

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: Ballinskelligs - Baile an Sceilg	Ref: 1481
County: Kerry	Mark: 274
Category: A	Date(s): 18/06/2019

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	35	36
Streetscape & Public Places	60	37	38
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	34	34
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	18	19
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	18	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60	62
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	34
TOTAL MARK	470	267	274

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Asdee Eas Daoi páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

We have noted that your committee of ten members are supported by an additional twenty volunteers in this your 6th year of participation. That is a good level of support to encourage you to continue with your meetings throughout the year and develop strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools. Kerry County Council support you as do some other bodies.

Social media is one of your means of communication as well as newsletters. It is good to read that you have a great working relationship with the local school (the source of future committees). Congratulations to them for achieving their 6th Green Flag. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention and some photographs. While you attached several maps, we suggest that one is enough but please show more landmarks such as the church, school and community centre. We note that you are working from the 3-year plan some time ago. May we suggest that you include a summary of your current plan in next year's entry.

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

Well done on the improvements to Browne's Shop and surroundings. The creation of new walks and trails are a great addition to the amenities of the area, and it is good to know that they are popular already. The beach car park is well done and well-maintained and we noted the recycling banks to the side of the entrance. There are plenty of signs here about the Blue Flag Beach, the geography of the areas and the fish to be found here. In an area so close to the beach, we question the need for flower beds, especially since they look so 'man-made' with a timber surround. We visited the old priory building (what is left of it) and were amazed to read that much of the building has been eroded by the sea. It is great to see the scaffolding erected for restoration/preservation works which are underway. The old cemetery was clean and tidy, and we liked the sign with the layout of the graves. Well done. Cable O'Leary's Seaview Beer Garden looked well with appropriate local scenes in the windows. We liked the well-painted Blue Bay Café with the blue reveals on doors and windows. The murals of puffins on the gable wall caught our eye. The iconic Cill Rialaig Arts Centre complex is quite a feature that occupies a prominent position in the village. The grounds are well-maintained. The former Garda Station is now a Heritage Centre; it is great to see a new community use for the building. It was well-painted, and the grounds were clean and tidy, but a few trees would add enhancement. The church also looked well.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Items which you mentioned under this heading include the edible garden which can be browsed whilst walking along

the footpath. Being a coastal area with frequent strong winds, you are challenged when it comes to tree planting. There are some trees in the hedgerows mainly hawthorn which have survived for many years. We saw many specimens of *Cordyline australis* (New Zealand Cabbage), especially in residential estates and we assume that these were chosen because they can tolerate the local climate and because people like their 'palm' appearance. We suggest that sycamore trees (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) should be tried because even though they are not native, they are hardy and will establish in coastal areas and provide support for approximately 30 organisms. We admired *Escallonia* hedges in several places. Their red flowers adding to the enhancement. The GAA grounds are enclosed with a concrete block wall which is rendered, and some shrubs planted in front of the wall are helping to soften its appearance. The use of weedkiller in the bed and in front of the low wall takes from the appearance. Some tidying is suggested here. 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. We note your actions in providing bird boxes and bat boxes on local farmers' lands. You have also run a series of talks by farm advisors on the importance of biodiversity and sustainable farming. Well done. You work with Ballinskelligs Environmental Action Group in organising poster competitions and identification of birds and other wildlife. You are conscious of the valuable seashore habitats in your locality and we liked the information on fish and bird life at the beach. Remember to contact the Irish Wildlife Trust for more information.

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.

Projects listed by you under this heading include the elimination of single use coffee cups in your community in favour of the compostable cup with the town logo. We also note that Sceim Bruscar is going well. Other measures noted are cycling to school, car-pooling and encouraging the use of sustainable materials instead of plastic.

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? There are several other measures that your town can take regarding sustainability.

- Recycling is only the fourth most preferred option after avoidance, reducing and re-using. So, aim to reduce waste by working with retailers to cut down on packaging and reminding people to re-use shopping bags.
- 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.
- The use of self-watering hanging baskets help in reducing the amount of water used and the task of watering. Collecting rainwater for plants and flowers is also advised.
- 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:

Your management system under this criterion is to have regular road and beach cleans and the area around the recycling banks. You encourage everyone who uses the beach to help keep it clean by picking up at least one piece of rubbish. The 2-minute beach clean scheme was well highlighted with the sign. As mentioned by last year's adjudicator, the number of signs at the beach car park is too much and is causing untidiness. Please review these for next year. All signs and poles were nice and clean. Well done on keeping Ballinskelligs so clean.

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

Residential properties were in good condition and well-maintained. Some have planted hedges in their gardens and others have window boxes with summer flowers. The few residential estates are notable for a lack of trees, shrubs or hedges. There is just grassed open spaces and gardens. There is a need for some landscape treatment to enhance these schemes. Some of the open spaces could be used for wildflowers.

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

The approaches to Ballinskelligs is very natural with the natural vegetation on the sides of the road and we were pleased to note that the emphasis is on nature not exotic flowers. Well done to the lady who provides teas and coffees in her garden on Sundays after Mass.

Concluding Remarks:

It was our first visit to Ballinskelligs, and we were pleasantly surprised. Keep up the good work.

