

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kinnitty** Ref: **294**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **277**
Category: **B** Date(s): **21/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	40	41
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	35	36
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40	41
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	24	25
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	31
TOTAL MARK	450	271	277

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Thank you for your application to the Supervalu Tidy Towns 2017 Competition. You took on board the advice of last year's adjudicator and provided a concise application with an improved map. While you don't want a cluttered map, make sure any key features are noted on the map, especially if linked to a current project e.g. Parish graveyard. The 'before and after' photos included with the application are very helpful. It's great to see a copy of your three year plan. For future reference, it might be useful to include project partners and targets. There is quite a bit of repetition in the plan e.g. 'Continue with recycling days to involve the community', which should be avoided.

Kinnitty Tidy Towns works with many other groups and bodies, including Offaly County Council. It's great to have the new and enthusiastic Tús workers to help with the work of the Tidy Towns Group. Your involvement with the school appears to be very productive. Last year's 'Can it' project still looks great and the pollinator project is a great idea. The Town and Village Renewal Scheme award is a great achievement and I'm sure will be put to good use.

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

Liaising with property owners in relation to the upkeep and maintenance of buildings is proving fruitful. Many buildings in Kinnitty are very well presented, the Community Centre, Catholic Church, national school, Peavoys, Giltraps and deCleir's. The graveyard at St. Finian's Church is no longer overgrown, as it was last year. The sheep appear to be doing a great job keeping the grass down and they are unlikely to damage any of the memorials or built heritage. The wire fence doesn't look very attractive, however, and there does seem to be heavy herbicide use along the paths. The main gate to Kinnitty Castle looks very well and it appears that the gate lodge is being restored. Remember to just include projects that relate to the built environment and streetscape in this section, not landscaping although there is some overlap. Kinnitty has a rich heritage and history. It would be great if there was more interpretive information available for visitors. Some of the signs in the village could be updated or cleaned.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Kinnitty is set within a beautiful landscape in the foothills of the Slieve Blooms. There are many attractive trees within the village. Several of the trees were pollarded or heavily pruned, however, which isn't to be recommended unless absolutely essential. The perennial flower bed in the grounds of the Community Centre and playground are looks well. The shrubbery could be enhanced with some ground cover. The planting of the triangle on the Mountrath Road appears to be well thought out and with pollinators in mind. The planting looked quite sparse on adjudication day but I'm sure it will develop over time. Leaving a strip of grass unmown on the Birr Road should encourage the establishment of wildflowers over time. This approach could be extended to other areas. The central green looks very well. It was also good to read that you are considering nesting birds when deciding whether to trim bushes. Hanging baskets and window boxes can add a splash of colour in the summer. Just be careful not to overdo it and

distract from the distinctive appearance of Kinnity. Including flowers that will attract pollinators in any planters would be bonus. The GAA grounds have great potential for landscaping. Planting a native hedgerow or a stand of native trees on the roadside edge of the grounds could reduce the amount of grass for mowing and enhance this area.

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

It's great to hear you have entered the pollinator award. This is an area you can expand over the coming years by mowing some places less and planting more perennials in your landscaping schemes. This should reduce your costs as well as providing food and habitat for pollinators.

You are working closely with the Heritage Officer in general in your work and in relation to this category, which is great. The wildflower walk with Fiona Devery was a good way to raise awareness locally. You might consider running a heritage week event to highlight the biodiversity of Kinnity and environs e.g. focussing on flowers, bats, birds. Dawn or dusk chorus events also tend to be very popular and there are plenty of places nearby that these could be run. The stretch of post and wire fencing along the Mountrath Road near the village centre could provide an opportunity to plant a native hedgerow, with the consent of the landowner.

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

The recycling area was very tidy on adjudication day. Community composting can prove challenging as you have discovered. It might be easier to encourage local residents to have their own compost bins and run events to promote composting. Maybe some residents would be interested in following the example of the school and having a wormery to deal with organic waste. Replacing the lawnmower or strimmer with sheep in the old graveyard is a novel idea. It is important to monitor grazing levels and ensure no damage to the built heritage. It's good to involve the local school children in the National Spring Clean and any other clean ups. The school appears to be busy with Green Flag initiatives to deal with waste. Some photos of projects and activities would be welcome. Your three year plan refers to water butts. Have you made any progress with this project?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Very little litter was observed on adjudication day. Reducing the number of bins in the village appears to be working to keep litter down. The Tidy Towns Group and TÚS workers have done a great job clearing weeds and debris from paths. A few photos of the National Spring Clean and other clean-ups or weed clearing would be nice to see. The issue of undergrounding cables is a complex one but worth pursuing as a long-term project.

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

The residential areas and estates in Kinnity are presented to a high standard. Trees greatly enhance these areas. It is important to select trees that suit the area and will require minimal maintenance. Pruning and pollarding can be costly and produce unsightly results.

The Tidy Towns Group appears to be liaising well with the residents groups. It will be nice when all the estates have names displayed and you are making progress in this regard. Some stretches of concrete wall e.g. in St. Finnian's Park could be screened with climbers.

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

The approach roads to Kinnity are generally well managed and presented. The road from Birr has attractive native hedgerows and trees. The wildlife area is a great addition. There is some opportunity to expand the 'don't mow let it grow' approach to other road verges on the approach roads.

Concluding Remarks:

The Tidy Towns Group is doing a great job to enhance the appearance of Kinnity and involving the younger members of the community. Keep up the good work!