

# Tidy Towns Competition 2017

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Banagher** Ref: **591**  
County: **Offaly** Mark: **291**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **21/06/2017**

|   | <b>Maximum<br/>Mark</b> | <b>Mark<br/>Awarded 2016</b> | <b>Mark<br/>Awarded 2017</b> |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Community Involvement & Planning          | 60                      | 46                           | 46                           |
| Built Environment and Streetscape         | 50                      | 39                           | 40                           |
| Landscaping and Open Spaces               | 50                      | 40                           | 41                           |
| Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities  | 50                      | 34                           | 35                           |
| Sustainable Waste and Resource Management | 50                      | 14                           | 14                           |
| Tidiness and Litter Control               | 90                      | 45                           | 45                           |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas       | 50                      | 35                           | 35                           |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes           | 50                      | 34                           | 35                           |
| <b>TOTAL MARK</b>                         | <b>450</b>              | <b>287</b>                   | <b>291</b>                   |

### **Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:**

Banagher is very welcome to the 2017 Supervalu Competition.

Thank you for the comprehensive application form complete with sketch map of the town and its outskirts. The supplementary material on the swift survey and TUS programme was very useful to the adjudicator in his adjudication process.

It's been a few years since this adjudicator has been to Banagher and there have been some very positive changes to the town and the outskirts but also there have been a few closures of prominent businesses

The committee of 8 with additional volunteers is sufficient for the work that you have to do but one is always receptive to other willing participants.

Interesting to note your comments on methods of communication and what works for you as a committee.

Being a member of the Offaly Tidy Towns Network allows you to share ideas with other centres in the county.

You have an impressive list of supporters of your work and it's important that they appreciate the work that you are doing for the betterment of the town.

Good to note that you intend to put a plan in place to enhance the appearance of both Fort Falkland and Fort Eliza also known as the Salt Battery.

Not much has happened to this area since this adjudicator last visited Banagher and as you correctly state they have such a significant history attached to them.

You are wished well with your plans which hopefully will fully come to fruition within the given timescale.

The planned projects under the TUS Scheme have been noted and reviewed by the adjudicator and will be commented upon where relevant in other sections.

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

The work that has commenced in both Forth Falkland and Fort Eliza has been noted and it is hoped that it will be the start of a major revival of this area around Crank Road and by the river bank.

What is the situation with the Brosna Lodge Hotel it seems to have been unoccupied for some while but on the day in question it looked as if it was being refurbished inside?

The sculpture to Johnny McEvoy looked very well on the day as it had been re stained or varnished and the surrounding hard landscape bed was tidy and clean.

Banagher has a number of derelict premises that have over time fallen into decline and some were prominent business from a different era.

The committee has done well to address the problems with a view to making improvements over time.

The main objective should be to ensure that these properties do not become a blight on the built environment of the town.

The following are a few personal observations that this adjudicator made on the walkabout.

The Marina Area was vibrant on the day with many boats moored for the evening and the facilities were in good condition.

One negative here is that the Finger Post Sign Pole has 12 finger post signs on it, far too many and far too confusing.

Some of the road surfaces were a little uneven and maybe the committee should engage with Offaly County Council to see if Banagher is in line for a resurfacing programme that has happened in other towns in the county such as Kilcormack.

Overall the standard of presentation of "active" business premises was good with some just having been painted. Simon Lyons Pub which is synonymous with Banagher looked very well retaining its original frontage and looked as if it has been re painted recently.

Banagher Town Centre with its anchor tenant, or maybe owner, Flynn's Supervalu was presented to a very acceptable standard.

Flynn's Bar and Restaurant is a very imposing premises holding a focal position in the town side by this was CGH Pharmacy but the adjudicator was a little perplexed at the banners overhead that advertised Fresh Meat, Cafe and Bakery!!

The adjudicator was quite impressed with the Post Office facade which was its attractive feature.

Crank House seems to be more of a resource centre as nowadays as in the past it was more of visitor attraction.

The adjudicator also liked Angelos Traditional Italian takeaway, it was colourful and very clean.

A number of directional signs were a little tatty on the day but maybe have been cleaned since then.

The Billiard Hall is one very few that you come across in the country and it was clean.

The Boundary wall looked as if it had been dashed since last year.

All Public buildings including the fine Garda Station were presented to a good standard

St Rynaghs RC Church has a very prominent position on the Birr side of town and it was very well presented.

All the schools visited were well maintained and St Pauls Parish Hall on the Birr exit was in good condition, weeds at base of boundary wall need to be removed.

St Rynaghs GAA club home to some of the greats of Offaly Hurling is a fine facility off the Cuba Road.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

There were some fine examples of urban planting and landscaping to be seen in the town and especially at the Marina.

Some additional works have been done on the last year but as was the case last year many trees that have matured had stakes and ties still on them.

Maybe the committee should audit the tree stock and see which ones need to be freed from what could stunt further growth.

