

# Tidy Towns Competition 2019

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballyheigue - Baile Uí Thaidhg** Ref: **324**  
County: **Kerry** Mark: **269**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **13/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	35	36
Streetscape & Public Places	60	34	36
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	33	33
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	32	32
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	10	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	28	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	32
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>269</b>

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Ballyheigue Baile Uí Thaidhg páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

For a small community, you are fortunate to have 14 committee members and the support of another 30 volunteers. It appears you are actively involved through your meetings with Kerry County Council officials and your own sub-committees in progressing improvements in your community. All this activity helps to strengthen the links with residents, voluntary groups and schools. You receive support from local businesses and public bodies. For communications, you make good use of the local community noticeboard in the Post Office and you use social media such as Facebook with 700 followers. The involvement with two local schools through a School Liaison officer is commendable and of course it must help greatly having the Headmaster of Booleenshane School on your committee. Good luck with establishing a Junior Tidy Towns Committee; they are the future for your community.

Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention and some photographs. We wish to add our compliments to last year's adjudicator on the colour coding of the projects. It works very well. Our only problem was the font size, it is too small to read comfortably, and you have enough space on the page to make it larger. Please also identify landmarks such as the church and school and identify road names. These details would greatly assist adjudicators in writing their reports. We read your multi-annual plan and suggest that you reformat it into tabular form with specific projects numbered and to the right place columns indicating which year the work will be carried out/completed. That way, it can be read at a glance. Well done on the progress made for this your third year of participation in the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition.

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

The ruins of the old castle a Tudor Gothic Revival style country house, from the early 19th century impressed us greatly. What a fine entrance with castellated piers and walls forming an entrance to the golf course and commanding a focal point for the junction. A wooden side door needs replacement. This area has potential to be an important open square for Ballyheigue if an alternative site can be found for the cars. How about constructing a car park behind the golf course entrance? It is always great to see public toilets, something which very few Irish towns have compared with towns in other countries, so well done on these facilities. The building faced with stone looks very well. There is a great view from here to the waterfront with its open space and playground. The statue of Sir Roger Casement is a good focal point and we noted it was recently cleaned. While no doubt this coastal area is often exposed to strong winds laden with salt from the ocean, it would be good to try a few sycamore trees (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). If you decide to do so, it would be best to use small specimens that would establish better than larger specimens. The public space at the waterfront is well-maintained and the seats are of a good standard.

Commercial premises which we admired include the impressive White Sands Hotel, Jerry O'Regans Bar and we noted the side access to traditional music and dancing. Brassil's Pharmacy was well-painted as was W. O'Leary, Victualler, Flahive's Bar looked well, Kirby's Bar and the adjacent take away have coordinated their colour scheme. The Community Centre is painted in an appropriate colour of blue for its location. The very large site of Whites Caravan Park would benefit from an improved entrance and to have permanent planting rather than flowers in containers.

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

The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and that should be your first priority instead of providing plant containers. While we realise the coastal climate is challenging for trees, there are species such as sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) that will establish, especially if planted as young specimens. 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. You should also concentrate on planting hedges, which will provide shelter for other plants and reduce wind speeds generally. Hawthorn (*Crataegus*) or holly will make excellent hedges and we have seen *Olearia traversii* has been well used in Kerry.

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 suggest that the large plant containers placed in several places within your community do not function as per the above guidelines. They are too large and are only attracting attention to themselves. We suggest that they be removed, and the plants planted directly into the ground. The large concrete container at the entrance to Barr na Sraide residential estate does not enhance the entrance and would best be removed.

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. Items mentioned in your application include two biodiversity areas, the successful planting of Marram Grass, nature walk and a workshop in the school on biodiversity. Researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages. 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:**

You have listed 9 projects under this heading mostly dealing with energy saving measures. The success of the seaweed workshop from last year has encouraged you to run it again this year. You mentioned green flags for Glenderry National School. For what initiatives and how many did they achieve? You use rainwater for hanging baskets. Great. The recycling facilities are working well. 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. The emphasis here really 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 to consider are...

- Determine from the waste contractors what amounts of material is placed in their bins and see if there is a trend from year to year
- Recycling is only the fourth most preferred option after avoidance, reducing and re-using, so your focus should be on reduction.
- 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.
- 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:**

Your actions under this heading include repairing litter bins and obtaining plastic seats, plogging, which is collecting litter whilst jogging different routes (that's a new word for this adjudicator), regular clean-ups, including the beach with the slogan 'trash for treasure', painting bollards, kerbs and fencing and reducing the amount of signage and cable ties. Well done on all these initiatives.

While the honesty box for free range eggs and potatoes at the entrance to the golf course is a nice idea, it is adding clutter to the stone wall façade of the golf course entrance. We are pleased to note that we found hardly any litter in Ballyheigue, so well done on all your various works. Overhead wires in some places look untidy.

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

Barr na Sraide estate has nice houses but without front gardens. There is very little greenery on the open spaces and evidence of overuse of weedkiller which is unsightly. The painted walls need attention; we suggest the use of climbing plants such as ivy to eventually cover the surface and eliminate the need for painting. The two estates in the Church Field and the Kerry Holiday Village complex have very nice houses set in green open spaces. However, they badly need landscaping to enhance their appearance. There are many options to consider from trees, shrubs, hedges and even allowing some grassed areas to develop wildflowers. In general, the residents of Ballyheigue take good care of their houses and gardens.

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

We liked the stone wall boundaries, especially on the R551 and boundaries of private gardens. We have already mentioned the large black containers which in our view are no addition, despite the amount of work done in making and planting them. Just plant a bed of shrubs/perennials around the base of the pole and do the same behind the stone with the town name. The large grass margin is ideal for a line of trees.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Our first time to visit Ballyheigue was an interesting occasion. Well done on all the work you are doing to improve your community. We hope this report provides some guidance for further improvements.