

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Roundwood** Ref: **246**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **282**
Category: **B** Date(s): **10/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	40	41
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38	38
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	33	33
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	26	27
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61	61
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	36
TOTAL MARK	450	278	282

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

You are very welcome to the 2017 SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition and we thank you for continued participation in the competition and for all the work carried out by Roundwood Tidy Towns Committee over the last year. We note that you have up to 20 Members on your Committee meeting monthly with a further 50 Volunteers available as the need arises and that you are now working under umbrella of the Roundwood and District Community Council (RDCC) resulting in more focused action plans and less duplication of activities. Community support is essential in progressing in the competition and you have confirmed a range of organisations who assist you in your work including local Men's Shed, Walks Committee, Historical Society, Local Sports Clubs, Active Retirement Group etc. We are impressed with the range of organisations providing you with advice and funding such as Wicklow County Council, Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board, Irish Water, Wicklow Uplands Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service, PURE, all local businesses and East Coast Radio. Communication with local residents is also to the fore and you achieve this through your website, Facebook page, Newsletter, email, texts and local radio, Open Day and Community Survey. You are involving young people in your activities such as having an input into biodiversity poster competition in the National School, litter picks with T.Y. Students and the Cubs and Beavers painting fences and planting daffodil bulbs. The level of activity of the various groups in Roundwood together with the many social interactions in place such as the organising of Reservoir Walks, Roundwood Festival, and various fund-raising events is worthy of great praise. Finally, it is noted that you are currently in the process of analysing feedback from the recent Community Survey undertaken by the RDCC and this will form the basis of a definitive 5 Year Plan for the village based on the appropriate public consultation process. As mentioned in last year's Adjudication Report you have now submitted a very good Outline Action Plan for Roundwood 2017-2021 which is clear in terms of its objectives and timelines and no doubt this can be refined and strengthened when all the information from the current Survey is available. We used the aerial photograph submitted with your Application and found it of some help in finding the various sites of interest around the village. However, a clear and concise Tidy Towns map of the village with the specific physical projects completed clearly marked on the map, together with a numbered legend and completion dates etc. would be preferable. Perhaps this could be considered for next year.

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

The Byrne and Woods premises and the Vartry House Bar were admired for their presentation as was Keeley's Hardware and Garden Centre premises (formerly the St. Kevin's Bus Garage). Some of the street trees (Rowan) located opposite St. Laurence O'Toole Catholic Church now require essential maintenance work, such as removing low-growing suckers and repairing tree guards etc. This is not a particularly good long-term street tree species and maybe a different type of tree could be planted here in the future. The Church grounds and frontage were maintained to a high standard and the boundary wall and railing is a very attractive feature in this part of the village. The floral displays on the dwelling opposite Tochar House were admired as was Tochar House itself. The Garda

station looked well and we were impressed with the quality of the nearby Commemorative Monument to the Signatories to the 1916 Proclamation. It is great asset to Roundwood to have public toilets on the Main Street - a lot of villages in Wicklow and elsewhere do not have this kind of facility available. However, it is important that such facilities receive the appropriate high level of ongoing maintenance so they are in an acceptable condition for use by the public. On the day of adjudication they were found to be in a good condition although they would benefit from an internal re-vamp and decoration. Externally, the roof is covered in moss which is unsightly and some littering was found to the rear of the building. The sign beside the public toilets which provides information on Roundwood was clean and well presented. However, the area around the entrance to the public toilets generally does not enhance the village streetscape and would benefit from an appropriate landscaping scheme – We note this is proposed in your outline 5 Year Plan. It was a shame to note that the Old School House premises are now boarded up and the site has become overgrown. Hopefully this building, which appears to be in a good condition, will be sensitively restored and brought into good use in the near future. The provision of good cycle parking facilities here was noted. The Roundwood Inn and Bar and the Coach House premises were both admired for their presentation and the floral displays were impressive along the frontage of these premises. We called to Saint Lawrence O'Toole National School and noted the 'natural' play area. Some additional maintenance work on the play area and around the school grounds generally would be welcomed and some litter was noted in this area. The pedestrian traffic barriers outside the school would benefit from painting and the timber boundary fence along the field opposite the School could be replaced or alternatively a hedgerow planted along the roadside at this location.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The seating area on the Ashford Road known as 'Roundwood Bank' was well presented and it is good that this area is getting well used and is included in the 'Adopt a Spot Initiative'. It was noted that a number for seats would benefit from painting here and capping stones on some of the enclosing walls are missing. The area known as 'Bertie's Triangle' was visited and was found to be very well maintained and presented and we noted with interest the floral displays using the timber 'Cable Drum' motion planters. These might benefit from painting or staining at some stage in the future. The seating area at Sinnott's Corner was visited and this feature has become a little jaded with uneven paving etc. and possibly would benefit from a re-design – as provided for in your Outline Five Year Plan.

