

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Shillelagh** Ref: **937**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **219**
Category: **B** Date(s): **06/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	34	35
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	29	29
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	29	30
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	18	18
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	8	8
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	42	42
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	27	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	29	29
TOTAL MARK	450	216	219

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

You are very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2017. Well done to Shillelagh Tidy Towns (Shillelagh People Property Company Ltd.) for participating in this year's Tidy Towns Competition your second year back in the competition. Thank you for the very clear and concise Application Form which together with informative photographs and Village map complete with numbered legend, greatly assisted in the adjudication of your village. It is noted that Shillelagh Tidy Towns currently has 12 members and you have 20 Volunteers and a range of other bodies such as the Shillelagh Cheshire Home, Shillelagh GAA Club, Shillelagh Utd. F.C., Community Games, Primary Schools and Millbank Residents Association who assist you with your work. Your Committee meets monthly and village clean ups and Village Market at the Courthouse are also held on a monthly basis. You have forged strong links with local businesses such as Cheshire Home, Kerry Foods, Walker's Shop, Parkview House, Central House, Ye Olde Shillelagh B&B, Oakridge Cabs, and None-so-Hardy Nursery who assist with resourcing and funding your work, as necessary. It is great to note you have secured a grant to develop the Village Green and you liaise closely with Wicklow Leader, Wicklow Tourism and Wicklow Uplands Council in relation to preparing longer-term plans for the development of your village. You are engaging well with local children and young people through the Greta Partnership and local schools and sports clubs. Communication with local stakeholders is primarily via Facebook on a weekly basis and through leaflet drops, Newsletters, local newspapers and church notices etc. Thank you for enclosing with your Application your Top Level 3 Year Draft Plan which sets out a clear path for the development of your village and will enable you to carefully plan the sourcing and allocation of funds and resources to maximum effect.

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

Shillelagh has a streetscape of considerable architectural quality. The Church of Ireland Church situated on an elevated site above the village was admired for its impressive cut stone entrance, gates, piers and arches. The grounds of the Church and Churchyard were noted for the high standard of maintenance and thanks are no doubt due to local Tús workers who it is presumed assist with maintenance works here. The farmhouse and farmyard opposite the Church entrance was noted for its positive presentation and appeared to have been newly painted. Parkview House was admired and the colour scheme here was fitting. The stone dwellings opposite the Central House Bar on Main Street were most attractive and the presentation of gardens and frontages here was very good. The Olde Shillelagh Stick Makers B&B was admired particularly for the shopfront and traditional window display providing a comprehensive history on woodlands in the area and the manufacture of Shillelaghs. The Avalon premises looked a bit run down and would benefit from some improvement works. The planting of a new flower bed here with roses was a welcome addition. The Old Courthouse is a building of strong architectural merit and worthy of due care and attention. The windows and doors and facade would benefit from painting as would the railings. The N and H Pratt premises detracted from the village streetscape but this site may be re-developed in the future? The

pedestrian bridge over the river Derry would benefit from cleaning/painting and a more appropriate colour might be considered. The National School was visited and the striking red railings along the frontage were admired. However, the maintenance of the school grounds has fallen behind, but this may be tackled during the summer months.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The planting at Bachelor's Walk was noted and it is suggested that the plant density here it's a little bit sparse with too much gravel visible. The Village Green (Community play area) was visited and grass cutting was in full swing when we arrived. The standard of maintenance in the Park here appeared to have fallen behind and could be improved. Perhaps consideration should be given to establishing larger areas of long grass/wildflowers which would reduce maintenance requirements and costs and would also benefit wildlife conservation. Where grass is cut however, this should be carried out frequently perhaps twice/week during the busy mid-summer months. The perimeter hedge around the Children's Playground is struggling to establish due to excessive weed growth. It is noted that plans are in train for the re-development of the Village Green and we await the implementation of these plans with interest. The planting scheme at the Tinahely Road junction looked well. However, the adjacent site to the rear of the Courthouse was found to be in a poor condition with some dumping and litter present. Perhaps consideration could be given to developing this plot of land in the future as a small Riverside Park with perhaps a café/restaurant located in the adjoining Courthouse building. The landscape planting on the Carnew Road junction was found to be a little sparse. The Fairgreen area was noted and would be suitable for the establishment of Wildflower meadows and conservation of important wildlife habitats along the river.

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

It is noted that you have progressed plans in conjunction with Wicklow Tourism for the development of the Village Green Area which includes a biodiversity area. A Healthy Walk initiative has also been implemented in relation to the off-road walks at Cheshire Home, Fairgreen and the Village Green. A large element of this category is raising awareness and an understanding of the natural amenities present in the vicinity of Shillelagh to local residents and stakeholders. You can do so by organising events or simply by sharing interesting posts on social media.

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

It is noted that your future proposals under this category are currently in development. Some simple initiatives under this category which could be put into effect for next year could be; the use of water butts for rainwater harvesting to assist in the watering of gardens and plantings, re-use or upcycling of household items, charity shop enterprises, Stop food waste workshops and other sustainable waste events. However, your Committee might also consider a range of longer term initiatives under this category for future years under the headings of sustainable waste, energy and transport actions e.g. composting of vegetation and leaf litter, car-pooling and encouraging the walk-to-school initiatives, grow your own Community Gardens, cycle parking and facilities for Tourists, off-road 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 etc. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website has good information in relation to the development of Better Energy Communities.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The clean - up work carried out on Chapel Lane was noted and the flower bed at the Church of Ireland entrance looked well. Some litter was noted in Shillelagh village on Adjudication day and it was wondered whether a monthly clean-up of the village was frequent enough to deal with this ongoing issue. In addition, some of the road signage on the approaches to the village was dirty and would benefit from cleaning.

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

It is a very positive development that a number of local 'teams' are now taking ownership for their estates namely Millbank Residents Committee, Coolattin Residents Committee, and Bachelor's Walk Residents Committee. The planting at the entrance to Millbank housing estate was in full bloom on the day of adjudication and was particularly admired. Coolattin Gardens was well presented. Oakridge Manor estate was visited and noted positively including the extensive growth of clover on the open space area, which is very pollinator friendly.

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

Shillelagh Tidy Towns has been very active this year in carrying out works to improve the presentation of the approaches to the village at a number of locations including at the Carnew Road junction, Tullow approach at Bachelor's Walk, Ardeen, Chapel Lane, and the Tinahely approach road. It will take time for these improvements to bear fruit and some areas may need to be revisited in terms of more intensive planting schemes and improvement works, as resources allow. The extensive use of herbicides along the road margins on the Tullow approach to Shillelagh was noted. This is unsightly and is not a practice we would encourage in the interest of protecting habitats and biodiversity.

Concluding Remarks:

Shillelagh has a wonderful sylvan setting and impressive architectural quality to its Main Street and therefore, has great potential to progress further in the Competition. The name of the village is well known worldwide, has strong historic associations which could be used to great advantage in developing a strong Tourist offering in the area. Natural amenities such as the River Derry and Village Green could be developed further and there is great potential

to further enhance and develop the Main Street and Courthouse area. It is hoped that you find the comments in the report helpful and we wish you well in your future endeavours.