

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Belmont** Ref: **522**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **280**
Category: **A** Date(s): **14/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	42	42
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	39	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	23	23
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	19	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	46	46
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	36
TOTAL MARK	450	278	280

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Belmont is welcomed to the 2017 Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition.

Thank for the completed hand written entry form and pictorial record of work being done.

The sketch map supplied could be more detailed outlining areas of interest and enumerated parts of the village where work was being done.

25 volunteers is quite a lot for a village the size of Belmont, if you have not done so already I would suggest that you appoint an executive of four and divide the remaining committee members into sub committees with responsibilities for different categories.#

The adjudicator would like to see a simple two year plan outlining what is to be done under each category and the timescale involved

As it stands there are no bench marks to work against in your present application.

You have developed good links with Offaly County Council and you should seek advice from the relevant section on how to proceed with an action plan for next year competition.

Also refer to the Tidy Towns handbook which a great resource for guidance on planning your work schedule.

It is good to report that you do have involvement with the local school, outline that involvement in more detail in next year's application.

Thank you for your endorsement of the competition and what it means to the local community.

You are a long time competitor of 20 years standing.

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

It has been some years since the adjudicator visited Belmont and there are still a number of old buildings with historic connotations at the canal lock end of the village that are in the same state of neglect since then.

You say that you are engaging with owners of derelict buildings to seek improvements, a little more detail would have been welcomed by the adjudicator.

This is where the 3 year plan work schedule would benefit as it would indicate the timescale and detail involved.

The lock area of the canal was well maintained with car park and building presented well and signs on the bridge clean.

St Sarans School on high street is an example of newly refurbished school with excellent frontage, new boundary walls and clearly marked car spaces.

St Saran's Church and adjacent graveyard were very well presented as well and credit to the voluntary effort that is involved in this task.

The core of the village looked very well on the day as road surfaces were good with clear markings.

Sections of footpath were a little rough and need some remedial work, maybe the committee could liaise with Offaly County Council on the matter.

Kelly's the multiple businesses unit in the centre of village looked very well. The corrugated building attached and surround wall are distinctive features not often seen nowadays. It would be hugely enhanced if it was coated with a green oxidised paint to make it really stand out. The Samaritan Travellers Plaque synonymous with Belmont will be 20 years in existence next year. Maybe the writing could be re highlighted in advance of next year's competition as its fading a little. Overall the standard was good.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Some very colourful arrangements of flowers and nice shrub planting arrangements were viewed on the adjudication walk about. Well done to those involved in maintaining these arrangements and the task can be onerous in a village that takes up a wide area outside of the core. The planting of walnut trees as part of National Tree Week was an excellent undertaking and was noted by the adjudicator. Again a dedicated landscaping mini plan as part of the main one would help you indentifying other areas that could benefit from additional planting. Also you should try to enhance the traditional features of the village that were alluded to in last year's report. Some very fine individual gardens were admired during the walkabout. Top marks to those homestead owners, especially one near the lock house, who have contributed to this category in a very positive manner.

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

There is a mention of a wildlife project in conjunction with the local school in the first section of this report but unfortunately it is very short on detail under this heading. This should be a main project for the village and one that needs detail and more information for the adjudicator to do his or her job properly. Most of your input in this section is centred on what is planned for the future and there is no timescale attached to this. You have a myriad of natural wildlife habitats to choose from and when you consider your association with the Grand Canal one would expect some additional projects that would contribute to both the preservation and promotion of wildlife in your area. For next year you should be more forthcoming with factual information that states how you started a particular project and what stage of development it is at. Getting the school more involved will help it with its green flag programme and will also contribute to your work. A simple plan of action with times of start up and dates of completion should be your objective for 2018. Belmont has far more potential in this category.

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

Like last year there is very little in out under this category and this is a little disappointing as since the category was revised Belmont has received relatively high marks. The objective of this category is to reduce the production of unnecessary waste at source and the guidelines of the competition under this section encourages communities to engage in projects that are closely aligned to this objective. The adjudicator would suggest that your first port of call would be the County Environmental Officer. Also consider the following for project ideas www.localprevention.ie www.greenhomes.ie and www.sustainableprocessing.ie. The Tidy Towns Unit also produced a very informative leaflet on the category some years back so this is also a must for reference purposes.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Belmont is a scattered village as the canal bridge and lock house are more than 2 kilometres from the core area. Well done to the litter pick groups that patrol and keep the area as free of litter as possible. On an adjudication day the standard was good, as except for a few wrappers and plastic bottles, the wide area that makes up Belmont was nearly litter free. General tidiness was acceptable but unfortunately there are a number of buildings that do not contribute to the concept of tidiness. These have been problematic for a long number of years and are for all intents and purposes outside the remit of any voluntary group. More information with planned work schedule would be welcome for next year's entry. You have a fine school on High Street and it looks a progressive establishment so one would suggest far more details of involvement of school children for 2018.

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

The village has only one clustered housing development and the standard of presentation in this was quite good. The green area was tidy with mature trees and park furniture and the estate had a very fine name stone which clearly identifies it. The shrub bed has obviously been improved upon since last year. Well done to local residents here as this development was not in this condition when the adjudicator visited the

village some years.

There are many fine farm homesteads near the village and on the road up to High Street and these were well presented with back and farm yards clean and tidy.

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

The road in from Cloghan has been made good on foot of last year's comments in the 2016 report, so well done to you as a group for undertaking this work.

The Carr Chlos at the canal lock was tidy and that whole area has an inviting appeal but there is still more improvements to be made that would boost it even more.

The Shannonbridge entrance was good and the monument does add to its appeal.

The Ferbane entrance seems to be the same as mentioned last year and the committee should take the comment made into consideration and engage with the local authority to have a welcome sign installed.

In an overall context the standard in this category was quite good and merits an increase.

Concluding Remarks:

It was good to visit Belmont after a few years absence and experience its rural charm and tranquillity.

The village has potential to do even better in the competition but do this a planned approach is needed.

You are wished well for the future.