

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Naas** Ref: **382**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **331**
Category: **G** Date(s):

03/08/2018

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	50	51
Streetscape & Public Places	50	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	45	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	42	43
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	19	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	38	39
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	35
TOTAL MARK	450	324	331

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Naas Nás na Rí chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Naas is very welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2018 in it's Anniversary Year. You are to be congratulated for this, your 60th Entry to the Competition. Thank you for your very comprehensive, clear and informative Application Form provided with numerous photos of your work. It was a pleasure to read all the activities undertaken by Naas Tidy Towns set out in such a clear and concise manner. It is great to note you received your fourth consecutive Gold Medal Award in 2017 and the herculean efforts of your Committee, Volunteers and Support Groups in recent years have been justifiably rewarded. It is noted that you have also received awards in special categories such as the Youth Award, Greenway and the Kildare Chamber Award for the Wild Food Festival. Your activities and profile is attracting more volunteers and businesses to your cause and attendances at your many events are increasing which is great to see. It is noted that you have a total of 92 Volunteers available to your Committee which is a testament to the healthy state of Community Involvement in Naas again supplemented by the Scouts, Brownies and Guides. Great thanks are also due to your Committee for the significant voluntary commitment in attending regular meetings and particularly to those group leaders and volunteers who undertake regular litter picks etc. and other works around the Town. You have established a very successful means of Communication in your Community and it is good to see an increased level of engagement locally with your activities through the use of SMS Texting , Facebook up 31%, Twitter up 51%, WhatsApp, Newsletter, Website, e-mail and Local Newspapers, and through the Awards Night etc. You continue to have a strong engagement with local schools who have achieved an additional three Green Flags. We particularly liked the activities promoting Tidy Towns Work with Secondary/Transition Year Students and Junior Tidy Towns providing for very important social integration opportunities for newcomers to the Town. The engagement with Scouts, Brownies and Guides continues to be strong and the 'adopt a patch' initiatives in conjunction with the great efforts of the various group leaders is worthy of much praise. The wide range of Organisations and Traders providing support to Naas Tidy Towns is very impressive and all are deserving of great thanks for their active engagement with your ongoing activities. It is noted that you have now finalised your Three Year Plan 2018-2021. This is a very impressive document and blueprint for the future, with many worthwhile and exciting projects under all categories. We wish you well in the implementation of this plan in the future. We are very impressed with the Vision your Committee has set out for your Town based on the general ethos that Naas is a 'large town with a small town's spirit'. There is no doubt that the activities of your Committee are enhancing the attractiveness of Naas as a place to visit, live and work in, with even greater potential in the future for attracting greater numbers of visitors to your Town.

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

The overall composition and varied streetscape of Naas generally creates a very vibrant atmosphere in the centre of the Town and the attractive individual buildings are generally presented to a very high standard. Floral displays

