

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: Annascaul - Abhainn an Scáil	Ref: 989
County: Kerry	Mark: 275
Category: B	Date(s): 16/06/2019

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	39	40
Streetscape & Public Places	60	35	36
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	41	41
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	27	27
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	13	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	27	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	31
TOTAL MARK	470	268	275

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Annascaul Abhainn an Scáil páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

Your committee of six people assisted by another 20-30 volunteers who support you in several ways. You hold monthly meetings, have subcommittee meetings as well, and meet more regularly as the need arises. Weekly volunteer hours are from April to September. Events such as lighting the Christmas tree and National Heritage Week are other activities undertaken by your group. We counted 16 agencies or bodies that support your activities. This is a very good record and shows that you are good at networking. It's nice to see the local Authority involved in various guises as well as the Heritage Council among your supporters. Your communication systems include newsletters, newspaper, local radio and you have a Facebook page with 330 likes as well as a Twitter account and an Instagram profile. In addition, you have a website and were assisted with the local shops by displaying posters. It is great to have this level of support. Good luck to the 2011 formed group and may you stay with it for much longer. The involvement with local schools is commendable and having a Junior Tidy Towns Group is important for succession. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention. Please make these larger next time and in a bold font. We liked having the legend at the bottom of the page. You are good at planning as evidenced by your action plan which has many projects up to the year 2021. We are pleased to note that participation in the competition is one way of being informed of various environmental activities and having contact with agencies.

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

The village centre has a certain charm about it that you have built upon with the two memorial gardens, which we enjoyed very much. It was a wise decision to have them in separate locations and it is fortunate that there was enough space in the village for that to happen. The Jerome O'Connor memorial is the smaller one, but this tastefully done and very informative and blends in well with the old stone bridge. This adjudicator is familiar with some of his work in Merrion Square, Dublin. Tom Crean is such a big hero within your community and everyone passing by will be reminded of this because of the South Pole Inn and the various memorabilia on the outside. I wonder how many passers by without realising that the memorial park is in the village centre. It was obviously a conscious decision to place it there and not to have the statue of Tom facing the road. That requires visitors to take a walk. Still, I suggest that some sign at the entrance would help or did we miss that. We knew it was there because you told us in the application map. The little park is a delight. Unfortunately, the adjacent site is going through some changes and looks very untidy at present. The church is somewhat hidden as well because it is a little distance from the road and has a narrow entrance. The grounds are neat and tidy. There are some trees in the grounds and some sycamore trees are coming through the shrubbery. These are weeds and should be removed. The school is well-painted and

adorned with window boxes, but the small entrance gate seems to have missed the brush. The adjacent car park is neatly located off the road and we admired the shrub planting on the bank. Most buildings in the village are in good condition and you are dealing with the few that are vacant at present. We liked the treatment of the semi-derelict house on Station Road. Well done. We looked at the former water tower that was used for the railway. It is obviously of historical interest for your community. The base is constructed with stone and the tank itself seems to be concrete. Have you consider engaging an artist to paint some art feature on the tank?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and you have many good examples in Annascaul. However, we were very surprised to see some established trees with their stems surrounded with concrete in the footpaths opposite the school. This is not good practice; it can be expected that as the tree grows further, the stem width will be restricted by the concrete and eventually the tree will fail. We suggest that the concrete be removed from a circular area of approximately one metre diameter as soon as possible. It is of interest to note that you have some arc shaped raised areas on the same footpath with some flowers. The trees need that equivalent of space.

In planting new trees, it is best to use a single species on a road or street for uniformity. Also, it is important to ensure that the base of new trees is maintained free of weeds, grass and flower beds to ensure early establishment. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the stems can get damaged from the ties or stake.

Guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible; they should not in themselves attract any notice. It is better to have fewer well planted containers than a large number in which the quality of plants is inferior. Empty or poorly planted containers are less effective than no plant container at all. In that regard, we noted the blue containers opposite the school and suggest that they take from the trees and other circular areas and would best be removed. The flower boxes are cleverly attached to the bridge. However, the flowers are making very little impact making the boxes more conspicuous. In any case, they are not needed in this location where there is so much natural landscape. An exception to the rule can be the several model trains placed around the village with flowers planted in the carriage. They are attractive and relate to your history of trains. If considering more seasonal flowers the use of permanent planting including herbaceous perennials for floral displays is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming. We liked the planting almost opposite the park.

