

# Tidy Towns Competition 2018

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Robertstown** Ref: **981**  
County: **Kildare** Mark: **263**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **02/07/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	40	41
Streetscape & Public Places	50	34	34
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	35	36
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	24	24
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	14	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	31
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>263</b>

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Robertstown Baile Roibeaird chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Robertstown Tidy Towns is most welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition 2018, your 9th year entering the competition. Thank you for your Application Form and reference Maps. Your submission was very clear and concise and provided plenty of good quality information which was most appreciated by the adjudicator. It is good to make sure the information provided is listed in the correct category or section. The maps showing the various sites of interest in the village, one hand drawn and the other at A3 size, were very easy to read and were helpful to the adjudicator in navigating around the Village. You have a Committee comprising 6 members, with 10 volunteers, and you organise 4 meetings per year. You engage with a range of local organisations and businesses to further your goals including Kildare County Council, Robertstown National School, Mullaneys, Welds, Drehid, and Robertstown Holiday Homes. You communicate with the public mainly through word of mouth and through contacts with the school. Well done to the School for securing the Biodiversity Flag this year. It is heartening to note that the work of the Tidy Towns Committee has improved the environs of the village to such an extent that there has been a marked increase in Tourism in the village, attracting more walking groups and cyclists – well done.

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

The traditional historic streetscape pattern of Robertstown remains largely intact and thankfully the unique character of the village has been preserved. The beautiful Binn's Bridge is an important focal point in the village and with its canal side location, the village has a very attractive tranquil setting. It was a scorching hot day when your Adjudicator visited Robertstown, and it was heartening to see the lovely Bridge-Side Café doing great business with customers sitting outside enjoying the sunshine. The presentation of both the Bridge-Side Café and the nearby Charlie Weld Licenced Premises was superb. You have been in contact with local businesses regarding the painting and presentation of their premises and they are very supportive of your activities. The limestone plaque representing 'Dolly' the last horse to pull a barge along the canal was greatly admired. There was a prominent stone building with boarded up windows in the village centre- are there plans to bring this building back into use? The information signs on the Hotel and the adjoining Grand Canal were very informative and were presented to a high standard. The Thatched cottage located on the opposite side of the Canal beside the museum with a striking blue and white colour scheme was enjoyed and it was wondered what plans there were in relation to the restoration of the adjoining stone-fronted dwelling. Mullaney's license premises and shop was also very well presented, as was the Post Office located on the approach to Robertstown from Clane.

### Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The floral displays on the Canal Bridge and in the surrounding area were greatly admired and significantly enhanced the wonderful stonework on the bridge and the overall presentation of the centre of the village. The Pink Garden was visited but this appeared to be in transition in terms of planting, although it is noted that a new planting scheme was on the way. There is a stream behind the Pink Garden and it might be worthwhile considering opening this up to public view in the future by removing the perimeter fence. An area of wetland behind the recycling facility would be considered suitable for the development of a Wildlife Park or Robertstown Village Park? The village museum was visited and the various items of old farm machinery make a positive impact here. This is a prominent feature in the village located on the opposite side of the Canal. It has however, become a little overgrown and perhaps the maintenance regime employed here and overall design might be reviewed.

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

It is noted that you are working with Irish Water with a view to upgrading the nature trail which sadly has been vandalised. Hopefully the installation of the vandal proof information boards can receive the necessary funding and will be robust enough to withstand any unwanted attention. You have made great efforts to ensure, where possible, that new plantings are pollinator friendly. The planting around the mosaic Robertstown namesigns was particularly noteworthy in this regard. You have carried out a local bat survey and it is pleasing to note that you have a thriving bat community along the canal. Have you considered erecting bat boxes on trees in this area?

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

Robertstown National School was visited and it was good to note that the School grounds and frontage are very well cared for. It was also great to see all the different flags obtained by the school including the Green Flag, Active Flag and Junior Entrepreneur Programme flag. Well done to the staff and pupils of the School for all their efforts in securing these awards. It is good to note that you are taking steps to reduce the usage of plastic in local businesses and hopefully further initiatives can be pursued under this theme. Your grass cutting equipment has been replaced with Mulchers to cut down on organic waste and you have been able to re-use perennial plants and bulbs in some of your village planting schemes. Energy and Water usage, Transport and Climate Change are also topics to consider for the future under this category. The installation of solar panels is now standard practice in new developments. It would be good to see this approach extended to the older housing stock to continue to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and also to reduce CO2 emissions. The use of water butts to facilitate the watering of gardens during the summer months is important as a means of conserving scarce drinking water. Water butts could be installed in the village for the watering of village floral displays and supplemented with canal water where this is permitted. The use of organic mulch on new plantings is also a useful water conservation tool. Promoting the use of low carbon vehicles and pursuing the installation of an electric car charge point(s) in the village would be worthwhile, as well as providing for the development of greenways and cycle parking facilities along the canal. Have you tried a car-pooling arrangement? The further promotion of grant aid for the installation of wall and attic insulation on older building stock, the greater use of solar panels on roofs and heat exchange units to reduce energy consumption by households/businesses, are all possible initiatives to consider. Grants are available for this work. 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:**

You undertake litter picks every day and the general cleanliness and absence of litter noted in the village is a testament to the great work undertaken by Robertstown Tidy Towns on an ongoing basis. The Brown Tourist Sign on the village approach and the sign for the Barrow Way are in need of cleaning. Some dumping of household items was noted at Grove Lane. Discarded litter was noted in the canal area and there was a heavy and unsightly growth of algae in the Canal water here. Are clean ups carried out along the canal by Tidy Towns or is this a matter for Waterways Ireland? A programme for the removal of heavy growths of algae in the Canal should be agreed annually with Waterways Ireland. Your policy not to provide bins in seating and picnic sites and to encourage people to take home their waste is laudable and fits in well with the 'Leave no Trace' philosophy. The novelty toadstool, frog and penguin litter bins designed and made by local schoolchildren add great character to the village and no doubt encourage the majority of residents and particularly young people to dispose of their litter responsibly.

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

It is noted that Robertstown Tidy Towns liaises closely with local housing estates and has provided namestones and plaques for all housing estates located in the village. Graydon Manor estate is well maintained with nicely-presented gardens and street trees, adding to the visual quality of this estate. Some damage has occurred to the piers at the entrance to the estate and these now need to be repaired. At St Bridget's Terrace some improvements works are required in relation to the maintenance of the open space. There are weeds along kerbs and the seat on the green area needs painting. At Fr. Murphy Park the maintenance and presentation of this estate could be improved – a horse was noted grazing on the open space area here and the traffic stop sign needs cleaning.

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

The village entry signs are a joy to behold and well done to all concerned with designing and making these. You cut the verges on approach roads fortnightly and this makes for a neat and tidy presentation. A narrow strip along boundaries facing the road if left uncut would leave a corridor for wildlife. The existing timber fence is well maintained at the Moorings - perhaps consider planting a hedge here in longer term. The Road surface on the approaches to the school would benefit from some improvement works. On the Clane Road approach – the black bollard and white chain boundary treatment is prominent along the road and along the stream. This feature requires

significant ongoing maintenance to look well. Perhaps the long-term usefulness of this as a boundary might be reviewed. The boundaries to the car park lay by area near the Moorings would benefit from upgrading works, including the painting of the overhead barriers and signage.

**Concluding Remarks:**

Robertstown Tidy Towns has put a great effort over the last number of years into improving the village for the benefit of local residents and visitors alike and you are now reaping the rewards with significant increases in visitor numbers over the summer months. Keep up the good work and we wish you well with your future endeavours.