

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Fermoy** Ref: **588**
County: **Cork(North)** Mark: **295**
Category: **E** Date(s): **17/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	34	35
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	44	46
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	37	38
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	35	35
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	63	63
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	31
TOTAL MARK	450	287	295

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

You mentioned in your submission that your Tidy Towns group is “part of the fabric of Fermoy and promotes a partnership and community focus”. This is certainly borne out by the number of groups that you engage with. You must be well regarded with the Fermoy community to have attracted such diverse groups willing to work with you to achieve your aims. With such a large volume of groups working together it is great to see you using a structured emailing system. This can be a very efficient, effective, and environmentally friendly way of keeping everyone in touch with what needs doing. Maybe you could also try using texting or WhatsApp. Some people are worried that joining Tidy Towns would mean a huge commitment, and having a communication system that is easier to opt in and out of might encourage more to sign up.

I was impressed with the posts on your Facebook page. Showing people progress is also encouraging to a group. Maybe more use of this would assist you.

Your map was of professional standard, clear and bright. However it took a lot of work to try and cross reference the submission to the map to ensure that all projects were seen on adjudication day. A small legend at the side of the map (even hand written), just numbering and naming projects would help with the adjudication. We always want to ensure that we don't miss any projects as we realise the amount of work that goes into each and every one.

Keep up the good work!

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

Showing the before and after pictures from the painting project on Pearse Square Fermoy was a great way to highlight the impressive results of the work. A fact you mention was already noted on the Late Late Show! The newly painted clock tower vastly improves the appearance of this street given its very prominent location. It never ceases to amaze adjudicators of the power of community groups, social groups and commercial groups coming together and what can be achieved. The fact that this project which started in 2016 is continuing to increase its participation is testament to success breeding success. As is now the norm in most towns in Ireland both large and small derelict buildings were noted but your work will certainly help here.

These improvement can only improve the shopping area in Fermoy which benefits from nice wide footpaths that are free of clutter.

Never underestimate the power of good signage. Even though it is a small percentage of the overall frontage of a building, it always adds to a streetscape. This was seen Spillane Butchers shop sign overlooking the river, which gives a lovely nod to the heritage of this fine town. Other lovely signage includes the Vanilla Shop and the Fermoy Florists whose font gave a nice sign an even nicer look.

The credit union looks exceptionally well in an area that includes a lot of well-kept shopfronts including Fitzgerald's Butchers. The imposing red brick Garda station stands out well.

The bright orange of the Bait & Tackle shop on Richmond Hill stood out well and was supplemented by some

pollinator friendly planting.

Fermoy as a market town has nice wide roads. However parking on both sides of the streets detracts from the width. We were impressed with the availability of car park facilities which were very keenly priced at a euro a day with free parking up to 1pm on Saturdays. This compares with €1 per hour on street parking. We were surprised that the car parks were not utilised more as they are so near the town centre. Motorists going in and out of parking spaces on the main street did cause extra traffic delays (although what was more surprising was that motorists seemed to co-operate with this by letting people in and out with no blowing of horns!)

Colman's walk is a beautiful amenity and very well maintained. Your additional flower bed planting improves this already impressive facility. You are fortunate to also have such a fine facility in your Town Park which is also well-kept.

The impressive building of Gaelscoil de hÍde had its Green Flag flying. The impressive roofed bike shed was noted and we hope on school days it is used as there seemed to be a lack of cycling around the town in general.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The amazing Blackwater River dominates this town and is an marvellous asset. I had forgotten just how breath-taking it is. The walkway beside it adds to its benefits for residents and visitors alike and was certainly being utilised on day of adjudication. The area was just so alive with life and vitality from walkers, people just sitting relaxing, the rowers that were spotted upstream, fishermen etc. The views from Kent Bridge from all angles whether looking towards river bank, the fine building of Christ Church & spire on horizon, or the convent peeping out, and the updating of the streetscape only add to this fine open space.

The Pike road new stone work and landscaping was very worthwhile project. The low maintenance yet stylish planting scheme is always to be encouraged.

The Mill Island car park has some nice planting. The work provided by your Junior Tidy Towners is certainly noted, although the barrier could do with some repainting.

The riverbank here provides a wonderful wild sanctuary for pollinators and should not be overlooked as an area worth highlighting as a resource for this.

The McDonagh Terrace car park near the town hall has some nice trees but needed to be weeded. While we realise that this vast space is not possible to landscape totally (and shouldn't be) but a little extra colour here would go a long way. Wildflower planters might work well here. Don't always feel you have to reinvent the wheel, take a look at what other towns have done.

The co-ordinated approach of the new planter boxes throughout the town does add a lot of new colour. With 100 now in total this require a lot of co-ordination. We note from one of your Facebook posts that you ask members of the public to take responsibility of one near them. We hope that this call was heeded. There were some nice colourful planters noted outside a number of businesses including Wagans Taverns planting which was stylish and didn't take up much room on the footpath outside. The window display out the Cross pub was also noted.

The Fitzgerald Monument had some colourful new planting in a very well kept area near the town hall.

There were some lovely standalone aspects which add to the overall good impression of your town. The bright purple coloured seating on Richmond Hill must be very welcome and appreciated for those using this area! The flower bed in front of the famine relief wall plaque commenting 1847 rebuilt in 2013 with the shale stone is very well kept. The bright multi-colour railing on the children's playground near Devlin Street certainly draws interest towards this very impressive and well-kept children's facility. The GAA pitches were well maintained with some nice hedging which will provide good cover in years to come. Many joggers were spotted utilising this facility.