significantly enhance the visitor experience of the Town with many business premises engaging positively with Tidy Towns to significantly enhance their facades and shopfronts. Buildings of note on the day of Adjudication were the Naas Courthouse Building, Town Hall Building, Presbyterian Church and environs, St. David's Church and environs and the Permanent TSB and environs together with a range of other business premises too numerous to mention individually. The floral displays and general maintenance around the Courthouse building particularly impressed as did the nearby entrance to the Naas Court hotel. The floral displays at the junction of North Main Street and the Sallins Road along the frontage of the Permanent TSB premises were very colourful and striking and caught the eye, enhancing the overall appearance of this part of the town. Your landscaper Mr Fintan Gilman is to be commended for the overall impact of his work here. The general presentation of buildings between the Courthouse and the Town Hall and along the South Main Street was also striking with nicely painted and tidy facades complemented by wonderful floral displays. A number of modern-style shopfronts here could be looked at in terms of their impact on the overall streetscape composition, namely i.e. K Windows and Doors, Eurostar, Elverys, Boylesports/Educo-gym etc. It was good to see so much off-street car parking and bicycle parking available in the centre of the Naas Town. This really does enhance the visitor experience. The walk along Moate Lane was very pleasing and the nearby Theatre building impressed as did the imposing historic Mounded Motte feature surrounded by a well - constructed stone wall with overflowing natural red valerian plantings which were in full bloom. The historic graveyard at Abbey Bridge was visited and we were pleased to note the extensive clean up works carried out here by the TY students from Naas Community College - well done to all concerned. However, at the time of adjudication there was still some brushwood left near the perimeter wall which could be removed to prevent further dumping or any potential fire hazard. It is good to know that a sign explaining the history of the Graveyard has been ordered – this will be a welcome addition to enhance the visitor experience in this area. The floral displays at Abbey Bridge were noted and enhance the canal-side landscape. Trenching works have now commenced on the undergrounding of Power Lines along the Main Street and the NTT Committee are to be commended for their efforts in lobbying for these worthwhile improvements. The creation of a wildlife area in the vicinity of St. Corbans Lane was noted and enhances this area. You are to be commended for your efforts in relation to the dishing of pavements- the walkability of Towns is an important consideration particularly for the very young and elderly and visually and physically impaired. Your continued efforts to remove graffiti at various locations in the Town are commended and there was an absence of graffiti in the Town on the day of adjudication.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Naas Harbour was visited and it is great for the people of Naas to have such an important waterfront amenity so close to the Town. For visitors however, it's presence is not so obvious and this could be enhanced with improved signage. The general environs of the Harbour were found to be presented to a very high standard however some attention could be given in the short term, pending future plans, to painting the bollards and chains in this area and the seating also in need of some attention. We know that the development of the Harbour Area in conjunction with Kildare County Council and Waterways Ireland is currently being planned and we await the further improvements here with interest. We also called to the area known as the Lakes Amenity Area. Like the Harbour, this is very significant amenity in the Town which can be developed further and made more attractive for the visitor and local residents. We particularly liked the retention of a strip of unmown tall vegetation around the edge of the lakes – this is the most appropriate and safest way to manage natural amenity areas like this and enhances public safety and minimises disturbance to nesting birds. The lakes provide significant wildlife habitats and refuge for waterfowl and the water quality appears to be very good – some quite large brown trout were noted in the lakes. Your Committee have sought and have been granted permission and funding to erect Adult Exercise equipment on this site which would be a very worthwhile improvement. We wish you well with your proposals on this. It is noted that your Committee has planted Whitethorn near the industrial premises on the Dublin Road and have cut back trees and bushes on the Monread Road and carried out tree planting on Monread Avenue. A more suitable pollinator friendly planting scheme has also been provided in the new flower bed at The Harbour View and the general bed makeover carried out here has been very successful. Monread District Park was visited and it is great to note that volunteer staff from the Kerry Group have assisted in the maintenance of this important local amenity.

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

The people of Naas are very lucky to have the Canal located so close to the Town. This waterway provides an important refuge for wildlife and an amazing opportunity for local people to enjoy nature and at the same time engage in active recreational activities such as walking and cycling etc. You have been very active over the last year under this category getting involved in a wide range of projects including the erection of swiftboxes, bat boxes, bug hotels, kingfisher nests and carrying out pollinator-friendly planting schemes and organising a Canal nature walk as part of Biodiversity Week, erecting wildlife and bird nest cams etc.. You have delayed grass cutting in Spring in some areas to encourage the flowering of Dandelion and other wildflowers, to provide important pollinator friendly areas and have established an edible greenway between Tandy's bridge and the Loch. Your Committee has organised bee and butterfly identification training with the Irish Wildlife Trust to assist in heritage recording along the Canal. All of these initiatives significantly enhance the wildlife and biodiversity awareness amongst local residents.

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

It is great that you have pursued a wide range of different and exciting projects under this category this year such as the conversion of street lighting to efficient LED's from the Town Hall to Poplar Square, in conjunction with Kildare County Council. The upcycling of old bicycles continues to provide colourful features around the Town and the installation of a sustainable solar powered watering system in the Men's Shed, Repair Café and water irrigation system, are all examples of projects which meet the requirements of sustainability and doing more with less. There is a strong educational emphasis in the projects you have included under this category which will have many

benefits for the future e.g. upcycling project with Naas Scouts, planting your own crops by pupils of Naas Community Primary School, the air monitoring project and the reduction of food waste initiatives etc. All of this work will have a lasting impact on residents' attitudes and their general engagement with sustainability issues as they affect your Town. Under sustainable Transport you continue to promote the completion of the Naas Neighbourhood Greenway. This is a very worthwhile project and will provide a safe off-road option for schoolchildren and train commuters alike, at the same time providing an important recreational resource for local residents. You could also consider other initiatives in the future under this category in the sustainable energy and transport arena, such as promoting improvements in the e-car charging infrastructure in the area, use of solar panels on Community buildings and private house/ business premises, installation of small renewable wind and hydro power schemes in the area, where appropriate. The purchase of an electric van to store and transport clean up equipment as well the other listed items on your 3 year plan under this category, are all important initiatives and we wish you well with the implementation of these.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On the day of Adjudication generally there was an absence of litter in Naas Town, along approach roads and within housing estates. This is a Testament to all the hard work undertaken by Naas Tidy Towns volunteers and Kildare County Council staff in keeping Naas Town as clean as possible at all times. It is good to note that your Committee is engaging with the Probation Services to enable the more secluded areas around the town environs to be cleared of litter. The Good Friday Spring Clean, clean-up of Corbally by the Scouts, regular litter patrols and the 'adopt a patch' initiatives are all important in reducing the impact of litter on the Town and creating awareness of the scourge of litter amongst the general public. There was some minor littering noted in the corner of the car park at Friary Road which is operated by Naas Town Council. The CCTV cameras in place in this car park could perhaps be used for enhanced litter enforcement measures here in the future. It was pleasing to see the electric-car charging points operational in this carpark, one of which was being used at the time of the inspection. The quality and presentation of signage in the Town of Naas was generally found to be very good. We wish you well with proposals for the further undergrounding of power lines along the Main Street.