The attractive trellises on the Crank Road erected by the FAS workers were admired and are an attractive feature along that route.

Hanging baskets were seen over many business premises aka Flynn's restaurant and these were very colourful with the ubiquitous annuals such as double begonias to the fore.

A particularly attractive combination of planters, two stone and one timber, with colourful bedding plants were noted at the square area of the town where the excellent Banagher Information Panel is sited.

Well done to the volunteer lady who undertook this task.

The standard was very good and for the new work that was done in the last year an additional mark is awarded.

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

The objective in this category is to create an awareness of the wildlife habitats that exist in ones town or village.

How to promote these habitats as conservation areas is the key to success in the category.

You are fortunate that you have such a myriad natural wildlife habitats all round you in Banagher and as a committee you have certainly maximised the potential that these offer to the community.

The adjudicator was most impressed with the Saving Banagher's Swifts project and the support that was forthcoming from Offaly County Council and relevant agencies including Youth watch.

The involvement of school children of a young age (3rd Class) is a wonderful initiative and it will only serve to start their education of all forms of bio diversity and who knows some well known ecologists and environmentalists may emanate from this programme down the years.

The nest boxes that were made in conjunction with Banagher College of Further Education were viewed in Shannon Park near the Pitch and Putt Course and the historic Martello Tower.

For the very impressive work that you have carried out over the last year you are awarded an additional mark.

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

The objective of this category is reduce the production of unnecessary waste at source thus creating less

dependence on recycling and the use of landfill which will not become a viable option in the very near future,

There are many ways and means to help to achieve this objective and the Tidy Towns Unit as part of the revamping of the Tidy Towns Handbook produced a guidance booklet on Sustainable Waste and Natural Amenities for project ideas.

Other websites also offer options [www.localprevention.ie](http://www.localprevention.ie) [www.greenhomes.ie](http://www.greenhomes.ie) and [www.sustainableprocessing.ie](http://www.sustainableprocessing.ie)

You have identified another in your submission [www.stopfoodwaste.ie](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie)

Well done on providing two composters and the ingenuity of whoever decided to place them in areas where you have access to dead leaves to create the proper ratio of fertilizer.

Well done also to St Rynaghs National School on achieving a 3rd green flag for water conservation.

The litter survey crosses over into the next category.

You have where with all to add additional mini projects for next year's competition and the above information offers you the sources where you can get ideas from.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Top marks to your volunteer gentleman who does the weekly Sunday morning rota of litter pickers.

This is dedication to the cause of making Banagher an anti litter place.

On the day in question there was some pockets of litter in the square near the Banagher information panel even though there was a bin which was comparatively empty nearby.

Some was also seen near a flat roofed premises which was unoccupied and had a to let sign in the window and on the street opposite Angelos.

It is nigh impossible to get the message across to some people that littering is bad for the image of a place not to mention being harmful to the environment.

General tidiness was acceptable but some pockets of excessive enough weed growth at base of kerbs were seen.

One has to be aware that the weather was conducive to "mushroom" type growth of weeds so one cannot be too harsh on the matter.

You are wished well with the graffiti problem but in some countries this is seen as urban art aka Banksey.

Who is the mystery Banagher Banksey -Sin e an Ceist ?

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

Portavalla in the centre of the town is an older development and was in good condition on the day but the name sign was a little dirty and in need of cleansing.

The area at the base of this sign was a little weedy and just needs to be raked to clear the weeds.

It is not necessary to resort to using the likes of Roundup.

The other estates that you mentioned including Bothair Biorra were visited by the adjudicator and were as you state well maintained.

Cuba Avenue up the GAA Club Grounds is large estate of older houses and the vast majority were presented to a very good standard with some having lovely gardens.

Ard Abhainn adjacent to Cuba Avenue had some very nice detached bungalows with well presented frontages.

There were some very fine private residences viewed on the perimeter of the town as well and all in all the standard under this category was very good

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

The Birr entrance was the best viewed because of the very impressive landscaping and well maintained green embankment.

Harbour Road entrance was quite acceptable with edges and grass margins cut back and some fine houses were viewed that give added appeal and the new flower bed will enhance that road further.

The entrance from the Galway side of the town has an excellent view of the Shannon and Marina and the bridge railings were cleaned and looked better than the last time this adjudicator visited the town

The road that leads to Borrisokane had some verges very overgrown with weed growth evident near the Banagher Concrete and the road the surface here was a little rough.

The committee has worked hard and the novel idea of having benches painted in the three club colours works?

The Eyecourt bench could have a further embellishment if Galway hurlers or indeed footballers win the All Ireland.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

The adjudicator was a regular visitor to Banagher a good number of years back.

In the interim since those days many positive changes have occurred in the town.

It is good to be able to report that there is a positive proposal for both Forth Falkland and Fort Eliza area.

You are wished well with this and other developments in the years ahead.