

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathangan** Ref: **383**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **319**
Category: **C** Date(s): **03/07/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	54	55
Streetscape & Public Places	50	39	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	42	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	42	42
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	22	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	27	27
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31	32
TOTAL MARK	450	315	319

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Rathangan Ráth Iomgháin chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Rathangan Tidy Towns is very welcome to the Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition 2018. Thank you for your comprehensive submission which included many wonderful before and after photographs showing works undertaken and events held over the last year and the document was very clear and concise. The map provided with your application was also very easy to read and with the coloured legend provided, this was very helpful in the adjudication of your town. It would be good in future years to identify the timing of work activities and projects with the N,M, and FP designations, as indicated on the Application Form, as this is also helpful to the Adjudicator. You have 12 members on your Committee meeting weekly for work parties during the busy times of the year with a further 15 – 40 non- committee members who volunteer as required from time to time. Monthly planning meetings are held to discuss progress in relation to on ongoing projects etc. There are a wide range of Agencies, Community Groups, NGO's and businesses which support your work and the local Community are also very supportive getting involved in events and carrying out various improvement works in the town on a regular basis. You employ a wide range of Communication methods to enable you to provide information as far as possible to every member of the Community- the use of a Community Electronic Noticeboard in the Credit Union building is a particularly good idea. Your engagement with local schools and youth groups is very extensive and this augers well for the future of Tidy Towns in Rathangan. You are particularly congratulated for the very successful International Partnership Project which has improved international contacts and provided the Committee useful research, guidance and feedback as to how best the town of Rathangan should be developed into the future.

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

Rathangan is a town of considerable architectural character and beauty and has retained to a large extent it's original traditional streetscape pattern and features. It is good to note that building owners continue to maintain the exterior of their properties and keep them tidy and painted. Kildare County Council has also now appointed consultants to develop an Urban Design Scheme for the Town and proposals in relation to this are awaited with interest. There are many fine heritage buildings situated in the Town Centre and these are presented to a very high standard such as Hackett's Supermarket, the Village Pump and The Burrow licensed premises, D&T Dillon's and the Bridge Bar. The Credit Union building also impressed. The recycled plastic flower tubs added interest and colour to the central part of the Town. One feels that more could be done in relation to adding colour and visual interest at important junctions etc. in the town. These can consist of tubs with colourful herbaceous perennial schemes which do not have to be replaced each year and planted with pollinator friendly plants e.g. peruvian lilies which are available in a range of colours. The erection of satellite dishes on some buildings detracts from the overall character of the streetscape and these should be minimised. The Roma Takeaway premises requires repainting and refurbishment. The plaque feature commemorating the life of Maura Laverty was very tastefully presented and the

scent of the roses here was particularly enjoyed. Rathangan is noted for the memorials erected in the centre of the Town and these have been carefully restored and upgraded by the Tidy Towns Committee. The Centra premises looked well and integrates successfully into the streetscape of Rathangan but one needs to be careful with the over use of window stickers, as these can detract from the overall quality of shopfronts. The Catholic Church and the adjoining Noone Engineering building, which no doubt once had ecclesiastical connections, are majestic imposing buildings on the approach to the Town along New Street. The large expanse of tarmac in front of the Church could be ameliorated to some extent with judiciously placed tree planting. Congratulations are due to Bunscoil Bhríde which is celebrating its eight Green Flag award – a great achievement. The Quaker cemetery was visited and the newly painted entrance gate was noted. This beautiful cemetery is presented and maintained to a very high standard and the newly installed seating added to the very peaceful atmosphere experienced here – well done to Rathangan Tidy Towns for all the great work undertaken here. The compost area is very sturdy and well-constructed. The Grand Canal walkway was visited – this is a wonderful amenity with significant potential for future Tourism development. The sign for the Grand Canal Way would benefit from cleaning. It was wondered what the future plans were for the old mill building located near the Canal?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The works on the walkway along the Slate River in the area known as the Pound to provide improved public access along the river has significantly improved this area for the benefit of the residents in Rathangan. It is presumed that the use of concrete footpaths was because the area is prone to flooding. The picnic table and seats made from sturdy recycled plastic were noted positively. The public park known as Tannery Park was visited and the pedestrian linkage to the green space along the canal is a feature which can be further developed. The children's playground is a wonderful amenity. Perhaps consider widening and surfacing some of the gravel pathways in the Park as in places they are hard to negotiate and are not suitable for universal access. The many rose beds throughout the town and those associated with the various memorials were greatly admired. The roses were flourishing in the hot sunny weather and their scent was particularly enjoyed. The trees situated on the paved areas along Main Street were enjoyed and add interest and enhance the streetscape. Where footpaths are wide enough, it would be worthwhile considering introducing some more tree planting into the central part of the town. Trees must however, be carefully positioned so as not to obstruct pedestrians, overhead cables, traffic sight lines or residential/commercial properties. The use of upright-growing so called fastigate trees would be most suitable for this purpose. The existing birch trees seem to be growing well and enhance the Main Street. The works undertaken to upgrade the Canal slipway were positively noted and you are engaging well with Waterways Ireland in relation to improving the presentation of this area. Further developments on the construction of the Barrow Way route are awaited with interest.

