

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castledermot** Ref: **367**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **270**
Category: **C** Date(s): **10/07/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	40	41
Streetscape & Public Places	50	30	31
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	35	36
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	28	28
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	14	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	47	48
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	35
TOTAL MARK	450	262	270

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Castledermot Diseart Diarmad chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Castledermot Tidy Towns is very welcome to the Tidy Towns Competition 2018, your 12th year entering the Competition. Thank you for your very clear and concise application form/submission with map and the many photographs. The map provided with your application was rather small and although there were numbers provided referencing back to the application form, it would be good to include a key on the map itself, listing all the projects and sites of interest in the town. This is important and assists greatly in the adjudication process and perhaps can be addressed next year. A folded A3 size map is perfectly acceptable. You have a loyal Committee of 4 Officers with 3 CES workers and a further 20 volunteers assisting your work. You receive considerable local support from a range of organisations including your very own Season's Shop and communication with the general public is through Newspapers, Meetings, Facebook, Texts and Posters. Strong links have been developed with local schools and in particular the Transition Year Programme students where students assist in clean-up campaigns and Swift Boxes have been installed in Cloáiste Lorcáin. The support and assistance that you provide to Residents Associations is important and will yield significant improvements in the presentation of housing estates over time.

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

Castledermot (or Dermot's Hermitage from the Gaeilge) is a very attractive and interesting Town from a historical viewpoint and it was intriguing to learn that the earliest Irish Parliament met here on the 18th June 1264. One feels that the Town could exploit this historical significance to a greater extent. The traditional street pattern and building form remains largely intact, adding greatly to the character of the Town. The Mad Hatter Café with its colourful shopfront was particularly enjoyed. The signage over the Leinster Arms licensed premises could be replaced with a more traditional and tasteful design. Significant shopfront grants are available for improvements of this kind. It was good to see the young cherry trees planted at Market Square - they seem for growing very well and complement the older specimens growing close to the Leinster arms – these must provide a spectacular feature in Spring. It was heartening to see the restoration works taking place on the premises beside the National Electrical shop. It was noted that a number of premises in the centre of the Town remain unoccupied and their current condition detracts from the streetscape. Perhaps a scheme for the restoration of these could be developed with the owners in consultation with Kildare County Council. Significant Grant funding may be available for this work, where a residential element is included. The library building with its beautifully painted façade and wall and railing frontage along the road was particularly admired. The Priory and Hospital of St John the Baptist was visited but unfortunately it was not possible to gain access - perhaps in the future public access and appropriate signage could be provided here in consultation with the owners of the adjoining property. The streetscape and shopfronts located between the Wok Inn and Tom's Diner are very colourful but would benefit from some improvement and renewal work to signs

and re-painting etc. The dwellings on Main Street near the post office were splendidly presented. The granite posts which define the doorways of these dwellings here were a superb feature. Saint James's Church was visited. The graveyard with its Romanesque doorway located in front of the Church building, the Round Tower, Viking burial stones and Celtic Crosses are a joy to behold. Perhaps these features should be protected in the future from weathering to ensure the stone carvings are not damaged over time. Moone High Cross has been protected from weathering with appropriate interpretive signage and perhaps a similar type scheme could be carried out here. The Community Centre building is a great example of high quality modern architecture which respects the traditional character of the town. The Franciscan Friary is an extremely interesting and imposing building complex, of particular note were the baptismal and holy water fonts which are still intact. Perhaps this area could be developed as a major tourist attraction in consultation with the OPW, Heritage Council and Kildare County Council with improved visitor access, guided tours and further restoration/protection of the building fabric. Some information could be erected in the vicinity of the Carlow Gate explaining the history of this structure. Consideration should be given to rethatching the cottages on Keenan's Lane near the Fair Green. Could these be developed as a future Heritage Centre or for Tourist Information/Tearooms with possible grant aid?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The Fairgreen, with its Flora and Fauna Information Sign and extensive areas of wildflower meadow is a wonderful amenity for the Town. The sign could do with cleaning and there was some plastic bottle litter near the seat - although it was great to see that this litter was picked up later on in the morning. Plans are in train for the provision of a children's playground on the Fairgreen and maintenance works are to some extent on hold, pending further developments. The closely mown paths provided through the wildlife area here were splendid. The innovative upcycled Cable reel bench and seat was a great invitation to sit and enjoy the sunny weather. The painting of the table and seat would probably improve its longevity. It is recommended that the 'drainage pipe' bollards situated around the perimeter of the Fairgreen should be removed, as they generally detract from the presentation of this open space. The mature lime trees on Keenan's Lane are a wonderful feature of the Town and the approach to the Fairgreen. The timber flower planters and seat at Market Square outside the National Electrical premises added greatly to the presentation of the streetscape here. The seat could do with painting. The Hennessy Commercial Workshop premises would benefit from some maintenance works to the facade - perhaps this site is due for re-development in the near future. The floral displays installed at Doyle's Bridge were greatly admired. The Pound Garden, previously developed by Castledermot Tidy Towns, is another wonderful well-maintained amenity in the Town and was a haven of peace and tranquillity, broken only by the beautiful birdsong emanating from nearby trees. You have planted trees this year on the grounds of Coláiste Lorcán and at the Church of the Assumption-well done on this.