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

A number of individual housing estates were visited on Adjudication day including Aylmer Park, Kerdiff Park and Kerdiff Lawns, Dún na Ríogh estate and Gleann na Ríogh Court, Roseville estate amongst others. The housing estates in Naas were found to be maintained to a very high standard with a complete absence of litter, roadside margins were closely mown and well maintained and roadside trees added to the high quality sylvan character of residential areas. In some estates we noted the planting of flowers at the base of street trees which indicates a high level of awareness amongst local residents of the importance of the presentation of their local area. Open space areas and private gardens were also very well maintained and presented. Estate entrances were well presented with suitable ornamental planting schemes around estate namestones and it is noted that new flower beds have been provided at Dún na Ríogh and Elmwood Estates. It is acknowledged that significant work has been undertaken by NTT in recent years in dealing with Graffiti on walls residential areas. Painting over the Graffiti on walls is a good short-term solution. However, consideration should be given in the future to planting hedges such as beech hedging along walls at problem locations, as this prevents a recurrence of graffiti in the longer term. NTT is highly commended for the efforts made each year in holding a Tidy Towns Awards Night where the presentation of individual housing estates and private gardens is recognised and there is no doubt that this is improving the standard of presentation of estates each year.

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

The Town of Naas was visited during a very hot and dry period in late June with many of the grass margins, roundabouts and planted areas exhibiting signs of severe drought. We are also aware that there are plans for upgrading of the Dublin approach road in Naas and improvement works may be delayed as a result. Despite this all the approaches to the Town were found to be well presented with high quality planting schemes, neat margins and boundaries and an absence of litter. Some of the roundabout planting schemes on the main approaches have become a little jaded over the years and require replanting and additional maintenance and weeding. An disused site at the entrance to Naas on the Dublin approach detracts from the overall presentation of this part of the town - no doubt this site will be developed in the near future.

The entrance to Saint Corban's graveyard is very well presented and is particularly striking on the Dublin approach to the Town. The painting or renewal of overhead barriers and gates at various car park locations in the town including at Monread District Park car park, should be given serious consideration as they currently detract from the overall appearance and presentation of these areas. It is noted that you have arranged for the erection of Welcome Stones on the Kilcullen and Newbridge Roads and the removal of chicken wire and stone cleaning on the Blessington/Ballycane Roads.

Concluding Remarks:

Naas Tidy Towns has been very active over the last year and all your efforts continue to have significant impact on the overall presentation of the Town and the lives of local residents. Well done to all concerned and we wish you every success in the competition.

Second Round Adjudication:

It was a pleasure for this adjudicator to visit Naas and experience the many positive changes that have taken place in recent years. The attractive 'Fáilte' signs give a good first impression. The nicely landscaped Ring Road and

Business Park are neat – appearing popular with walkers and joggers. The Main St has some fine architectural buildings that enhance the overall streetscape. The Court House and Town Hall are highlighted with good quality floral displays as are the impressive bank buildings. Naas has a mixed quality of shopfronts and we would urge you to continue your efforts to encourage businesses to use appropriate signage and shopfront displays. We read with interest the sign denoting all the existing and proposed cycle routes at the lovely harbour area. Indeed, as we walked the various areas of the town, we were impressed by the pedestrian/cycle connectivity between them, e.g. from the wonderful lakes amenity area through Lakelands and onto Sunday's Well.

We are most impressed with the diversity and quality of projects you have implemented under the 'Nature & Biodiversity' and 'Sustainable & Waste Resource Management' categories, with the overall aim of making Naas a more sustainable community. Well done to all involved.

Litter control was excellent on the day. Apart from a few small pieces, the town was litter-free. Your positive and enthusiastic approach as well as hard work and commitment is ensuring Naas's current high standing in the National Tidy Towns competition. This adjudicator concurs with the comments and marks provided by your 1st round adjudicator. Thank you Naas Tidy Towns for an excellent presentation and we wish you success with future projects.