

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: Ardclough	Ref: 353
County: Kildare	Mark: 319
Category: B	Date(s): 29/06/2018

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	49	50
Streetscape & Public Places	50	39	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	39	41
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	40	41
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	17	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	39
TOTAL MARK	450	310	319

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Ardclough Ard Cloch chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 bliain an Chomórtais. Ardclough Community Council is very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2018 celebrating 60 years of the Competition. Thank you for your wonderfully presented and comprehensive Entry Form including location map, 3 Year Business Plan 2017-2019 and photographs recording all the works undertaken by your Committee over the last year. The Tidy Towns map included with your entry was clear and the legend provided helped greatly in the adjudication of your village. It was the Adjudicator's first time to visit Ardclough and the first impression has been very positive. You currently have 8 members on your Committee with a further 6 people who volunteer to assist with your activities. It is noted that your Committee is affiliated with Muintir na Tíre and you arrange meetings at least monthly throughout the year. Your Tidy Towns work days are held on Thursday evenings which involves ongoing maintenance and some individual projects. You have engaged with a range of organisations to further your goals and you communicate with residents and members through Ardclough Community Whatsapp Group set up in 2017 and through social media, local noticeboards and parish newsletter. Your engagement with young people in the area is very strong and you co-operate well with the local National School on various projects. The involvement with the Tidy Towns Competition has been very beneficial for Ardclough and has improved the local environment and community spirit. Many different events undertaken under this category have served to bring the Ardclough Community together such as the Operation Transformation 'couch to 5K' event and the various Community Conversations held in the Village Centre. These Community initiatives appear to have been a great success – well done to all concerned with these. Your approach to the planning of your Tidy Towns work is very thorough and your 3 Year Plan is comprehensive and allows you to easily track progress on specific projects and also across categories – Tús maith leath na hOibre!

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

The Ardclough area has a rich heritage and has historic connections to the Guinness and Shackelton families. It has important associations with horse breeding and famous race horses of the early 20th Century. It's location adjacent to the Grand Canal is also important in providing connectivity to the Arthur's Way route to Hazelhatch, Celbridge and Leixlip. The canal provides many recreational and amenity opportunities for the residents of Ardclough. New development in the village will be positive but will no doubt bring challenges and a strong tidy towns voice will be important to ensure that changes to the environment of Ardclough are sensitively planned and are sustainable. It is quite evident on a walk around the village that the residents of Ardclough are very proud of their area and the work undertaken by the Tidy Towns. The Village Centre building is central to the community and its presentation was superb reflecting how important this building is for the Community. The new kitchen is a great addition as is the Community Noticeboard near the path. The painting of the window grids also helps the overall presentation – these little jobs can be very important. The large granite boulder with the engraving relating to Ardclough's equine history

was greatly admired. The presentation of the church grounds and frontage is to a very high standard as is the shop which is an important meeting point in the village. The impressive Scoil Aine Naofa school was visited. This is a wonderful educational establishment and is a great asset to the village. However, some additional tree planting is needed in car park area, on the traffic islands and along frontage, as these areas are quite bare and require a landscape enhancement scheme.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your flagship project under this category is the installation of a large heritage stone, which provides an insight into the history of the village, on the triangle opposite the church. The standard of maintenance of the triangle is superb and installation of the heritage standing stone here is appropriate given the name of the village. The works undertaken on this project are applauded. Perhaps a small quality herbaceous perennial planting bed should be provided at its base to provide further enhancement and deal with any maintenance issues arising. The nearby Ardclough Natural Heritage sign is superbly presented and very informative. Other works under this category have been carried out on the grounds around the Village Centre including the installation of a new park bench and the planting of a mini woodland. The grounds around the Village Centre are maintained in an environmentally sensitive and appropriate manner with extensive wildflower meadows and closely mown pathways – congratulations to all concerned with this.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

Your 'Cat Collar' project is interesting as there has always been a concern regarding the impact of domestic cats on wild bird populations. This is very worthwhile. The newly installed Wildlife sign was noted at Ardclough Bridge on the canal and it is good to hear that long-eared owls are present in the adjoining wet woodland and that rare mandarin ducks have also called to visit Ardclough. Public signage which is for permanent use should in most circumstances be bilingual. Well done on the smooth newt survey which has confirmed the presence of this species in the area.

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

Whilst walking through the grounds of the Village Centre a local resident was noted diligently watering vegetables in the community vegetable garden. The vegetable beds here are an important educational resource and despite the recent drought conditions, the vegetables plants are thriving. Your mini market for waste has worked well and the local community has engaged with this project. Your new leaf composter and composter sign on the grounds of the Village Centre were noted. In relation to future projects under this category, you might consider the possibility of a car-pooling initiative based near the shop car park area and promoting the use of low carbon vehicles and maybe pursuing the installation of an electric car charge point at an appropriate location in the village. The extension of cycle parking facilities in the village or along the Canal could also be considered. The further development of Arthur's Way and other cycle routes will ultimately help Ardclough develop in the future and will need further promotion. The greater use of solar panels on roofs and heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption is a worthwhile initiative to consider - perhaps in the context futureproofing the energy requirements of the Village Centre building. The greater use of water butts or tanks to provide storage for the watering of plantings during the Summer period is also encouraged. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website has good information in relation to the development of Better Energy Communities.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The new Ardclough Village Centre welcome sign and sign at the Village Shop requesting people not to throw litter shows your commitment to keeping Ardclough clean and tidy. During the visit all areas along roads, at the shop car park at the triangle and at the Village Centre were found to be neat and tidy with an absence of litter. Signs were clean and there was an absence of clutter or inappropriate signage. Well done. Thanks are also due to those involved in clearing of drains to prevent future flooding in the village and erecting anti-litter signs along the Canal. The remarking of the car park at the shop/church could be a project to be considered in the future.

Residential

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

The floral containers installed on top of the stone wall boundary along the frontage of Wheatfield Estate were admired as were the high quality timber seats on the adjoining open space. This estate was spotless and the open space area was superbly maintained - well done to all the local residents here. Lishandra Manor is a gated development and it was not possible to gain access, although the entrance area was very well presented.

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

Approaches to Ardclough were well maintained and road surfaces and markings were generally very good and Ardclough namesigns well presented. It is good to see that the maintenance of roadside verges and hedges is carried out with a view to encouraging wildlife. The so called 'Fringing' of verges is a good option and is visually acceptable whilst retaining a strip for a suitable as a wildlife corridor. Perhaps consider providing a tree planting scheme to stabilise the newly constructed bank at the 13th Lock.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a great pleasure to visit your village. Ardclough is making great strides in the competition and your committee

is clearly working very hard to improve community spirit and the appearance and environs of your village – keep up the good work.