

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Thurles** Ref: **627**
County: **Tipperary(North)** Mark: **293**
Category: **E** Date(s): **06/08/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	38	39
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	42	43
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	33	33
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31	32
TOTAL MARK	450	285	293

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Thank you, Thurles, for your completed application form including your map, with the projects which you undertook numbered and referenced to your application form. You are very welcome to the 2017 SuperValu Tidy Towns competition. We admired the Tipperary County Council produced Residents Association Handbook which has Refresh Thurles logo on the cover which you also included with your applications.

Your committee of five is quite small for a town the size of Thurles which must be a challenge for you. You have however, the support of many organisations and businesses which you can call on for advice and support. Communicating your activities on Facebook is excellent and that together with the parish newsletter and local newspaper ensures your information is getting out to all. We suggest that you ask people to help in just one small project, even for one hour. It is always beneficial to get as many as possible to volunteer even for one small job, as the more people involved in the activities in one way or another gives a sense of community spirit which this competition fosters. Perhaps put up a notice in the local sports facilities listing the jobs and asking for volunteers. We are happy to hear that you are beginning to involve school children. Perhaps talk to the Transition Year teachers who might be very happy to have help in a project for their students.

We are happy to see that you feel the town has benefited from your involvement in the Tidy Towns competition. It takes time to get the whole community on board but your approach by involving the residents last year and the businesses this year will work, although it may take a few years.

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

You have many great buildings and facilities in your town – the magnificent RC Cathedral of the Assumption, Thurles Library and Arts Centre, the LIT Thurles Campus, The Leisure Centre, the Railway Station to highlight just a few. You also have a great many beautiful shops and buildings and we greatly admired Liberty Market, J. Dempsey, First Editions, Hayes Hotel, The Bank of Ireland, Devlin's Chemist to name some. Some of these not only have beautiful shopfronts which are well maintained but also have upper floors with great dripstones over the windows which add greatly to the character of the building. The street lighting attached to the buildings in Parnell Street free up the pavements and look great – are these LED lights? The newly roofed building in the town park was finished when we visited and looks good as too does the newly repaired wall beside it. The freshly painted seats were noted and looked well – others are still in need of attention. You have many projects which you have in mind to undertake in this category and we look forward to seeing them developed in future years.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

We admired the beds of begonias at the name signs to your town. There were also beautiful floral planting beds, hanging baskets and also town trees in other locations throughout the town which we admired e.g. the Square

looked beautiful (in spite of all the cars). The new planting at the railway station was in full colour and looked really well – congratulations to your TidyTowns member Pat Baird for undertaking this. We spoke to one of the station employees who told us she regularly maintains the bed and that it is greatly admired by travellers. We looked for the planting at the swing gate into the Town Park but there was none – just a barren flower bed to our right as we entered. Trees are badly needed in some of the open green spaces and along the roadways in many of the housing estates. Contact the Co. Co and Coillte to see if this could be a project for you to do in association with the residents. Maybe local horticulture growers /centre might sponsor some trees on an annual basis – a discrete notice with the names of the sponsors could be added.

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

We see that you have not advanced in this category. There are many projects you could undertake and some in conjunction with the local schools. Undertake a survey of wildlife habitats around the town, have a Dawn Chorus day, invite speakers from BirdWatch Ireland to talk to the community etc. etc. This in addition to installing bird boxes (including swift boxes) and bat boxes in selected locations around the town. We suggest you contact the Heritage Officer who will assist you with other ideas. Contacting the local Camera Club and asking them to take photos of the town's nature and then holding an exhibition is an excellent idea. Make it more inviting/ exciting by making it a photographic competition.

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

Congratulations on your proposed Directory of Recycling. In addition to delivering it, don't forget to add it to your FaceBook page so that people can access it on line and also put copies in doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms. What a great number of Recycling Shops and we love the work carried out by Thurles Men's Shed (we saw a Women's Shed in one of the towns we visited). We noted your comments on CEX Entertainment – what a great idea collecting the unwanted items and selling them for €1 which goes to a charity. Is Refresh Thurles a member of SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities or An Taisce's Green Homes? Are you involved with the National Schools in any project which could come into this category? There are many projects which you could undertake which could come under this category. Maybe form a sub-committee with some other organisation who will think of ideas / projects for you to implement.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Being a large town is always challenging with regards to litter but we are happy to report that when we visited there was only a little litter in a few areas and the town, generally, looked neat and tidy. We see that your bottle banks are well used – 194.22 tonnes of glass recycled in one year! Amazing. And to think, before we had bottle banks all of this went to landfill. There are a lot of temporary signs on the approach roads advertising community events which give the areas a cluttered feeling and detract for the spaces. We suggest that a community notice (8'x4') made from marine plywood, be erected on all entrances roads where events can be advertised. All other temporary signs are then considered litter and warrant prosecution and can be removed. There was quite a lot of graffiti noted which is a pity.

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

There are a number of older estates which have matured nicely with public spaces with great mature trees. Gardens were generally, neat and tidy and some had spectacular displays of flowers. We love the idea of the Tipperary Co Co. Residents Association Handbook. Well done on promoting the Co. Co.'s grant aid for residents' association – very often they don't know it exists. Having a community estate and streetscape competition is an excellent way to get the town involved – publicise this and have photos on the notice board in public institutions showing the winners receiving their awards. Can a certificate be given to the shops which they can display – this might encourage the streets to become involved. Ask the Co. Co. to become involved / present the prizes – another way to raise the profile of the competition.

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

Neatly trimmed grass margins and canopies of trees greet the visitor to your town. Road surfaces were generally good and road markings and directional signage very clear. The roundabouts had a great display of shrubs – maybe a little more colour could be added to these. Trees are perhaps what we feel was missing along the streets in Thurles and we encourage you to approach the local authority when you have identified areas where these could be planted. Trees are great for shelter both for the human and wildlife.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure visiting your town and seeing various projects which you undertook this year. All of the projects identified in your application had not been carried out when we visited and we assume that it is the intention these be undertaken throughout the summer. We love the grant scheme to improve business and residential properties and we look forward to seeing a huge improvement in the town as a result. In addition to the overall map a larger scale map of the town centre showing the projects numbered would be very helpful to the adjudicators. We look forward to a return visit in the years ahead to see its progress. Thank you for entering the Supervalu TidyTowns 2017 competition.