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

You have put in a lot of effort under this category in partnership with Irish Water in relation to the further development of the Vartry Reservoir Walks and you have ambitious plans to develop and maintain over 25 Km of sustainable walking trails to link up the Upper Vartry Reservoir Walk with the Lower Vartry Slí na Sláinte and the Coillte Plantation at Mullinaveige. It is good that in the future the possibility of extending these trails to other trails in the Wicklow area such as the Sugar Loaf Way, Avonmore Way and Wicklow Way is being pursued. It is noted that work will commence shortly on the provision of two new car parks to service these trails. That you are considering the general health and future viability of woodlands in this area is also noteworthy and you are addressing this issue through selective thinning and replanting where necessary. Your partnership with the National Trails Office, Wicklow Uplands Council and Co. Wicklow Partnership is clearly reaping dividends in regard furthering your objectives here. It is noted that insect hotels continue to be provided and maintained on the Ashford Road.

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

The initiative in association with Wicklow County Council's Local Agenda 21 to establish a 'Water Butt Team' as a specialized unit in the Men's Shed is a great idea and should incentivise local residents to conserve drinking water and use rainwater instead for their gardening activities. You continue to work in relation to resource efficiency such as the Parish Hall book exchange and monthly car boot sale, and having a discount provided by business premises for using re-usable thermal coffee mugs. It is noted that 'Special Ops' a local business has converted from diesel generators to a new renewable energy system entirely off-grid. We wonder has this conversion been successful? Perhaps your group could consider further initiatives under this category for future years such as sustainable transport actions e.g. car- pooling and walk to school initiatives, possible new cycle routes in the area, encouraging the development of solar farms on appropriate sites, use of solar panels, mini wind turbines and heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by households/businesses etc. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website has good information in relation to the development of Better Energy Communities. Grant funding may also be available to provide energy efficiency upgrades for community and commercial facilities.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Thanks for taking part in the Annual Spring Clean on the 24th April last – it is noted that there was a 50% reduction in the number of bags picked and sorted this year compared to last year, although it is still a large quantity- the most of which it is presumed is generated by passing traffic. In this context, the fact that Wicklow Uplands Council picked 60 bags of rubbish on an earlier Spring Clean along the road up to Sally Gap confirms clearly that litter is still a major issue in rural and upland areas and must be tackled. It is noted that you conduct monthly street clean-ups but this may not be frequent enough during the busy Tourist Season? Roundwood was reasonably clean and tidy on the day of adjudication although there were locations where litter was present such as at the public toilets and in the vicinity of the National School, as previously mentioned.

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

The random rubble stone walls at the entrance to Tochar Páirc estate were admired. The general standard of maintenance in Tochar Páirc was found to be good and the rocky feature planting at the entrance added visual interest to the area, although this may be difficult to maintain. Signs at the entrance to Vartry Heights should be

repaired. Some front garden boundary walls in Vartry Heights would benefit from painting. Red staining was noted on a number of the boundary walls facing open spaces here and it would be good to consider planting hedges along these walls to screen them from public view in the longer term. There was some litter also noted in Vartry Heights. Djouce Meadow estate was well presented.

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

In general, the margins and boundaries along all the approach roads to Roundwood are presented to a good standard. We particularly admired the mature trees and stone wall boundary along the entrance to Roundwood from Killmacanogue side. It was also great to see an area and strip of grass margin retained uncut to promote the development of wildflowers along the road towards Tochar GAA Club - this approach to maintenance, if undertaken in a managed way, helps to encourage wildlife and provides food for pollinator species. Road surfaces on the approaches to Roundwood were generally found to be good, although some sections of road would benefit from renewal of road markings.

Concluding Remarks:

You are making good strides in the Competition under a number of headings and in particular in relation to the further development of walks associated with the Vartry Reservoirs, which are a terrific amenity situated on your doorstep. It would be good to pursue, the proposals outlined in your Five Year Plan with some vigour and the local consultation and feedback will help to focus your shorter term plans and objectives in this regard. We hope some of the suggestions in this report will be of some assistance with your work over the coming year. Roundwood is a village with great potential and you can go far in this Competition and we wish you well in your future endeavours.