

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Stratford-On-Slaney** Ref: **849**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **312**
Category: **B** Date(s): **05/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	42	43
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	36	37
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44	45
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	19	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	62	63
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	39	40
TOTAL MARK	450	305	312

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

You are very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2017. Well done to Stratford-on-Slaney Tidy Towns for participating in this year's Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for the very comprehensive Application Form and Detailed Submission including the very informative photographs showing works in progress and the wide community involvement with Tidy Towns in your village. It was very beneficial to include in your submission the Walking Map, Street Map, and Historical Map of the village. The excellent and well presented Walking Map with its useful legend key was invaluable to the Adjudicator in getting to see all the sites of interest in your lovely village. It is noted that Stratford-on-Slaney Tidy Towns Committee is operating for the last 48 years and currently has 14 members supported by 12 Volunteers and you have at least 12 meetings per year. You have established strong links with Stratford Grangecon Development Association Ltd., Wicklow County Council and County Wicklow Partnership. Parish Newsletters, Meetings, Flyers, Word-of-Mouth, Facebook and house visits are utilised to communicate with your community and you have a dedicated schools-liaison officer, two Community Garden officers and a GAA liaison officer. It is good that you have established a programme of regular talks, meetings and excursions which provides a very important social outlet for local residents and particularly the elderly living in Stratford-on-Slaney and you are to be congratulated for the various fund-raising activities undertaken over the year.

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

The first port of call in your village was the Community Centre and the enclosed Communal Garden, including the children's playground, all of which looked most impressive. The wide range of features and facilities available here was amazing, such as the Community Greenhouse, Community Polytunnel, Vegetable Garden etc., all available for the residents of Stratford-on-Slaney to enjoy. Unfortunately, the gate was locked so it wasn't possible to inspect the garden in any great detail. The National School was next visited and presentation of the grounds and school frontage was excellent. The road surface here is, however, would benefit from upgrading and re-marking. It is noted that the school's 9th Green Flag and 4th Active Flag have been awarded – congratulations to all concerned. The Green Flag was flying but has become a little frayed at the edges and may need to be replaced. The John the Baptist Church of Ireland Church was visited and the newly painted gates looked well. The Churchyard, containing some very old headstones, was generally maintained to a high standard. The works in progress on the stone wall boundary of the churchyard were also noted. Progressing to the village core, the presentation of the Stratford Arms Bar and the dwellings on the opposite side of the road was admired, the latter displaying particularly fine and attractive granite door surrounds and sills. The artistic Wildlife Board, located at the Village 'Circus' was informative and looked well. The Roman Catholic Church and grounds were visited and these are maintained to a high standard. The renovation works carried out on the old schoolhouse building were noted. This is a very worthwhile and interesting project for your Committee to become involved in and we wish you well with your endeavours here. We look forward to seeing the finished project when all the renovation work is completed. The painted re-used slate

signs erected throughout the village are very tasteful and add tremendously to the character and sense of place in the village.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The planting of tall hedging around the Village recycling facility was particularly admired and in fact it was so well screened, it was almost missed this on the way down to the Church. Recycling bins can become unsightly elements in a village streetscape and to be able to screen them from view with a well-developed deciduous hedge is a great advantage. The Village Circus area with its stone triangle planters, formal box hedging and tree planting all of which were well maintained, was most attractive - this is a great visual and historic feature in the village. The triangular planter bed with timber surround containing the cross-community planting scheme was noted positively. The Milk Churn planting scheme on Chapel Street where the Fuchsias were in full bloom was a splendid feature in this area. The floral displays throughout the village were well cared for and added considerably to the presentation and positive impact of the work of Tidy Towns on the village.

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

The establishment of a wildflower meadow on the grassed area opposite the Roman Catholic Church and old schoolhouse was noted and a range of wild plant species were in flower here on the day of adjudication - well done on this. The renewal of the Wildlife Sign at the Village Circus was also noted. The commencement of the Nature Walk was visited. This is a great amenity which can be expanded to include other walks in time. You should be aware that there is an infestation of Japanese Knotweed close to the nature walk steps. It would be a good idea to arrange with the landowner or otherwise for the eradication of this invasive species at this location, as soon as possible to avoid it spreading any further. The use of pollinator friendly plantings at your Community Garden and around the village was noted. The planned flower bomb event with the school and GAA Club in the Autumn is a great fun idea to create awareness amongst school children and parents of the importance of wildflowers and natural habitats for wildlife conservation.

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

You have outlined a very impressive list of 21 different ongoing projects being undertaken or supported by your Committee under this category. Most notable amongst these are the Ink Cartridge Recycling Scheme, Minion Planters using Old Tyres, Refurbished stove for the heating of the Old Schoolhouse Building, the reuse of old slate to create artistic street signage, Food Waste Program, bucket and toilet roll planters and pallet planters. The photographs provided were helpful in giving the adjudicator a flavour of what was involved with some of these items. You have clearly been successful under this category in creating awareness amongst the local Community of sustainability and the management of waste and resources. To develop this category further it may be worth considering looking at projects across the whole area of Energy usage and sustainable transport such as walking to school initiatives, car-pooling, e-car charge points in the village, use of solar and wind power for etc.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Litter control in Stratford-on-Slaney on the day of adjudication was very good and no litter was noted in the village. You have daily litter patrols and on Wednesdays there is a litter patrol at the school involving two Committee Members. It is good that you are sorting and recycling the collected litter where possible. It is noted that the school healthy eating policy has helped to reduce the amount of waste and litter generated here. Footpath cleanliness and weed control in the village was to a high standard.

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

Hillview estate was visited and the general standard of maintenance and upkeep of this estate was good. It may be worth considering planting hedges along all the concrete block boundary walls at the entrance and facing onto the open spaces in the estate. This would have a positive impact on the general presentation of the estate in years to come. We called to Slaney View Estate and admired the presentation of open spaces here. As with Hillview, consider planting a hedge along the wall at the entrance. Winetavern Manor was visited and the good standard of maintenance here and good road surfaces was noted. Perhaps some hedge planting could also be considered here along the concrete block walls at the entrance to this estate. Residential properties and front gardens in the centre of the village were presented to a high standard and residents were busily tending their gardens near the Village 'Circus' on the day of adjudication.

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

All the approach roads into Stratford-on-Slaney were inspected and road surfaces were generally good and roadside boundaries in some cases consisting of random rubble natural stone walls were most attractive. In general, roadside margins were maintained and presented to an excellent standard with suitable set back and protection of hedgerows with unmown boundary edges, where appropriate. Road signage was clean and generally not obscured by vegetation. Road surfaces and markings at a number of locations in the centre of the village would benefit from some improvement works e.g. Chapel Street.

Concluding Remarks:

It was the first time to visit your lovely historic village and it really is an idyllic place with great character, set in the lush countryside of West Wicklow. Thank you for all your efforts, as outlined in your professional Submission and

Application Form - the high quality maps and photographs showing works in progress indicate a strong Community-wide involvement in your work. It was a great pleasure to judge Stratford-on-Slaney and your Committee can be justly proud of all your achievements this year.