

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ferbane**

Ref: **621**

County: **Offaly**

Mark: **292**

Category: **C**

Date(s): **09/07/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	46	47
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	37	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32	33
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	46	47
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	35
TOTAL MARK	450	287	292

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ferbane is very welcome to the 2017 Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition.

Thank you for the very comprehensive application form and the excellent support material in the form of a one page resume of the four year plan, nature walk and one of the best descriptive maps seen by this adjudicator.

Over the last few years the town has made good incremental improvement in the markings and this year the good work continues.

The committee seems to be reduced down to 10 this year but you have supplemented the voluntary support forthcoming from the local community.

Every local organisation has periods of transition and the adjudicator takes this into account.

The committee has links with a large number of agencies and of course the statutory body that is Offaly County Council.

Fundraising methods are through bag packs and church gate collections will go towards defraying expenses associated with the work of the committee.

It is also good to report that you are very much involving the younger generation through practical interaction with the Beavers and Cubs and other junior groups.

Good methods of communication bring rewards in that the community is very much aware of your activities and will row in behind your efforts when asked.

At this point the adjudicator would like to point out that as you have a very comprehensive application that it would be neigh impossible to comment in detail on the content but feel assured that the adjudication was done in a fair and objective manner in line with competition guidelines.

Just a word of advice and as you are in a period of transition and have a relatively small committee I would suggest that you carefully manage your workload and just tackle what can be achieved in a given timescale.

Thank you for your endorsement of the competition and how it has impacted on Ferbane in a positive manner.

Also you are wished well with application for funding under the Rural Development Leader Grant Programme for the development of an Overall Community Plan.

Application processes for this type of funding can be a little unwieldy as one who speaks from experience so hopefully all will work to your advantage.

Lots of additional work input in this category earns an increase in marks.

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

There has been a substantial body of work undertaken in this category since last year and all of what you have detailed in your submission was visited by the adjudicator who also did an objective assessment as per competition guidelines

One can see your concerns re the situation at the very well designed Library building, adjudication was undertaken

on a Sunday morning when traffic was comparatively minimal but still one could envisage problems when cars are parked in the allocated spaces.

St Marys Parochial Hall was in a presentable state and of course it could be a multi use resource for the community so you are wished well with your dealings with the Department of Education.

The Bridge over the Brosna is a very fine iconic structure that one associates with Ferbane so it was good to see it painted and it proves that basic maintenance often creates the best effects.

The problem that you are confronted with in relation to non cooperation of owners of premises that are in a state of disrepair is not uncommon and it needs sensitivity and a degree of patience to resolve issues.

Unless owners are contravening the law in relation to dereliction there is no compulsion for them to get involved in tidy towns and this is unfortunate but factual.

The streetscape looked well on the day of adjudication with good road surface and footpaths and the skyline not overtly burdened by overhead wires.

Your concern about the quality of the road surface due to the inordinate amount of heavy traffic has been noted but overall the standard was good.

The following are some personal objective comments that the adjudicator noted on his walkabout

The parking area on the Ballycumber/Clara road is a bit addition to the town, its well appointed but it can be difficult to turn sharp left out of the entrance without straying on to the opposite side of the road.

Memories of one of the great eras of Offaly Football were depicted on the excellent wall panel.

The little Bridge Hall was very well presented and obviously has good membership.

The new council area office is well under construction and will radically change the look of that area of the town for the better.

The relatively new Gallen Community School is a fine structure with excellent ancillary facilities to cater for a large student population.

The old former Shannon Development put on the Ballycumber Road is looking the worse for wear and one wonders what is planned for this area as it is a bit of an eye sore.

There were some very well presented shop fronts in the town and it was good to see that some old shop front signs such as Flemings were retained in original format.

It looks like that this premises may find its life as business again as there was a for sale sign on the wall.

The Church of the Immaculate Conception has extensive grounds and looked well on what was a worship day.

St Cynocs National School on the Ballinahown end of the town was presented well and had good safety measures in place.

Ferbane GAA Club grounds are a credit to the Club members as it was resplendent on the day.

Overall the standard was good in this category.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Much of the work being undertaken is of an ongoing maintenance nature with some new additions and this is an excellent approach.

Weed control is very important in ensuring that shrub beds and planters are free from unwanted weeds and well done on taking cognoscente of concern about the over use of weed killer.

The GAA Club one assumes would be open to the suggestion of having trees as part of its new plan for further development.

The Cowpark is an excellent town amenity that is enjoyed by locals and it was well presented and tidy when visited late am.

The Centra improvements were noted on the walkabout and it's gratifying to report that you have made application for grant support to make improvements to the playground area as it does seem a little jaded.

Just one slight negative in that few shrub beds were seem to be a little over populated and will need attention in the Autumn season.

Overall the standard was good especially the ongoing maintenance of existing planting arrangements.

Before one forgets it would be remiss of me not to mention the many private residences that splendid gardens and tidy frontages.

