

# Tidy Towns Competition 2018

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Strokestown** Ref: **715**  
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **267**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **01/07/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	36	36
Streetscape & Public Places	50	37	37
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	34	34
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	27	27
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	17	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	48	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33	33
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>267</b>

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Béal na mBuillí chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Strokestown TidyTowns is very welcome to the national SuperValu TidyTowns competition. We value your commitment to the TidyTowns movement and note that you have been participating for circa thirty years. You are working collaboratively with a number of agencies and bodies including the County Council, the Strokestown Town Team and the Community Services Association. Such collaborative working is key to ensuring continued improvements in and around the town. Communication with residents and various stakeholders is via public meeting, newspaper articles, Facebook and the Church Bulletin. We note that last year's adjudicator mentioned your three-year Plan so we gather you have one. It is helpful to include a brief summary of your plan each year with your application. Along with your map these are the two pieces of supplementary information an adjudicator looks for. As you are awaiting the three year plan for the town we suggest that once you receive this you also review your TidyTowns plan to see where you can assist or where your work can complement the proposals.

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

This year you have paid particular effort to placing tables and seating around the main Square and in various other locations, including the slipway, and the installation of the Tourist Information kiosk. We understand that you man the tourist kiosk also which shows fabulous dedication. A number of businesses were looking well on adjudication day and particular praise goes to McDonnell's Pharmacy, Sportsman Inn, The Beauty Suite, Luna and McHugh's Gift Shop. We liked J. Beirne - the mutli-purpose pub come grocer harks to the past. The Percy French Hotel was also putting its best foot forward and appeared to be a hive of activity when we passed by. Public buildings such as the Community Centre, GAA Club, Library and Scoil Namoh Padraig, a green school, and the impressive new secondary school were all noted positively for their presentation. The church also is a key feature of the streetscape. We liked the weighbridge feature and how you have added old photos to windows in some empty properties such as at the F. Connolly and Co building. Your issue under this category, as you are no doubt aware, it that there are a number of empty and/or derelict properties on the prominent streets. Other large buildings such as the building near the Scania garage / Texaco are empty. Lobby for improvements and for the Council to pursue refurbishment and reoccupation of vacant premises in the village. It is important for a TidyTowns committee to understand the buildings/sites which are protected structures in the village and also those which were recommended by the NIAH for protection. You have a number of future planned (FP) projects such as the painting programme in association with the Town Team. Bear in mind that the adjudication period this year is for works completed by 1st June 2018 so be sure to include any of these completed painting projects in your application form next year. Work was nearing completion to the Children's Playpark at the time we visited but it wasn't yet open to the public.

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

You have some small green spaces that are being maintained. We note the new fencing at the grotto area and the climbing roses that have been recently planted. Lovely stone rose planters at the junction of Elphin Street were admired.

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

One of your key assets in relation to this category is the river, which flows through the south of the town in a west to east direction and is crossed by Bridge Street. Your adjudicator understands it is a tributary of the Shannon. You mention concerns over 'apparently noxious wastes' polluting your water stream and we suggest that you liaise with the County Council or indeed the EPA in relation to this. Perhaps you should liaise with a contact in the Waters and Communities office to discuss ways that your community can get more involved in managing your water environment. You are now thinking of pollinators and planting pollinator friendly plants in the Grotto area. Bear in mind that you can encourage householders to plant pollinator friendly species and get residents involved in the action. Have you compiled a habitat survey of the village? Your adjudicator does not see any reference to it and it is something that adjudicators like to see under this category. It gives you an appreciation of the various habitats on your doorstep and how you can protect, conserve and enhance them. There are also opportunities for the TidyTowns committee to join up with the management of Strokestown House and assist in this location too. The grounds look fabulous and would be suitable for facilitated nature walks with an enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide.

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

Currently you are using harvested rainwater for watering plants and also mention composting of grass. A composter was noted in Kildallogee Heights and at the grotto area. Has any of your committee participated in the Master Composter Scheme? This may be of interest to some of the Residents Associations also. The aim of this category is to encourage communities to work together to become more sustainable and circular in thinking and action. This category is all about how TidyTowns Committees can promote sustainable waste and resources management in their local community. Many groups are making strides in this category in association with other organisations. Please have a look at the following website (<http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>) to get ideas of projects that can be undertaken by yourselves to encourage more sustainable behaviour in your community. This category is also about how your TidyTowns Committee conducts things in a sustainable manner such as; reduced use of paper, reusing materials in planting projects, use of water butts for water collection and subsequent use in hanging baskets, planters etc. Local businesses can get involved too! Does the Percy French Hotel have any environmental initiatives? In other centres shops are supporting the Conscious Coffee Cup Campaign or pubs are getting rid of straws and stirrers – in this category – every action adds up to benefit the planet. How green are the events such as the Agricultural Show, the International Poetry Festival or the Feile Strokestown? We are sure you can come up with one of two innovative projects for the competition next year.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Weekly litter picks are on-going and daily inspections of the Bring Banks are conducted – well done. In order to further promote the anti-litter message you have recently commissioned signage and aim to place them on the approach roads. The National Spring Clean is a great initiative and we thank you for your participation in it. In terms of litter you fared well this year – however some beer tins were noted in the composting unit at the Grotto and faeces nearby on the ground.

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

You have a number of very well maintained housing areas in the town and we visited many of them including Shevlin Court and Lisroyne Oaks. We noted that Vesnoy won the Tidy Estates competition the year previous – congratulations! Some lovely individual gardens and the communal seating were noted and we thought the wildlife area was very nicely completed. The residents in this estate have contributed very well to the high presentation of their surrounds. Perhaps the wall at the entrance would benefit from a fresh coat of paint however. In Kildallogee Heights we noted the water butt and the eye-catching presentation of the planter to the fore of the trees at the entrance. The composting area, and bug hotel, log pile, small pond, along with a wonderfully well weeded large boundary shrub bed edged with stone looked excellent – a wonderful haven for a variety of fauna. Hanging baskets and colourful containers and planters were noted in The Crescent. Surfacing was excellent within Lisnaree and we thought all homes were nicely presented, likewise in The Maples. Your adjudicator particularly liked the bike display outside No. 7, The Maples. A quirky addition –well done! Please carry out a review of stakes and ties on trees as there are a number that are no longer needed in French Court. It is positive that there are more estates joining the Tidy Estates competition – best wishes to all. We thank all the various Residents Associations who assist Strokestown TidyTowns Group and who make a concerted effort to maintain their estates for the betterment of all residents.

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

The wide streets are impressive. It is great to learn something new each day and we were delighted to learn that it is said that they were made this way because the second Lord Hartland of Strokestown wanted to make his village thoroughfare wider than the famed Ringstrasse in Vienna! Would you consider having interesting points like this, displayed on boards, at key locations in the town? The Council assist you in maintaining the approach roads and

also facilitate the road sweeper on various occasions to assist in keeping the area neat. It is positive that a number of the streets have been power-washed, was this initiated by yourselves and the Town Team. We loved the host of colour from the boundary planting along the Council Depot boundary on the Tulsk Road – strong impactful planting here. Lighting standards throughout the town are attractive. We thought the main roundabout in the village square, which is the focal point of the village core needs a bit of an overhaul however we realise that this is outside the scope of a TidyTowns committee. Perhaps this is something that could be discussed at County Council level as this is where an investment into the public realm could be justified.

**Concluding Remarks:**

There are numerous plans in the pipeline for Strokestown and a number of projects that will come to fruition over the next twelve months. Be sure to mention these in your application. Please keep up the good work and you are wished well in next year's competition.