

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathdangan** Ref: **1538**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **239**
Category: **A** Date(s): **04/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	36	37
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	32	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	33	34
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	16	17
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9	9
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	49	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	28	29
TOTAL MARK	450	232	239

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

You are very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2017. Well done to the Committee of Rathdangan Community Council for participating in this year's Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for the clear and concise Application Form with map of the village with numbered key – this assisted the adjudicator in finding the various features and works undertaken by Tidy Towns in the village although the map presentation might be improved for next year. We note that you have 12 members on the Rathdangan Community Council Committee with a further 25 Volunteers who undertake various activities. Your Council meetings are held monthly with Tidy Towns activities co-ordinated and implemented on a weekly basis. You have strong support in implementing your work programmes from outside bodies such as Wicklow County Council, Local Primary School, and Supervalu and local traders and businesses. You communicate with stakeholders through a quarterly newsletter, Facebook and Web Page, Village noticeboard, parish Newsletter etc. Your involvement with the local school is associated with the 'biodiversity' Green Flag Project and biodiversity workshops have been held in conjunction with Wicklow County Council. You are fortunate to have in place a 5 Year Plan 2014-18, based on a public consultation process, which sets out a blueprint for the future development of Rathdangan and its Community. The plan lists priority areas for Strengthening Community Spirit and Involvement. It is great that you have secured €48,000 funding for a playground on the Community Field. Your Community Café has obvious benefits in providing a space where local people can gather socially. No doubt it also allows the Tidy Towns Group to meet and progress ongoing works and future proposals, set out under the Local Environment Action sub-heading of the 5-year plan.

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

The 'Old Village Pantry' premises located on the site of the O'Toole Memorial Hall were presented very well. The red benches outside, the strongly coloured well painted walls together with the Floral displays provided great colour and interest here. The Marian Shrine or Grotto was well planted and tended and is a credit to work of the local community and Tidy Towns Group. Byrne's Public House premises (formerly 'Juniors') is an attractive building located close to the crossroads and looked well. The Rathdangan Heritage Sign was neat and tidy and provides comprehensive information on the village and surrounding heritage features. The old bicycle with the floral displays at the main junction was noted positively. Road surfaces and markings in the village centre would benefit from some improvement. Cranerin graveyard was visited and the setting and views across the countryside were admired here-it is maintained to a good standard. The graveyard gates are rusting however, and would benefit from painting and the car park surface gravel may need to be topped up in places. The Rathangan Heritage Trail was followed and the Moat in the vicinity of the Catholic Church was noted. Saint Mary's Church of Kilamoat was visited and was well presented. However, the perimeter railings at the Church have rusted and would benefit from painting.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

It is noted that you have planted trees donated through National Tree Week at various locations in the village and bulbs have been sewn for spring colour. You maintain the grounds at the Catholic Church and the verges on the approach to the village. We wish you well with the Playground Project on the Community field. There is further scope for additional feature planting using pollinator- friendly perennials at a number of locations in the village.

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

You have attended Biodiversity workshops during 2016 and have engaged with other small villages in the area on the same theme. You are implementing actions under your 5-year plan to improve biodiversity such as the installation of bug hotels, bat boxes, nesting boxes, living wall and wildflower area in the Village Garden. You are co-operating with the local school in relation to the award of the 'Biodiversity' Green Flag and are helping with the provision of a range of biodiversity related elements at the school. With regard to the little stream which runs near the village – it would be a good idea under this category heading, for the schoolchildren, under appropriate supervision and guidance, to survey the wildlife associated with this stream and present the findings as part of a Biodiversity Project. This could feed into the Green Flag award and any future plans for extending walking areas along the stream.

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

Your application confirms that you have not undertaken any particular projects during the year under this heading. 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. Your group might therefore, consider further initiatives under this category for future years such as sustainable waste, water energy and transport actions e.g. extending car- pooling and walk- to-school initiatives, possible 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, 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 such as the Community Café. A 'Free Wee Library' project could also be considered for the Community Café.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

It is noted that you undertook a litter pick on April 27th with 20 volunteers -thanks to all those who participated in this. It is good that individual residents are maintaining 'litter free zones' close to where they live- this is an effective good approach. The litter control situation in Rathdangan was very good on the day of adjudication and no litter was noted. The village core was neat and tidy and signage was to a high standard. Has any progress been made with authorities regarding the undergrounding of overhead wires and cables? – these detract from the streetscape in the core village area.

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

Residential property frontages in the core village area and along approach roads were generally found to be presented to a good standard.

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

The approach roads to Rathdangan including margins, boundary walls and fences and field boundary hedgerows are maintained to a good standard. The little stream and stone bridge located on the Donard /Glen of Imaal approach Road (with millstone lying nearby?) was of considerable interest and might benefit from improved public access in this area.

Concluding Remarks:

Rathdangan is a very attractive village with considerable potential to progress well in the competition. The Village Pantry Café is a real gem of intrinsic value and you have made great strides in ensuring the development of your village and Community is carried out in a planned way. We are looking forward to seeing how your new playground and Village Garden develops. We have given you some pointers as to how you might do better in the lower scoring categories, although you may come up with even better ideas yourselves. We hope you find our comments helpful and wish you well in your activities for the coming year.