

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bennettsbridge** Ref: **997**
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **279**
Category: **B** Date(s): **25/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	41	42
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38	38
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40	41
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	26	28
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	11	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	27	27
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36	37
TOTAL MARK	450	270	279

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

We warmly welcome Bennettsbridge to the Supervalu Tidy Towns competition 2017. We see that this is the 5th year of Tidy Towns for the current committee – you have achieved a lot in a short space of time – well done. We really enjoyed our first visit to your lovely village – thank you for your helpful map, which enable us to navigate our way around the village and find your recent work. We would kindly ask that you take the time to read the category headings to get guidance on what information to submit under a particular café. There was a lot of ‘category confusion’ and repetition in your entry form; this can be quite confusing for the adjudicator and there is the risk that we will miss some pertinent information. Your large committee of eighteen members has another fifty volunteers to call on as required for specific tasks. You receive valuable support from Kilkenny Co. Co., Kilkenny Leader Partnership and the Heritage Council. You use a variety of communication channels to spread your messages including web text, Facebook and local newsletters. You have had good recent success in engaging with your younger residents (school, clubs etc.). This is important as they are the future of Bennettsbridge – well done! Thank you for submitting a copy of your ‘Bennettsbridge Tidy Towns – Planning & Strategy 2016- 2109).

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

We are delighted to hear that the Garda Station is still in use – this protected structure is a most unusual design. The planters here give a ‘lived in’ effect. Community Centre looks very well (very impressive landscaping) as does the school across the way. You are commended for reviewing the accessibility of all areas in the village with the help of Kilkenny County Council. The grotto is nicely maintained with a good mix of planting. The standard of presentation at Centra is quite poor in relation to the rest of the village. The woodwork and paintwork requires attention. Poor quality poster displays also detract from the overall appearance. All was in good order at the Playground. The creamery is a nod to times past in Bennettsbridge. The Nore Tavern and off-licence looked well as did the Post Office and Corner House.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

You have put a lot of work in this this category. It is always sad to hear then mature trees have to be felled but necessary in this case due to disease. You are commended for taking on last year’s adjudicator’s comments with regard to church landscaping. You have put in many hours of work here with the assistance of your community employment scheme. The new planting scheme is very pleasing to the passing eye and appropriate to this site – well done! The church, community hall and graveyard grounds were all maintained to a very high standard. We note your policy to plant mostly broadleaf trees and native where possible. The perennial planting on the Thomastown Rd was admired. The interspersed stone beds are attractive features as one approaches the village. The planted wheelbarrow outside the painted door of an old outbuilding makes for an overall attractive feature. The

old bike works well too. The shrubbery at 'Moth to a Flame' enhances this streetscape. Lovely stone beds at approach roads provide a welcoming impression to the village.

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

We are impressed with your awareness and approach here. You are striving to work without use of weed killer where at all possible. This is commended as there is always a potential threat to wildlife. You are educating workers and volunteers regarding the risk of damaging trees with the lawnmower. This is such a common problem so well done. The Community Garden (established 2016) appeared to be thriving and is well situated beside the Community Field and school. We are glad to hear that it is being well used. The beech hedge makes for an attractive boundary here. Your promotion of an environmentally friendly gardening approach is commended. The small 'wildflower meadow' was admired. Your local ecologist is surveyed by a local ecologist and submitted to the National Biodiversity Data Centre. Any significant findings to date? You have attended KCC training events/forums to further increase your knowledge and you are passing this on to the wider community at events such as your Field Day. The pathway down from the butchers to the beginning of the Nore River Trail is just lovely and lightly managed as it should be. Pathways and seating is maintained but the back areas are left in a natural state. The walk is well-signposted. We would love to see a photo of your bluebells in bloom as well as your Biodiversity Template – a great idea, well done.

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

You could include your water harvesting and composting under this category as opposed to 'Built Environment' as it is about saving on all our natural resources (waste, water, energy, transport) in our environment. It is wonderful to hear that your community garden is chemical and pesticide free. You are implementing a sustainability ethos in all that you do, for instance the splitting and reusing of plants and overwintering of your geraniums in the greenhouse to avoid purchasing new ones each year. You get marks for hosting and promoting events such as the County Kilkenny Tidy Towns Waste Forum. Well done to Bennettsbridge N.S. students for implementing a 'Wipe out Waste' programme – briefly what does this entail? Your newly established 'Local things for sale or free' is good example of Reuse in the community – giving good items a second life. Facebook is a one great way of administering such an initiative. We look forward to getting an update on this and your new 'local repair directory' next time. Making window boxes from timber off-cuts is another excellent example of Reuse. In the past year, you have installed a water harvesting system at the Community Garden. This, in addition to your existing water butts is enabling you to cut down significantly on mains water usage for watering plants. We are impressed that you store your winter display boxes and reuse the following year. You now have two community composting areas – at the community garden and to the rear of the Community Field. Excellent work – you show a wonderful appreciation of the importance of this category and the practical steps that can be taken. Well done.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have made great strides in terms of litter control and awareness in Bennettsbridge. The village was spotless so well done to all involved, particularly the Tus workers who conduct daily litter picks. Don't forget to tell us about your litter awareness activities so that we can award you marks accordingly. New dog-fouling signage was noted. The bottle banks at the GAA entrance were in neat order. Well done to the canoeists who carry out litter-picks in the river.

Generally, Bennettsbridge presents a tidy appearance. You are tackling the issue of signage clutter on approach roads as best you can – this is indeed a sensitive topic! We weren't sure if the Credit Union is in operation or not. Can the old flag be removed here and the yellow tape removed from nearby railings?

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

Residences along the street were freshly painted and colourful. We admired many lovely gardens with a good mix of colour for year round interest. Your 'Best Gardens' is a worthwhile initiative. Have you introduced environmentally-friendly topics to it? (planting for wildlife, bee friendly planting, water saving etc.) Some roadside homes were enhanced with window boxes or tubs. Bennettsbridge residents are obviously proud of their village – well done to all involved. We were impressed with The Ring with its impressive entrance planting consisting of trees and potted geraniums. Kilree Park is neat with attractive landscaping. The 'Houses for the Elderly' is an attractive development beside the school. Woodlawn is nicely presented with attractive tree planting. Could the compost area be 'screened' with some hedging perhaps? Or moved to a less prominent area of the estate?

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

Your magnificent stone bridge is a protected structure that you are proud of. We assume therefore that the annual clean-up is done in a sensitive manner with appropriate materials. You have carried out some significant clean-up work at the overgrown boat-slip area and we note your ambitious plans to make this area even more accessible, in conjunction with Kilkenny County Council. In the meantime, try to have the boundaries on the lane tidied up and keep the area around the bench mown. The area was clean and beautiful however. The new fence was noted to the rear. We look forward to seeing further progress here next year. In your longer term Plan, you could consider giving such lanes and amenity areas discreet but visible names. It all serves to strengthen the identity of the village and bring out the local history. The Kilkenny Rd has been newly surfaced and new lighting has been added near the bridge. We loved the interconnectivity between various areas of the village. Nowhere felt too far from the centre or 'cut off'. Cycling routes were well-signposted.

Concluding Remarks:

We admire your positive and inclusive approach, organised structure and unrelenting enthusiasm to improve your local environment for all to enjoy while at the same time increasing community spirit. Community pride and spirit is alive and well in Bennettsbridge. Well done and keep up the great work.