

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Brittas** Ref: **1765**
County: **Dublin** Mark: **250**
Category: **B** Date(s): **03/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	34
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	35
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	24
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30
TOTAL MARK	450	250

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Brittas Village is very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2017. Well done to Brittas Tidy Towns Group for participating for the first time since the late 1980's in this year's Tidy Towns Competition and you are heartily commended for all the work you have undertaken this year. This is your first year back in the Competition after a long absence and no doubt it has been a steep learning curve for your Committee to get to grips with the different Competition categories. Thank you for the clear and concise and very informative Application Form and Submission document including before and after photographs and excellent Map of the village and surrounds, with numbered key – these were very helpful to the adjudicator in finding the various features and works undertaken in the village. You have also included dates when you completed the various projects which is excellent. As you know the Tidy Towns Competition is all about Communities working together for the betterment of all and we wish you well in your future endeavours to inspire cohesion amongst all those involved in improving the village of Brittas. We have no doubt you have already made great strides in this regard and your efforts will have lasting economic and social benefits. Your Committee meets monthly and you have 14 Committee Members with 28/35 volunteers who assist in the completion of various tasks. You have strong links to a number of local bodies and groups who provide essential funding and support especially South Dublin County Council, (Libraries, Environment and Community Depts.) and Kilsaran Quarry. You communicate with residents and stakeholders through group text messages and your highly successful Facebook Page and you issued your first Newsletter in April of this year. It is great that you have a 5th Class student represented on the Tidy Towns Group and that the Vice Principal is also involved. It is wonderful to note that the Tidy Town's work carried out has brought you closer together as a Community and that a great sense of local 'Pride of Place' has been fostered. You have already put together a Strategic 3 Year Tidy Towns Plan for your village with Key Initiatives across all the competition headings. This is a very comprehensive document and it provides a blueprint and timescale for tackling priority issues which you have identified under the various Competition Categories and will ensure the effective implementation of projects and maximising the use of scarce resources. The artistic laminated signs noted as part of Project No. 1 under this category, which were produced by local children, advocating for Tidy Towns and for keeping Brittas Tidy, were greatly admired. These catch the eye, present a very positive message, and have been mounted very sturdily and we are sure they will survive for a long time.

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

Your group has really achieved a lot in a very short time under this category. The large Heritage Signs were most attractive and provided fantastic information on the history of Brittas, Brittas ponds and the Swiftbrook Paper Mills and also the Dublin to Blessington Tramline. It is great to have all this information and interesting photographs available for members of the public to conveniently view on the site. The standard of finish on the Community Centre building which is faced in stone was excellent. The two small stone planters at the entrance to the Centre

were particularly admired as was the finish of the paving, granite kerbing and planters on the perimeter of the site here. You really have done a great job on project No.2 at the Fenced Bridge Area on the R114 – the new stone wall and capping and footpath improvement has significantly improved this area. There was a fallen tree here on the day of judging which could be removed. Saint Martin's School was visited and presentation was very good. The road surfaces and markings here were excellent. The three permanent planters built using Kilsaran Concrete materials were noted positively. The use of perennial planting for year-round effect is a much more sustainable way of providing a floral displays and thank you for adopting this approach

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The visit and to your Community Garden to the rear of the village Centre was heartily enjoyed and the sparrows were busily chirping in the nearby trees on arrival. The standard of Maintenance generally was very good and the railway sleeper surrounds on the areas of grass and defining what we presume is a small car parking area, were noted positively. The 1916 Commemorative Memorial was noted and we particularly liked the treatment of this area and the use of a slab of Basalt with a carved extract of the poem '1916' by WB Yeats with the famous lines 'A terrible beauty is born'. The line of cherry trees growing along the boundary of the Garden was growing well – No doubt there is a great show of flowers here at Springtime. On a slightly negative note, we were not too excited by the steel fencing erected along the stream consisting of galvanised box section steel panels. It is fully understood that fencing of some kind is an essential requirement in relation to the safety of children using the site. However, this fencing appears a little too functional and visually overpowering. Perhaps if it was painted a dark colour or if some kind hedge was planted along the line of the boundary, it would improve the appearance of this particular feature. A low, less substantial fence would probably be better so that the stream, which is an attractive feature in this area, is not completely screened from view. The open spaces and trees fronting Gortlum cottages were maintained to a high standard and provided an excellent approach to Brittas along this section of road. It was wondered what the current status was of the triangle of land bounded on two sides by the N81 and the R114 and perhaps this could be used for community purposes in the future. The Community Herb Garden was noted and it was delightful to read that people could pick what herbs they wanted and also that you have provided nesting sites for birds on the tree nearby.