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

This is a category that the town has done very well in over the last few years and it is very much the same trend this year.

You are blessed to have base of natural habitats within the immediate vicinity of the town and you have succeeded in maximising them to the fullest.

The famous Brosna River is a wonderful natural resource but it is surprising that it is not mentioned very much in your input under this category, once if I can recall correctly

One would like to see plans for an information panel that would highlight the fauna, flora and fish of this wonderful river.

Maybe this will be done as part of your proposed Biodiversity Signage Programme

The mini projects that support the National Pollinator Plan are very creative especially the Wildlife Hotspot Sign and the 4th Class Pupils outstanding project the results of which were both noted and photographed for example purposes by the adjudicator.

Birdwatch Ireland Swifts Bird Species Survey which was launched nationwide to bring people's attention to need to conserve a species that because of a decline in their breeding population is threatened.

Your contribution to this is a very practical one and is in keeping with other wildlife conservation and promotion methods that you have employed.

For the additional work undertaken since last year you are awarded an additional mark.

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

the production of unnecessary waste at source.

Now with the concern about the future of landfill options nationally this objective has gained greater significance.

We note your concern about future performance in this category because of the size of your group so I would suggest the following sources of information

The Tidy Towns Unit produced an informative leaflet last year on sustainable waste and natural resource management.

There are also the following websites that are good sources of project ideas www.localprevention.ie www.greenhomes.ie and www.sustainableprocessing.ie that can be accessed for pertinent and up to date relevant information.

The local county environmental officer is probably the best person to call prior to embarking on any project.

What you have in place is in keeping with what is required but these are now becoming standard with most applications.

There are additional marks to be gained for very innovative projects so do give thought for next year's competition.

Finally well done to all the schools in the town who have each gained 2 green flags as part of the Green Flag Programme.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The Committee cannot be accused of letting anything to chance in your quest to keep the town as litter free as possible.

The litter task force is certainly doing the job that it was set up for as on the day the town was pretty free of litter and this was a week end day.

It is important that you keep this momentum going and that you use the methods of communication available to you to put the constant message out there to locals and visitors alike that Ferbane has zero tolerance for indiscriminating littering.

One likes the idea of the dog fouling mitts which if comes to fruition will further encourage owners to pick up after pooch does its business.

There were some cluttered areas of the main street and this was Sunday so one would like to see businesses contribute to your efforts by keeping frontages free and leave easier access for pedestrians.

A few directional signs and name signs were a little dirty and in need of a basic wash down.

The Bring Bank was tidy and clean on the day and no excess litter was visible.

There are a number of properties on Church Street that were kind of abandoned and looked the worse for wear but no doubt these are probably some of the properties that the committee are well familiar with.

The adjudicator is very much with you on the placing of these receptacles at a different location as they are not suited to the present location which is quite an attractive part of the core of the town.

The education of the youth programme with schools and very junior groups on matters of the environment and the threat that pollution brings to communities and the environment is to be lauded.

The mark lost last year has been restored.

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

The adjudicator visited all the housing developments in the town and indeed it is a deceptive town and surrounds in terms of size

There are 8 housing developments that were visited on the day and the standard of presentation overall was very good

It seems that the interaction between the committee and the residents' representatives has resulted in a positive reaction to your urgings to keep their properties well maintained and communal green zones cut and tidy.

The Garden Competition brings out the competitive spirit in residents and this helps the efforts of the committee in a most positive way.

The adjudicator notes that while most of the houses are singular that the residents on the Belmont Road have formed a residents group to look after this long stretch of road.

The results of their efforts were seen on the day as the grass verges were cut and boundary walls clean.

Some fine individual gardens were admired on this road as well.

The adopt a patch scheme seems to be a winner for a lot of communities and it's no different for Ferbane and hopefully it be sustainable in the years ahead.

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

The best entrance into the town was the Belmont entrance but there were a few rather confusing signs to be seen as maybe the definition of where the Tidy Towns boundaries are were not quite so clear.

There are two Ferbane identity name signs one on the very outside and one nearer in.

I would suggest that the one further out sign be the main sign and that it be enhanced a little with a planter box of selected shrubs that will not in time obscure the sign.

The adjudicator noted the condition of the road at the no entry part of this junction with Main Street

The relief road referred to in last year's competition looks as if has been improved somewhat as the fencing didn't seem to be in a poor condition and looked as if had been cleaned.

The Ballycumber entrance was also very well presented except for a section of the grass verge which came out on to the road.

The Athlone Road was also impressive but there are long sections of the path on the left coming in from Ballinahown that were weedy.

Concluding Remarks:

It has been some time since this adjudicator stopped and took time out in Ferbane. Many positive improvements have happened in the town most notably the car parking option on the Ballycumber Road and also the one way traffic system on the Belmont Road in to the centre. It is good to see Ferbane making good progress in the competition. You are wished well for the future.