

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ahascragh** Ref: **1027**
County: **Galway** Mark: **269**
Category: **B** Date(s): **11/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	38	39
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	38
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	25	26
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	29	29
TOTAL MARK	450	265	269

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Many thanks for your entry in this year's Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for participating in Ireland's biggest community project. Your entry this year was so well presented with many illustrations of your lovely little village and the work that you do to keep it looking so well. Your committee retains strong numbers and regular meetings and good contact with other agencies will keep you focussed and on the right track. This is your 8th year in the competition and we are very pleased that it is helping to uplift and unite the village. The competition is made possible by hard working groups like yours. Thanks for the supplementary information that you supplied. With regard to your plan, it is felt that this could be more detailed. It is suggested that you go to Galway Rural Development and seek funding for assistance with upgrading your plan. This would be a useful exercise. You also supplied a very thoughtful sheet for fellow residents on 'things that we can all do' which is an excellent idea.

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

Well done on the Best Kept Business Front competition - very good! Congratulations to Cahills. Good luck with running this on subsequent years. Keep up your efforts with all business owners - even the reluctant ones - and look after your built heritage. Unfortunately the adjudicator didn't get to see the stained glass window of your church (a bad oversight). A return journey is required. You have taken on some derelict buildings and painted them, well done.

The Post Office is gorgeous - surely one of the nicest in Galway? - with lovely flowers and great colours. Your Roman Catholic Church is an unusual design and celebrated with a scale model too. The Takeaway isn't enhanced by the illustrations whereas the handball alley is brightened by the cheerful murals. The Parish Hall is very well looked after. It's great to see that the national school has been in continuous use since 1934.

Ahascragh Mills' painted gates look very good. The Pubs of the village look great. The old-fashioned signs are very appealing. The Barber Shop is very amusingly painted. Lots of the older and disused premises are still kept very well. The Petrol station, shop and café premises were bright and neat. Other cyclists were gathered here ahead of an evening spin.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The adjudicator must first echo the comments of last year's adjudicator with regard to the area at the road junction. These cars shouldn't be here. It's not believed that these were parked. This is an area of public road and shouldn't be used in this way. There is massive potential for developing this area. It could become a lovely centrepiece for your village but nothing will happen if the status quo is retained. It is felt that you should approach both Galway City

and County Council and Galway Development with a request for a landscape plan for this area. It could be transformational. Opposite this, the paved triangular area really should be planted, not paved. It could be trees or even simple grassed green but the way it is, with cars parking on it, it looks very poor.

Well done on your work at the Grotto and the Community Garden.

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

The adjudicator looked up your Bug Hotel on Thrip Advisor and saw your 5-star ratings and was shocked to see that it's fully bugged for the entire of next year. Ah well, it'll be worth waiting for. Well done on your Bee Aware work last year and this is the is noted of project where the benefits will go on and on. A simple pile of sand can be a useful habitat area! Please make sure to keep the river free of debris. Downstream, cattle drinking from the river are causing siltation. Could the farmer consider some alternative means of watering his livestock? The Bunowen River sign was in need of cleaning.

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

You are encouraging residents to invest in water butts - this was seen in your entry - well done. However, it is felt that you haven't risen to meet the challenges of this category just yet. You are advised to contact Galway City and County Council's Environmental Awareness Officer who is very expert in these matters. She will be able to advise you upon the various steps that you will need to take in order to go about learning more. Also, the Tidy Towns Unit sent out a guidance document on this category two years ago. It is available from www.tidytowns.ie if you didn't yet see it. This has literally dozens of project ideas which won't leave you short of things to do to manage waste and save resources.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have submitted a good entry this year in this category. You are attacking litter on a number of fronts and that is great. You are also addressing illegal signage. Cigarette butt litter is a widespread problem. Working with the business owners is the way to go. The bottle banks were very neat and look well. Road signs were generally clean. One sign is missing near the church. Your information point in the middle of the village is an unusual feature but the sign here has been damaged and is in need of repair. Watch out for dirty name signs and 50kph speed limit signs.

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

Another good entry here, Ahascragh, well done. You have organised a Best Kept Residential Competition - excellent. You have also liaised with Galway City and County Council's housing Department on a problem area. You are doing what you can with derelict properties. Could you head up a campaign to have your unnamed estate finally get a name? This is could be a competition in its own right... Well done on your ongoing work. Gorgeous window-boxes and planters had been put out and tended by householders.

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

Improvements are on the way with some funding secured. The adjudicator looks forward to returning to see how these have progressed. The approach from caltra is fine but the name sign here is really too close to the ground. Either elevate this or make it stand out better with judicious planting. A nice stone wall and tree-planting were admired on the way into the village here. A stone is missing from the bridge. Nicely mown verges were noted on Church Avenue and on the way out of the village. A project to paint some of the lovely old farm gates would be a useful one.

Concluding Remarks:

A really pleasant visit was enjoyed here. You are progressing well through hard work and dedication. The adjudicator is sure that you have lots more 'in the tank' and will see yet more improvements at Ahascragh. Well done.