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

It is noted that you have installed 8 Bird nesting boxes (3 occupied) and 3 Bat boxes as part of your project No. 1 under this category. It is good that these boxes were visited by 4th and 6th class schoolchildren together with the School Principal – this helps to create an awareness of the importance of local wildlife and conservation amongst the children. As part of Project 2 under this category you have planted 600 No. pollinator-friendly native hedging plants along boundaries on approach roads into Brittas and hopefully these will establish well- this is a very worthwhile project which will enhance the appearance of village in years to come and will also encourage wildlife in the area.

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

The grow your own vegetable garden located to the rear of the Community Garden area was visited and a variety of vegetables were growing vigorously here including potatoes, carrots, cabbage, beetroot, amongst others. Weed control was excellent. The concrete block walls of the vegetable beds will be suitably durable for the longer term. We wish you well with your endeavours here and perhaps a Community Event to distribute or cook some of the harvested vegetables can be arranged later in the year. As part of Project No.1 under this category you have changed the indoor and outdoor lights to LED's and installed water butts to facilitate rainwater harvesting which will have positive environmental benefits. You have made good strides under this category this year. For future years under this heading you might consider some further initiatives such as encouraging local people to engage in further sustainable waste, water, energy and transport actions e.g. car- pooling and walk- to-school initiatives, providing cycle parking facilities in the village, creating greenways and cycle routes, 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, organising stop food waste seminars 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. A 'Free Wee Library' project could also be considered for the Community Centre or Community Garden.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Project No.1 under this heading includes the site of the Blue Gardenia premises which looks a little forlorn at present. It is hoped that this is just a temporary situation and the site can be restored to its former glory before too long. Unfortunately, this has become a magnet for casual dumping over the years and it is great that Brittas Tidy Towns Group keep this area under constant review and is an ongoing litter pick location. You have arranged Community Clean up days as part of Project No. 2 under this category - you have participated in National Spring Clean Day and organised litter picks which are undertaken on a weekly basis by your Tidy Towns clean up team- Great thanks is due to all the residents who volunteer for this work. Brittas was very neat and tidy on the day of adjudication and no litter was noted.

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

The little feature at the wall of the pumphouse on the open space fronting Gortlum cottages (Project No. 1 under this category) was greatly admired particularly the little fairy tree and the various tiled artwork pieces and planting. The gardens and front boundaries to the cottages at Gortlum and at other residential properties in Brittas were generally very well presented.

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

You may be aware that there is an attractive stone wall in the vicinity of the Bus Stop on the N81 which is concealed by vegetation. Perhaps this could be carefully exposed and restored, as it would provide a pleasant feature on the entrance to the Brittas. The new lay-by area was noted and your work has certainly cleaned up this area and made it more presentable. We await with interest the carving of the tree stumps to create interesting historic/artistic sculpture features here. Perhaps a more suitable colour could be chosen for the overhead barrier -maybe dark green or black. The lay-by area might also be finished with a lighter coloured gravel such as Ballylusk and your adjudicator feels this would improve the presentation of the area significantly. The rejuvenation of stone planters (Project No. 1 under this category) was noted positively.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a great pleasure to visit your attractive village situated on the outskirts of Dublin. The Community Centre and Garden area are amazing facilities and Brittas Tidy Towns Group and local volunteers and residents can be very proud of your achievements this year across all categories. Your adjudicator hopes you found the comments in the report helpful and we wish you well in your endeavours for next year.