

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardfert - Ard Fhearta** Ref: **677**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **273**
Category: **B** Date(s): **13/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	36	37
Streetscape & Public Places	60	38	39
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	34	34
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	26	26
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	10	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60	61
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33	33
TOTAL MARK	470	270	273

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Ardferd Ard Fhearta páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

Your committee of five supported by another 10-20 people hold monthly meetings throughout the year and have good links with the community. You receive support from local businesses and public bodies. Newspaper and public meetings are your main forms of communication. The involvement with local schools is commendable. We encourage communities to aim for a 3-year plan because it is not possible to achieve everything in one year and it is good to aim for targets over a period of years. Many thanks for attaching a map as well as the aerial view with 'critical issues' highlighted. We assume this is part of your action plan. However, the map is not very helpful because it lacks site detail. We suggest that you work on preparing an A3 fold into A4 size map for next year's entry. We note that last year's adjudicator advised you to provide more information in the application form. We repeat that suggestion and encourage you to contact Kerry County Council's Environmental Awareness Officer who will be delighted to assist you.

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

In this section, please tell us about the various buildings in Ardferd and how your community is taking care of them. The famous 13th century Ardferd Cathedral was visited, and we marvelled at its structure. It is well maintained by the OPW. We were disappointed to see so much weed killer being sprayed around graves in the adjoining cemetery. Both the cathedral and the Friary are very important buildings in Ardferd and it is great to see them being conserved in their present state. We liked the stone façade on the lower level of Ardferd Community Centre; it harmonises with the cathedral opposite. Commercial premises which caught our attention were the thatched building, Kate Brownes Restaurant and Bar, the Abbey Tavern Bar and McElligott's Bar. Ionad Leigis with the adjacent pharmacy and Casey's Garage were well presented. The Post Office looked well. St. Brendan's Parish Church is a delightful limestone building and the outside detail is reflected inside the building with the stone arches. The adjoining cemetery is well-maintained, but we would like to see less use of weed killer. It is interesting to see how much the water supply was valued by the erection of a monument/small fountain in memory of Lieutenant Colonel Talbot Crosbie, by his brother Lindsey Talbot Crosbie, dated 1901. The memorial to people killed during the Black and Tan period was well-maintained.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and you have some good examples planted inside the wall on the road leading from the Cathedral to the Square (junction with Church Street). These are lime trees and are most appropriate for this location. In planting new trees it is best to use a single species on a road or street for

uniformity and we are pleased that this was done when these trees were planted. There is scope to do similar planting elsewhere in and around Ardfert.

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 several plant containers on grassed areas and suggest that you aim for permanent planting that will save you time and money in maintenance. 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.

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. You mentioned plans to develop a wildlife sanctuary behind the cathedral and are seeking advice on appropriate species to plant there. Often it is not necessary to introduce plants if you develop an appropriate mowing regime, you will find various wildflower species will emerge from the soil. 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.

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

Under this heading you have mentioned using rainwater to water plants and flowers. You also have recycling bins in the village and your project aim for planting is to facilitate pollinators. A member of the committee uses household compost for the planters. These actions are most appropriate. Other measures that you can take 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. 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 include reminding people to re-use shopping bags, 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.

At this level of the contest the adjudicator wants to see innovation in tackling bigger issues of food waste, plastic disposal and energy use. What are homes and businesses doing to tackle these?

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:

You are fortunate to have people employed through the Rural/Social Scheme to assist in maintaining your community. Your committee and volunteers provide support through a regular litter picking exercise and grassed areas are regularly trimmed. We were pleased to see very little litter in Ardfert although the footpath near the Community Centre needed weeding/cleaning.

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

Páirc an Fearann residential estate has some birch trees that are not surviving. This may be due to poor quality specimens, poor planting methods or inadequate after care. They will amount to nothing, so we suggest they be replaced with maple trees which are less difficult to establish. Please refrain from using so much weed killer around the base of trees; it looks very unsightly. There is much scope to encourage wildflowers on the open space by following a specific mowing regime that entails less frequent cutting, such as six-week intervals. Graffiti was observed on the ESB junction box. Houses in this estate look well and some residents have planted hedges in their gardens. Road surfaces were good, but the bare walls could be softened by planting climbing plants such as ivy at the base. It was good to see established birch trees in Hazel Grove estate, but we advise checking the supporting stakes and ties before they cause damage to the stems. The concrete wall here could be softened by planting climbing plants such as ivy at the base. Shrub planting here is very good but please ease off the use of weed killer. Private houses in and around Ardfert were in good condition.

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

We approached Ardfert from Ballyheigue and we liked the large brown boulder with the bilingual name inset and without planting at the base of the stone. The stone wall boundary forms a lovely background and we advise that breaches in that wall be repaired as soon as possible to maintain the continuity. Trees in front and behind the wall complement each other. The grass margin is well maintained but we suggest that portions of the margin be allowed to grow to encourage wildflowers and support pollinators. Further on, we liked the oxeye daisies which have established. Stone wall boundaries are a characteristic of other approaches and that is an important part of your heritage. It is good to see native plants established on these walls. Elsewhere, we enjoyed the native vegetation on the roadside banks.

Concluding Remarks:

It was our first visit to Ardfert, and we were pleased to learn about your proud history. Well done on your efforts to develop and maintain a delightful community.