reduced in height, it would open up the area and add to the openness and attractiveness of the village streetscape. The Community Playground site was visited which was well maintained and well used. It was good to see that you have been able to acquire extra land near the GAA pitch for the development of a carpark -this will hopefully remove cars from the road here at match times.

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

It is noted that members have attended a biodiversity course and have established wildflower meadows at a number of locations in the village, including at the Community Garden, Graveyard and shop. The small area of wild meadow in the graveyard was admired. The layering of the 'sceach' hedging was a good project to create awareness of how traditional farming methods can improve conditions for wildlife. You have organised other events to create awareness under this category, such as the wildlife walks to explore the bog habitat at Rathduffmore and the 'Dawn Chorus' walk with local birdwatchers and it is understood more are planned. Bird and Bat boxes have been installed in the village – all of this fits very well into the types of activities suggested under this category.

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

You continue to encourage the Community to re-use, and recycle through your monthly car-boot sales which also act as important source of funding. You also manage a recycling area for glass, cans and clothes. Your water butts were noted on the day of adjudication and you have plans to provide more units. You generate funds from plant propagation and composting is taking place at the community garden and demand is high. These are all worthy initiatives. The Committee might also consider from a range further initiatives under this category for future years such as encouraging specific sustainable waste, energy and transport actions e.g. car- pooling and extending the walk to school initiatives, grow your own , cycle parking facilities, safe cycle routes in the area, 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, food waste awareness events etc. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website has good information in relation to the development of Better Energy Communities and grant funding may be available to Communities and businesses.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

It is noted that you complete regular litter picks in the village and along approach roads and to date you have removed 30 bags of litter – thankfully a significant reduction on last year. Your CE workers are a great benefit to you in tackling this issue. Litter control was considered to be good on adjudication day and the central part of the village was free of litter. Knockananna was found to be tidy village on the day of adjudication and road signage was generally clean and presentable.

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

Knockmullan Drive Estate was visited and the estate was found to be well presented and maintained. Works were in progress on the boundary of the estate. It was good to see solar panels on the houses here. We noted the long grass area on the open space at the entrance to the estate -it was pleasing to see the sign erected here notifying residents of the different maintenance regime in place and the presence of this important wetland habitat. Kyle Park was visited and it was found that the standard of maintenance of the estate was generally good.

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

The natural vegetation along the roadside margins and stone wall boundaries on the approaches to Knockananna were greatly admired. However, the spraying of herbicide under the sign on the Rathdangan approach was noted – herbicide usage along roadside margins is not advised as it looks unsightly and is damaging for wildlife. Such areas are best left to grow naturally or alternatively plant under the sign with perennial flowering plants. The entrance to the village from Hackettstown was particularly admired. The line of mature birch trees and well- tended grass margin enhanced this area. It was somewhat disappointing to note the extensive use of herbicides on both sides of the lane known as Back Bawns Lane. The Mass Path was visited and it was pleasing to note that this feature is marked with a small sign. The end of the Mass path walk was also noted and it was wondered whether it was proposed to open this up in the future? The road surface on the Aughrim Road was rather uneven. Unsightly tree stumps here could be ground out or alternatively carved in situ to create artistic features? The road surface on the Ballinasillogue approach was in a good condition and the entrance to the village is well presented here. The Knocknaskeagh/Rathdangan Road approach was admired because of its natural vegetation and also because of the Cherry trees and growing in the roadside margin. Road surfaces and markings at the crossroads in the village could be renewed.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a great to visit Knockananna for the first time this Summer. The map and project list made the adjudication of your village a real pleasure. Knockananna village has a charming rural character and interesting physical layout and has great potential to progress to the upper echelons of the competition. Your Committee is clearly working diligently with the entire Community under all the Competition category headings to achieve this. We hope you found the comments in the report helpful and wish you well with your future endeavours.