

# Tidy Towns Competition 2019

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballyduff - An Baile Dubh** Ref: **1071**  
County: **Kerry** Mark: **246**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **12/06/2019**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2018</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2019</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	37	38
Streetscape & Public Places	60	30	31
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	29	29
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	21	22
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	14	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	25	26
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	27	27
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>246</b>

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Ballyduff An Baile Dubh páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

For a small community you have good numbers on your committee of eight members supported by another thirty volunteers in this your third year of participation in this competition. The strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools is very positive as is the support received from local businesses and public bodies (too many to mention here). The use of Facebook, notice board newspaper etc., are your means of communication. The involvement with three local schools is commendable and well done for having junior members on your team; they will be the committee of tomorrow. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention and some photographs. We note the 3-year plan and see that it is actually a two-year plan because there are no projects indicated for 2021. It is pleasing to note that overall, participation in the competition yields positive benefits for your community.

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

Well done on your work with the Old Forge. It is great to see how community action can turn a negative into a positive. The mural of the horse on the door is well done. The shopkeeper's contribution in improving their premises is a great help to the appearance of the village. We admired the shops listed in your application (Centra, Londis, Kerry Foods, Post office, Flanagan's and the Family and Community Resource Centre). Kearney's Hardware, Lowe's, Leahy's Bar, Your Man's Bar and O'Connor's Bar also looked well. The Garda Station was clean and tidy and McEllistrim's was well-painted. The cemetery is well presented, but it is a pity that it lacks trees that would enhance its appearance. The church sits in a prominent location forming a focal point at the end of the street with the car park to the front. The Republican memorial is a significant feature in the village; the words were difficult to read because they need repainting. The wall behind the memorial is painted with a mural of a round tower and a harp and some houses; it brightens up that part of the street.

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

The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and there are many places in Ballyduff where trees would enhance the buildings and streetscape. We advise that you work with Kerry County Council towards having street tree planting as part of your future plans. Beside O'Connor's Bar there is a private residence which has two upright evergreen trees in the front garden, one of which appears to be dying. The trees in the car park in front of the church are very poor specimens and most likely will never make any impact in the long term. We suggest that a new planting scheme be devised for this square and that you obtain professional advice beforehand. This is necessary because in planting new trees it is best to use a single species on a road/street/car park for uniformity. Suitable

species for this area include maple, birch or lime. 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. It is also advised not to attach any wires for lights or other purposes to trees as they can cause harm.

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. The best plant containers are those which are concealed by the plants; thus, the old tyres at Lacca Cross do not fulfil this function. 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.

We admired the long border with its mix of plants, including Bergenia, Hydrangea, Roses, Lavender and some more. It looks very well. 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. Items mentioned under this heading include the community garden, bird and bat boxes, beehives and a lavender garden to attract bees. 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. 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 under this heading include a book exchange. A poster competition to highlight litter awareness, growing plants, vegetables and herbs in a poly tunnel, using rainwater for plants, promoting compostable coffee cups, composting activities, using seaweed for mulching, battery recycling.

Now for a word of caution. Collecting seeds from plants was mentioned, that is ok for wildflowers but not for cultivated annuals which are bred by specialist growers. The seeds from those plants are unlikely to be of the same quality as bought seed. A second note of caution is the use of old tyres. They are best recycled by recommended means instead of using them for planters. They only attract attention to themselves and that is not the function of a plant container which if successful is hidden by the plants. Old tyres just add clutter.

The emphasis here needs to be on reducing the volume of waste produced rather than recycling (which is taken for granted). 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?

Other measures that you can consider are....

- Recycling is only the fourth most preferred option after avoidance, reducing and re-using. Therefore, focus more on reducing waste.
- 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 are a help in reducing the amount of water used and the task of watering.
- Working with retailers to cut down on packaging and reminding people to re-use shopping bags.
- 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:**

At Lacca Cross, the use of several containers made with old tyres and planted with flowers on a garage site and car park. This was an attempt to enhance the site and the effort is noteworthy. However, the flowers are not sufficient to hide the untidiness and we suggest that old tyres should be recycled in the normal way. A rusty roof needs painting and we advise tidying and better still screening. We suggest a boundary hedge of beech as an economical approach and the hedge would help to soften the hard appearance of the site. Finger post signs near here need to be replaced and kerbside weeds need to be removed. The presence of kerbside weeds in several places takes from the appearance of your community, especially all around the Republican memorial. Posters on poles are unsightly as was some litter in the car park in front of the church.

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

Many private houses are in good condition and well-painted and some also have trees and shrubs in the gardens. Meadow Lane is a nice estate where houses and gardens look well. Plants are establishing on walls and in time will be successful. Some trees need replacement. Cottage Road with its line of cottages on each side of the road was aptly named. There is an overuse of weedkiller within this estate.

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

On our approach from Ballybunnion, the 50kph sign needed cleaning. The stone with the Failte go Baile Dubh surrounded with shrubs looks very well, but the dead weeds around them look unsightly. Overhead wires throughout are not visually pleasing and we suggest you work with Kerry County Council towards placing them underground.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Well done on the improvement works carried out in your community. We hope this report provides some guidance for future projects.