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

Stopping to admire the Blackwater River and surrounding area was a delightful experience. There are very few towns in Ireland that would have this amenity literally on their doorstep. We note from your submission that schools visit the Barnane Walk by the River Blackwater on a regular basis to conduct surveys on the wildlife of the river and its banks. This is to be commended and encouraged. You have taken on a number of projects and surveys with the schoolchildren. Installing Bird boxes with web cams certainly bring them into closer contact with nature while not disturbing the birds themselves. The work of the Cork Nature Network should help ensure that this works continues. In their submission, Local Tidy Towns Committees sometimes forget to reflect the work carried out by other groups which help achieve Tidy Towns aims.

From the Town centre when you face the river only the noise of the traffic behind that reminds you that you are in the middle of a busy town, such is the expanse of nature before you. The heron looked magnificent with his wings outstretched amongst the mallards. Even though the weir wasn't very full the cascading water was highly impressive in noise and beauty. The two fishermen were testament to the vitality of this river.

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

Being surrounded by water certainly seems to have inspired you to focus on this area of resource management. You have built on the success of the initial water harvesting system at Andersons Place. Well done on the subsequent successful project with the Fermoy Rowing Club. Using the water from one of the two storage tanks to wash the boats after use seems like a logical choice. Using the other to feed the toilette system and to power wash and clean the traffic island at Pearse Street and Kent Bridge is a great use of resources. You mention a huge reduction in consumption of supplied water as a result (which is further evidenced by others wanting to set up similar systems) While we do not need an accurate assessment, it always makes a strong case to quantify benefits e.g. reduced by 20%/40%/60%.

We have no doubt that your work in encouraging community buildings and commercial premises as well as the on-going work of residential areas, to take on water harvesting will yield some very impressive results in years to

come.

It is wonderful to see how your schools have embraced the Green Flags program, with 6 out of 7 schools participating, some with multiple flags.

Fermoy's men's shed project to use recycled wood and pallets from local factories were noted dotted around Fermoy and added to the open spaces.

The "Bring Morning" seemed like a novel idea. Judging on its success, you may want to repeat again this year.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

For a sizeable town Fermoy's achievement of 8th cleanest in Ireland is commendable. Well done on this result. Your constant litter patrols are having a great effect and it is noticeable in walking around your town.

You seemed to have done a lot of work in the area of dog fouling awareness. I really liked the Dog fouling post on your Facebook page showing the photos of where dog fouling may end up ("Pick it up or we will") e.g. on kids shoes, buggies, etc.

Out of the six dog walkers we passed by, 4 had doggy bags with them visibly.

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

The work carried out between Tidy Towns, Cork County Council, Community Employment Schemes, Avondhu Blackwater Partnership, and local residents is having a great effect. There were many very well maintained housing estates and residential areas noted including the Meadows and Glencullen with nicely maintained green areas with trees and shrubs at the edges to allow the children make better use of the open spaces. The trees to the front of these estates on the main road hide the bare wall behind.

Cairn court has lovely bright white wall on most of the houses. The entrance sign could benefit from a cleaning, as this is an impressive this estate. There were some great examples of good pollinator plants in some of these well-kept gardens. Most notably the first house on the right.

The terraced houses behind the Famine Relief wall are well maintained, the house with the green door on the corner provides a lovely splash of colour.

John Anderson place was visited and is a very impressive area. Following the lovely smell of freshly cut grass here on day of adjudication brought me to some wonderful green areas. There is obviously a strong sense of pride of place here with well thought-out spaces which look well and also provide great playing areas. There is no excuse for not picking up after your dog with 2 stations of "Mutt Mitt" for the dog fouling noted.

The row of houses in the area in front of John Andersons estate (I couldn't see a name here) make up for their lack of gardens with the lovely display of the raised flower bed that has a lovely stone and a splash of colour.

The housing estate opposite Gaelscoil de hÍde has some lovely mature trees dotted around, but would benefit from maybe an avenue of trees to the front.

The houses behind the newly planted square at the town hall, Kneller Villas, provide an impressive backdrop.

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

Verges were well kept in general and very little litter spotted.

The Amber roundabout coming in on the R639 has lovely low maintenance shrubbery.

The innovative pallet planting was noted at the 50KM sign. The appealing old stone wall leading to the Amber service station low stone wall blends well together. The planting at the corner of the station was admired.

The work carried out on the Mallow road was admired. Thank you for including the photos here, as I had not been out that road in a number of years. Some of the shrub planting may need a little more protection. The impressive approach avenue of trees here leading to the lovely flower bed at the church is a very welcoming feature.

The speed signs at Cavanag's Ford garage were not in good repair and need to be replaced, although the garage itself was well maintained. The road leading from this approach road toward the housing area is very well maintained but looks a little sparse with the grey lampposts. Hanging flower baskets from these would require too many resources, but maybe some low maintenance planting at the roundabout would lift this. It could definitely benefit from an avenue of trees at some stage in the future.

The Tullow approach road is generally well kept except for the road signage which could do with been cleaned. The Ford pub looked really well. Its nice touch keeping the old sign "J Barry & Sons Timber Merchants Fermoy."

Concluding Remarks:

You can see the benefits that the many community led projects have had on Fermoy town centre and environs. All involved should be very proud.