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

The River Lerr is a particularly important area for wildlife conservation in the Town and it is noted that you are proposing to erect a wildlife sign here in the near future. It is great to hear the water quality in the river is good and capable of sustaining fish species and this is being monitored. Perhaps a survey of aquatic life in the river could be undertaken in the future. Wild Kildare is providing you with advice on the management and maintenance of areas in the Town with a view to encouraging wildlife and in particular pollinator species. Are there any sites in Castledermot which might be suitable for developing a wildflower meadow, pollinator-friendly planting, woodland or naturalised bulb planting? Natural field hedgerows along approach roads also provide important habitats for wildlife and where feasible, these should be allowed to develop naturally as much as possible, subject to sight-lines and road safety requirements. An unmown strip at the base of hedgerows along roadside margins creates a vital corridor for wild species.

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

You continue to make use of your Polytunnel and composting area and are now initiating a scheme to reuse spent ground coffee beans from local shops to make compost. The Cable Reel picnic tables and seats are an excellent example of how once discarded materials can be very effectively re-used and upcycled-well done on this project. The 'Seasons' second-hand Shop provides a useful source of income for your ongoing activities. It is good to note you are encouraging walking, cycling and car-pooling and that the local school are engaging with the Green Flag campaign. Under this category, the development of a Community Garden on a suitably secure site for growing herbs, fruit and vegetables and as an educational resource, might be considered. Other possible projects could include the promotion of the use of low carbon electric vehicles or requesting the installation of an electric car charge-point in the Town, if such a facility is not already in place. The promotion of grant aid for the installation of wall and attic insulation in older building stock, the greater use of solar panels on roofs and heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by households/businesses, are worthwhile initiatives to consider. The use of water butts for the watering and flower boxes and tubs and private gardens during the Summer period is also a good water conservation measure. 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 only litter noted in the town was found at the Fairgreen and this was almost immediately removed. The remainder of the Town Centre was generally found to be free of litter. Tidiness is also not an issue in Castledermot and there was a general absence of clutter in the central part of the Town, apart from some overhead power lines. Derelict and unused buildings facing Market Square impact on the tidiness of this part of the Town but this could quite easily be remedied with the agreement of the property owners, by painting or restoration works for which grant aid can be sought.

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

It is heartening to note that Residents Associations in Castledermot are working tirelessly to maintain and improve their estates and they are to be commended for all their work in this area. Abbeylands estate (1941) was presented to a high standard. However, the upgrading of the planting bed at the entrance with the 1798 memorial would significantly improve this area. The planting of a hedge along the wall facing open space on the way into the estate would also enhance this area. At Abbeylands Barnhill estate, the estate is well presented although attention is needed in relation to the maintenance of street tree ties and stakes. Bags of green waste were also noted at the entrance here. William Pierce Terrace is maintained to a good standard with attractive floral displays and grotto. At Maple Close the stone walls, attractive timber flower tubs and tree plantings on the open space enhanced the entrance to this estate.

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

The approach roads into Castledermot are generally presented and maintained to a good standard. It is noted that damaged road signage is in the process of being repaired by Kildare County Council. The Carlow Road approach with its attractive floral displays was particularly admired. However, the vacant site at the junction of the Carlow /Tullow roads detracts from this part of the town- are there any plans to develop this site in the future? Perhaps an improvement scheme here including fencing and hedge planting could be provided in the short term. The Lime Walk access to St. Jame's Church, known as the Laurel Walk, is a particularly attractive feature in the Town and it is good to see that a minimal grass maintenance regime is in place here to encourage wildlife. The back lanes in Castledermot are full of character and wandering around these on a warm sunny day was a particularly treat. Keenan's Lane with its mature Lime Trees, old single storey cottages and access to the Fairgreen is a delightful part of the town with great potential if developed and enhanced in a sensitive manner.

Concluding Remarks:

The visit to Castledermot this Summer was a very enjoyable experience. The Town has great potential to progress in the competition. A 3 to 5 Year Plan would be useful in terms of setting priorities and objectives with an emphasis on making the most of your significant heritage assets and natural features. You are wished well for the future.