

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castleblakeney** Ref: **545**
County: **Galway** Mark: **275**
Category: **B** Date(s): **07/07/2017**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2016 | Mark Awarded 2017 |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Community Involvement & Planning | 60 | 40 | 40 |
| Built Environment and Streetscape | 50 | 37 | 37 |
| Landscaping and Open Spaces | 50 | 35 | 37 |
| Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities | 50 | 29 | 30 |
| Sustainable Waste and Resource Management | 50 | 12 | 14 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 57 | 57 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 50 | 29 | 29 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 50 | 31 | 31 |
| TOTAL MARK | 450 | 270 | 275 |

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. A big thank you for anyone involved in putting together an absolutely lovely entry. This was not just informative, it was well-illustrated, varied and quite fascinating. One of the best things about Tidy Towns adjudication is learning more about really interesting little places like Castleblakeney. As for the map, well this is art, not just cartography. The adjudicator tried not to crumple it as it was in use for the visit. It is hoped that you have a scanned copy in safe keeping somewhere. It was really interesting to see that the Blakeney family (in England) are among the supporters of your work.

Bee Useful is a great motto and very apt.

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

You have new facilities at the college. A new playground is planned. You seem to have a keen regard for the needs of your residents, from new mothers to senior citizens and the new benches are a solid testament to this. St Cuan's College is a little bit bleak. There are lots of opportunities here for (e.g.) wildflower gardening. Is a Green Flag being pursued?

All of the pubs and shops looked well on the day.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Well done on the 1916 commemoration tree-planting and thanks for all the photographs of same. It's good to see that you are having regard for the pollinators when considering what you are planting. It is presumed that you have by now seen the All Ireland Pollinator Plan. If you don't have a copy, please do get one. Make sure that you water the planters, some looked a little bit dry. It is recommended that you get some advice on your street trees as several are not doing very well. The Oak near the school is damaged and won't thrive here. You could move it and replace it with a lime or a hornbeam. The main T-junction has only a few evergreen planters and these look a little bit woebegone. There is definitely an opportunity here for something substantial. The space in front of the Youth Development Centre cries out for colour and substance. The little park on the Galway Road has such well-tended flower beds. The 1916 commemoration is very simple but effective.

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

You have bat-boxes and bird nesting boxes throughout and that's great. Please do make sure that these are

maintained. The bird boxes will need to be cleaned out on an annual basis, please. Again, your planting for pollinators is applauded.

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

Thank you for the water conservation information and the costs were of the most interest. €2.13 for a whole year at the Heritage Centre? Amazing! Alas, we may no longer have water charges to keep us in such good mind of our water uses and misuses. The Tidy Towns Unit sent out a guidance document on this category the year before last. It is available from www.tidytowns.ie if you didn't yet see it. This has literally dozens of project ideas so you'll not be stuck for things to do to get more points in this category.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done on the Spring Clean. You know, it's great to read about a big litter-pick that doesn't get too much litter. Is the tide turning? Certainly you report that the school is already 'excellent' at minding the messiness. Good monitoring from the local authority is quoted too and that's also great to read. Some road signs are past their best and are discoloured. The pump looked really well. Watch out for empty sign poles. A children crossing sign is badly faded.

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

So you wrote to all householders to encourage gardening and house maintenance. Did you get any notable responses? Again, your care for the more vulnerable in your community comes through with your assistance to the elderly and unwell - very good. There are some super efforts in places including the planting atop stone walls - so nice and colourful! Some really fantastic efforts were noted. One of the stand-outs was a dwelling with many fruit trees.

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

The adjudicator suspects that you must have read at least some of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan as you allowed the dreaded dandelion to linger for those important few weeks - well done. You mind the verges with help from your CE staff and indeed they were neat on arrival. This must be difficult at times with the speeding traffic, it is felt. The little wooden planters are very nice but not needed on grass. Use these elsewhere on hard surfaces or ground unfit for planting. The trees planted along the R339 were noted. You could probably remove the ties from these before the trees become damaged. There is a dangerously sunken drain cover opposite the college, on the corner here.

The Cluain River walk is pleasant. One of the signs here is hidden by dogwood. On the Galway Road, it is recommended that a bed be removed in order to allow those wishing to do recycling to park here.

Concluding Remarks:

You've put a lot of effort into tree-planting in recent times and that is a great long-term investment. However, it is felt that you should get some advice on maintenance. You've also made a great effort with container planting but you could reduce the number of these. A great effort across the board. Well done.