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

Rathangan is fortunate to have such wonderful natural amenities i.e. the river, canal, bog and woodland areas so close to the town. You are striving to protect and enhance these features and are taking steps to measure your progress on an ongoing basis. It is great to read that you have 5 Bat species in Rathangan and that there are high occupancy rates in relation to the Bat boxes located at Tannery Park. You have also participated in a frog survey along the Canal in conjunction with the Irish Peatland Conservation Council. Engagement with the Birdwatch Ireland and the National Biodiversity Data Centre is taking place in relation to surveys and monitoring of swift nest boxes, butterfly and wildflower surveys etc. and it is planned to put this information up on social media platforms. A 'walk and talk' in relation to local bird populations has been held as part of Biodiversity Week and you have taken initial steps to create a Community Garden on waste ground at Bournes Lane. The Bournes Lane site was visited and it may be worth re-considering this location for the development of a Community Garden as this land may not be available in the longer term and a more central and secure location in the town may be preferable. The Biodiversity workshops with young children have been well received by all and you continue to promote the importance of pollinators by tailoring maintenance regimes to encourage greater biodiversity in the town.

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

It was good to read the wide range of examples of how sustainable waste and resource management initiatives are now being mainstreamed by residents, organisations and businesses in Rathangan. The secondary school is now working towards its second Energy Green Flag and the students are raising awareness of the impact of energy consumption on the issue of climate change. Well done to Rathangan's Men's Shed for all the work carried out to restore an old boat which can now be used for litter picking along the Canal. The whole area of the usage of energy, fossil fuels, transport infrastructure, CO2 emission reduction and climate change are important themes under this category. Therefore, other initiatives to consider for next year by Rathangan Tidy Towns might include the promotion of the use of low carbon vehicles and pursuing the installation of electric car charge point(s) in the Town. The possible further development of a greenways/blueways along the River Slate/Grand Canal and other cycle routes and cycle parking facilities in the area could be investigated. A car-pooling initiative could be considered for drivers who are regularly commuting to work. The further promotion of grant aid for the installation of wall and attic insulation on older building stock in the Town, the greater use of solar panels on roofs on public buildings and heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by households/businesses are worthy projects to consider. Significant grants are now available for these works. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland website has good information in relation to the development of Better Energy Communities. Water Conservation is also an important issue with the current severe water shortages. The use of rainwater harvesting systems in buildings and the use of water butts and rainfall storage tanks to provide for the watering of private gardens and public floral displays could also be considered under this category.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The 'Tidy Rathangan Competition' continues to encourage residents to maintain and enhance their premises and local area and the Awards Night held in July appears to have been a great success. Regular litter picks are undertaken and you liaise closely with Kildare County Council regarding the removal of dumped items. The National Spring Clean event was well attended with 50 people taking part as well as the scout troops. These activities seem to be bearing fruit as no significant amounts of litter were noted on the visit to your town. You are involved in various works to deal with weeds, litter and the neat and tidy presentation of road signage in the town. It was noted that the Canal was choked with a heavy growth of aquatic weed and perhaps this can be dealt with in conjunction with Waterways Ireland.

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

It is heartening to note that work has re-commenced on the completion of the unfinished estate at Temple Mills and there is a sense of renewed vibrancy in the town with other new estates starting construction work. The development of the site near the Peugeot Garage will remove a long-standing eyesore here. In general, the housing estates in Rathangan are maintained and presented to a good standard. Rathview Grove was visited and the attractive crescent of open space was admired as were the well maintained houses and private gardens. Some of the walls to private gardens would be enhanced with painting. Woodview Estate was well maintained and presented. It was noted that a number of individual trees and hedges were beginning to die in this estate due to the severe drought conditions. The picnic bench located on the open space is a positive addition. Glebe Court has an attractive well maintained open space with good tree planting and well established beech hedge along main road. At Ard Mhuire estate a herbaceous planting scheme would be desirable around the water pump and name stone. The stone planters are a little jaded and need to be renewed. Both Pomeroy Park and Doorley Park estates presented well maintained open spaces, roadside margins and street trees.

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

Residents living on the various approach roads into Rathangan take pride in their areas and undertake regular maintenance works including the re-painting of water pumps each year. In general, the presentation of approach roads into Rathangan is to a high standard with grass cutting on roadside margins carried out on a regular basis. Where possible on the wider margins, allow a narrow strip along road boundaries to remain uncut to provide a suitable retreat area and corridor for wildlife. The approach into the town from Lullymore was admired and in particular the area around the nicely presented town 'Welcome' sign, where the green area is enhanced with young oak and sycamore trees. The chain link fence on the boundary of the GAA grounds at this location is beginning to fall down and would need to be replaced with a more attractive boundary treatment. Road surfaces in some areas within the central part of the town would also benefit from upgrading works.

Concluding Remarks:

The visit to Rathangan this year was greatly enjoyed. The Town has very good potential to progress further in the Competition and in terms of the further development of it's wonderful built and natural heritage features. Much needs to be done and we wish you well with your future plans and endeavours.