

Tidy Towns Competition 2018

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castledaly** Ref: **221**
County: **Westmeath** Mark: **273**
Category: **B** Date(s): **26/06/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2017	Mark Awarded 2018
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	38	39
Streetscape & Public Places	50	39	39
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	40	40
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	27	27
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	8	9
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	30
TOTAL MARK	450	270	273

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

• Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Castledaly Caisleán Uí Dhálaigh chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais. Many thanks for your application, photographs and lovely map. I can imagine that completing the form for the first time was daunting! I do hope you find my comments help direct your work going forward and don't find them too critical. The intention was to be constructive. Putting the text in red in the application was actually very helpful. Please label the photos next time and feel free to include more, especially before and after photos. You have a new committee of six, which is a good number for a village the size of Castledaly, and several volunteers. Many thanks to the old committee for their hard work to date. It's great to hear the new committee are dedicated to continuing with the good work. It's a great idea to put together a 3-year plan to guide your work in the future. This doesn't have to be a huge piece of work and there is guidance in the Tidy Towns handbook. I would also recommend that you look at other plans online to get some ideas. The Westmeath County Council Environment and Heritage Officers might also be able to assist. You are right to consult with all the relevant stakeholders in and around Castledaly. The Tidy Towns competition has changed considerably in recent years and not everyone may be aware that much of the focus is now on community spirit and environmental sustainability. You liaise with other groups and businesses in the area, and Westmeath County Council, and you use a variety of means to communicate with your community. It's good to hear you have an active Foróige group and national school. Very best wishes going forward.

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

Many villages have closed shops, unfortunately, and it can be a difficult issue to resolve. The XL shop was neat and tidy on the day of adjudication. It could be brightened up with more colourful planters. The tubs with conifers looked a bit tired on adjudication day. The school is very well-presented with attractive grounds and tidy car park. It was great to see the green flag proudly flying. St Kieran's Church is a prominent building with attractive shrubberies along the road frontage. The community centre and recycling centre are well maintained. It is a good idea to install rainwater harvesters to facilitate watering of flowers. The graveyard was tidy on adjudication day with little rubbish but it was disappointing to see that some areas have been heavily sprayed with herbicide. It might be an idea to develop a management plan for the graveyard that minimises the need for herbicide. Fitzgerald's Pub looked very well on adjudication day with a clean car park and attractive green foliage on the building. The GAA building looks very well and the grounds are well maintained. A walking track is a great amenity for the community. Castledaly obviously has some interesting heritage features associated with Castledaly Manor, the Church and old graveyard. This might be something to highlight in the future.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Castledaly has a leafy feel to it as you drive through with woodland, many attractive trees and wide grassy verges. Don't forget to include all your maintenance projects in this category. There are some nice green spaces around the village and planters e.g. in front of the gate lodge. There is great potential for improving the green area in front of the graveyard. You might consider planting some native trees which will enhance the area and be good for pollinators and wildlife in general e.g. Rowan. Is there potential for enhancing the GAA grounds with some low maintenance and wildlife-friendly landscaping? A rockery in the graveyard is mentioned as a future project. Consider using mainly perennials as this will be more sustainable in the long run and has more potential to be wildlife-friendly.

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

There is great potential in this category to work with the National School and Foróige group. Castledaly is located in a beautiful rural setting with a wealth of nature and wildlife. You mention planting wildflowers in the graveyard. I didn't notice any on adjudication day but I may have been distracted by the herbicide use. There is little point in planting for wildlife if you are spraying in the same area. It might be easier to create a wildflower meadow by managing existing areas of grassland for wildflowers. The National Pollinator Plan has excellent guidance for local communities <http://www.pollinators.ie/communities/>. Some of the wider grassy roadside verges could be for wildlife by just mowing a narrow strip adjacent to the road and allowing the rest of the verge to grow naturally. There is a nice stand of trees in the graveyard around the old church. This is a valuable natural habitat in the area. You have a lovely wildlife area on the R444 which could be expanded. It's good to hear you are engaging with the council in relation to water quality in the river. Watery places are great for wildlife. The woodland close to the Manor appears to have many native trees and it would be fantastic to conduct a biodiversity survey of this area. Hopefully the Environment officer in the council will be able to assist. The school also has a wildlife area which is great for the school community. Would it be possible to organise a nature walk in the woodland? Running events to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity is just as important as doing projects.

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

The rainwater harvesters are a great idea for environmentally-friendly watering of landscaping. You mention planning a new recycling system in the community centre. It would be great to focus on reducing the amount of waste too and maybe you could organise a workshop for the community on ways to reduce waste. The Environment officer in the council might be able to assist. Maybe Foróige could come up with some inventive ways to reduce waste or to spread the word about the importance of reducing waste. It's good to re-use timber when making bird boxes. BirdWatch Ireland have some good advice for building your own bird boxes and where to locate them https://www.birdwatchireland.ie/Portals/0/pdfs/GBS_Nestboxes.pdf. It's generally not recommended to paint them if you want birds to take up residence.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The community clean up evenings for the whole village are a great way to tackle rubbish and to promote pride of place. The graveyard was clean and tidy on adjudication day and I know this area was problematic in the past so well done to the committee. The overall appearance of the village is tidy with well-maintained verges, trees and roads in good condition. Very little litter was seen.

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

Castledaly is a small village with no housing estates apart from Kilcleagh Park, which has attractive houses and a very well-maintained green space with trees. There are many well-presented houses in the village and attractive gardens suggesting strong community pride. The gate lodge is a beautiful heritage building but I understand the challenge of dealing with private property.

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

The approach roads to Castledaly are good with lovely mature trees, hedgerows and grassy verges. The planting under the name signs was a bit tired looking but this may have been due to the hot weather. There are nice stone walls along the Ballinahown Road. The main Athlone- Fermoy road has some well maintained grassy verges. The roadside wall of the graveyard could be improved by planting some climbing shrubs to screen it or painting.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to spend time in Castledaly. I wish the new committee the very best of luck.