

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Loughrea** Ref: **993**
County: **Galway** Mark: **270**
Category: **E** Date(s): **06/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	33	34
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	36	36
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	39	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	35	35
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	30
TOTAL MARK	450	268	270

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. Thank you for the very comprehensively filled-in entry form and map, both of which were very useful in adjudication. Thank you also for your 3-Year Plan. It is suggested that you add a little more detail to the next plan you produce. This could be in the form of fixed dates for your project completion and with priority tasks listed as same. The timeframe of 2015-2017 is a little bit vague. You have been in the competition for over 40 years now and that is fantastic. Your work is so important to Loughrea and it's great to have such steady involvement. You list only Galway County Council as a supporting body. What about funding bodies such as LEADER? You work without the schools and that is great.

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

Thank you for the list of buildings of which you are justifiably proud. You have many fine and interesting old buildings. You also have newer creations such as the local authority offices. You have made representations on a number of derelict buildings and this is an important role of Tidy Towns groups, well done. You report some progress on the upkeep of a number of empty premises which is great. A number of businesses are more than doing their bit to contribute to the streetscape. Garret's Pub looked very well-painted. Walsh's Pharmacy is very well kept, Clarke's Opticians is very bright. There are great illustrations and use of Irish at the Hungry Bookworm. Loughnane's was gleaming, Donlon's was spotless and Hope's Bakery so inviting.

Some others were not so good. Some takeaway premises have inappropriate signage and Kendel House is missing its broad vowels.

The Baile Stairiúl signage is excellent. Should the 1916 commemoration posters come down now? Your ecclesiastical buildings are just superb. The adjudicator wonders whether you should have welcome signage for Loughrea that reflects this. Certainly your planned roundabout piece should echo your excellent built heritage.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

You rightly state that ongoing maintenance is an important part of your role in this category. In the last year you've worked on bulb planting, a little bit of wildflower gardening and also replaced some old planters. This is very good. The garden at the GRET B campus looks really well. The park was seen to be in good order and very much in use on the day.

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

The local cycling club will be helping you to maintain the Grove wildlife area. An unusual partnership but why not? It's great to get other groups involved in your work. We hope that the talk on birds in your area went well. You have an amazing wildlife resource on your doorstep and this is of importance to wild birds all the year round.

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

Encouraging the use of cycle paths around the town is a perfectly valid action, as is the assistance with the local WEEE collection. However, it is believed that you could be doing more in this category. 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 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 lakeshore clean-up - 30 Transition Year students could surely collect a lot! You have other clean-ups planned - it is hoped that these went well. Well done on the Blue Flag status for Loughrea Lake. Old posters are a nuisance for you. One old circus poster was directing readers down a 1-way street (the wrong way).

Litter is unfortunately quite an issue for you and it was seen in numerous places. Some of the litter was quite old too (e.g. cigarette butts in tree grilles) and no effort had been made to pick this up. Chewing-gum is a widespread affliction.

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

Some of your committee members have helped out residents in some estates. This is great. The local authority has also assisted with tasks such as grass disposal. One of the key roles of Tidy Towns groups is to give encouragement to residents associations and to inspire them to take on projects and actions. You may be aware that there is now an All Ireland Pollinator Plan. This contains recommendations on how we might improve the lot of our pollinating insects, such as bees, by adjusting our practices when it comes to mowing, strimming and planting.

Converting areas of greens in estates to low/no cut regimes is a way to save time and petrol as well as bees. This is an area wherein Tidy Towns groups such as your own can provide oversight and resources and inspire the local residents to help biodiversity.

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

You have lots of exciting projects 'in the pipeline' for this coming year. Good luck with the wildflower gardening at the GAA grounds. The murals here sound great too. The sculpture or other installation at the Caherlane roundabout would be an excellent welcome to the town and you are encouraged to pursue this. Watch out for the scourge of commercial signage popping up on your approach roads.

Galway Road was seen to have neat and tidy verges. The Walk was enjoyed in its entirety by the adjudicator. What a lovely resource. Watch out for an old interpretive panel here that is in need of repair. Please make sure to keep dog litter bins clean in order to encourage people to use them!

Concluding Remarks:

Thank you for all your hard work. There are some areas where your diligence and attention is needed but you are making progress! You are wished every success.