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

You have a rich natural area surrounding your community and it is important to promote an awareness of its many traits and to map these habitats. Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to achieve under this category. In this regard researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages. Biodiversity is under threat globally and sadly Ireland is a part of this trend. Habitats of value include specimen trees, hedgerows, treelines, streams, woodlands and wetlands. Try to list the plants and animals to be found there and recognise their significance (native, protected, or alien invasive?). This information can be fun to gather and can involve the schools or other interested parties. Raise awareness through holding events such as hedgerow walks or bat walks. Contact the Irish Wildlife Trust for more information.

The Annascaul River is a wonderful asset for your community, and we note you have some walking trails along the river. These are great, but may we suggest that the information map/sign be renewed as it is quite faded. The major project you have planned is to start soon.

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

This category is about tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. It is a global and a local problem. To save the Earth we need to move quickly to a zero-waste society.

Under this heading you have listed eight projects and referred to others in the action plan. It is good to capture rainfall and use it instead of treated water for watering flowers and we note you have a water bowser for carrying the water to the various places where it is needed. You reuse old barrels for planters.

The 'Green your Festival' project is plastic free and is the largest festival of the year; that is some achievement. You're promoting public transport by having timetables access to your website and you promote walking and cycling to school and your campaigning for segregated cycle lanes and walkways in the next age of the N86 renewal project Other measures to consider are.

- Contact your waste contractors and try to find out what is being thrown away and armed with this information you can start to think about how waste can be reduced.
- Examine the waste pyramid and note the recycling is only the fourth most preferred option after avoidance, reducing and re-using.
- One third of our waste is organic in nature, such as grass clippings. You can avoid collecting mown grass by more frequent cutting and using mulching mowers which shred the clippings and facilitate faster decomposition.
- Other waste minimisation projects might include working with retailers to cut down on packaging, reminding people to re-use shopping bags, discouraging junk mail, encouraging the re-use of water bottles and coffee mugs at school and at work.
- In response to an overuse of chemicals for weed control, many useful products of the past are no longer available and therefore communities are encouraged to use other means such as hoeing to maintain weeds. In some cases, allowing wildflowers to develop is an acceptable alternative.

These activities will highlight the fact that you are focussing on this category and when you develop more projects in the future your marks will increase.

For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done on persuading the politicians from erecting posters. The litter patrol is very effective as we were very impressed with how clean the village is maintained. One beer bottle near the horses on the Dingle approach was seen but that is not significant. It is great to have the Mutt Mitts back again; they disappeared from some locations during the recession. Your vigilance is being rewarded.

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

Gurteen North Estate just off Station Road looks well and has trees growing in grass margins. We suggest that the stakes and ties be checked as they may no longer be needed and if left attached will damage tree stems. Your main activities in these areas concerns grass cutting and we note your intentions to have a trial area for rotational growing/cutting of grass for pollination/wildflower reasons and hope it is a success.

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

The approaches from Dingle and from Tralee are fine, clean and tidy. The statutory name sign is clean and sits in a natural landscape. We liked the way a narrow grass margin is maintained, and the rest of the vegetation can grow, and everyone can enjoy the wildflowers, including the pollinators. The old cable reels are colourful but are they necessary. We don't think so. We assume your reasons for using them is to show you care about your village. Their function is to hold some plants/flowers to highlight the approach to the village, not to draw attention to themselves, which is what they are doing. Sorry to disappoint you but we suggest you consider some other alternative, such as shrubs planted directly into the ground (if possible) or smaller, less conspicuous. How about painting them a different colour and putting stronger plants into them, such as Cotoneaster or Vinca that would creep over the sides. New footpaths were recently laid on Maum Road and they look very well. We also noted the stone wall boundaries with several recessed areas planted with roses; they looked very well. You have scope to plant an avenue of trees on the Tralee side of the village. It would make a wonderful approach when the trees establish. We note your intentions to plant dogwood in that location, but an avenue of trees should be the first priority and remember, they should be one species such as maple, ash or lime.

Concluding Remarks:

Annascaul looks well because of the care and attention that your committee supported by the community are giving to your environment. Keep up the good work.