

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: Castleisland - Oileán Ciarraí	Ref: 328
County: Kerry	Mark: 315
Category: C	Date(s): 22/06/2019

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	48	47
Streetscape & Public Places	60	43	45
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	40	41
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	33	34
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	21	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	36
TOTAL MARK	470	309	315

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Castleisland Oileán Ciarraí páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

We have noted that Castleisland has been an entrant in the competition since 1992. Your committee of seven members supplemented by up to 40 volunteers hold frequent meetings throughout the year and have strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools. You receive support from Kerry County Council, local businesses and public bodies. The use of Facebook, local magazine, newspaper and radio are your means of communication. You have a youth liaison officer and have decided to form a Junior Tidy Towns group for working with volunteers and many parents also help. That is a wonderful achievement; you are providing a committee for the future. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention and some pictures as well as paper clippings. The map was very useful but please place numbers in a sequence; that would save us time in trying to find them. Thank you for your 3-year plan which sets out projects and deadlines up to 2022. We would like to repeat the advice given by last year's adjudicator regarding the size of your submission. It is far too big and because you place information in two documents, it entails going over and back through both several times. We suggest that you aim to reduce the volume next year and one way of doing this is to download the application form and complete it by adding whatever extra pages you need. However, you are providing far too much information on meetings and organisations. That information is important for your records but not for adjudication purposes. You can also reduce the size of photographs, fit several on a page and that will reduce the number of pages overall. The less complicated you make the application, the more time an adjudicator has to examine Castleisland.

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

Well done on working with Kerry County Council in dealing with derelict sites and we note that this action has resulted in 18 owners being engaged with the Council at present. It is great that the brickwork on the central island on Main Street was lifted, cleaned and rebedded. It looked fine and we noted that the tree pit openings are wider than on the footpaths to the side. The street looked well with the fresh lining and street furniture varnished. Castleisland Desmond's GAA club has large grounds which we were pleased to see are visible from the road because the boundary is a low wall and railing. Some trees within the grounds would add further enhancement. The rugby pitch looks well but the road into the club needs improvement. St. Patrick's Secondary School and Naomh Cartaigh N. S. both looked well, and the grounds were clean and tidy. We would have liked to see some trees in the grounds. Castle Meats and the Half Barrel Bar were well presented. The gable wall of the Beauty Salon looked well, and we liked the catchy title – Be.You.Tiful. The Carnegie Building enhances the streetscape as did the River Island Hotel. Daly's Seafood was in good condition but the building beside it needs attention. We admired the window displays in the Slice of Life Health Foodstore. The Presentation Secondary School and the

Church of St. Stephen and John located beside each other are an important parts of your built heritage. The grounds are enclosed with ornamental railings and gates with handsome stone piers. The adjacent Nun's Cemetery is well-maintained, but we suggest that you have the existing trees in front of the cemetery examined by an Arboriculturist; they look unwell and all around them is hard surface so very little opportunity for water to reach the roots. One tree is leaning, and the canopy growth is much less than it should be for a healthy tree. This is a safety issue, so we advise early attention be given to this matter. The SuperValu and Aldi complex are looking well, and we liked the low stone wall boundary with the road. We also noted trees in the car park and in time, they will greatly enhance the scheme. The modern playground adjacent to this area is a wonderful facility and looks very well. The Community Centre is a large building which looks well but it would look better if some trees were planted in the car park in front of the building. The Fire Station also looks well but as mentioned by last year's adjudicator, the left side of the site, as viewed from the road, is an opportunity to do some landscape treatment. A similar comment applies to the Boxing Club; The red and black paint on the front is fine but some planting in front of the railings or trees planted inside the railings would add enhancement. We admired the murals painted in the windows of Vincent Murphy's premises. St. Stephen's Burial Grounds are well-maintained. The Community College was looking splendid and we admired the line of established trees inside the front wall. The toilet block near the library car park is a nice stone construction.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The first consideration should be trees because they are the main structural elements in the landscape, and we note there are many trees in and around Castleisland, and there is great scope for more tree planting. It is fortunate that the Main Street in Castleisland is wide enough to accommodate street trees and that some were planted in years past. In general, these trees have established well, and most are healthy specimens. However, we wonder what size of tree pit was prepared for their planting because the space around the tree stem is very limited. In fact, the stems are practically the same size of the tree pit opening and unless something is done soon, the tree stems will get damaged and the trees might fail. Our suggestion is that you seek professional advice from an Arboriculturist/Horticulturist who is specialised in urban trees to have the trees examined and recommend appropriate treatment for the ground around the base of the tree. This is an urgent matter and the sooner it is dealt with the better chance there is of the trees continuing to establish and enhance the streetscape. The car park in front of the library also includes trees, which need attention. In some cases, the tree guards designed to protect the trees, is actually damaging the stem. Additional trees in this car park would be preferable to the laurel planting. Some areas here need maintenance. We admired the train (#90) made with recycled materials to commemorate the Castleisland Railway (1875-1976), which operated for a century and a year. This project is also your entry under the School Award.

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. In that regard, we admired the hanging baskets on poles. You have some very large plant containers at various positions around the town centre. The existing plants are not in scale with the size of the containers. In our view, the containers are too conspicuous and so if they are to remain from year to year, we suggest you consider a permanent planting scheme which includes some shrubs (holly for example) that grow taller than the existing planting and some (Cotoneasters for example) that grow over the sides and help to conceal the container. On the footpaths, there are some (exposed aggregate) plant containers that are too small for their location. They would best be placed together in another location where they can make better impact.

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:

Several actions are listed under this heading, including the biodiversity area created on the river walk, which is most appropriate. Swift boxes were erected on the Community College and we note they were awarded a Green Flag for biodiversity. Using your Facebook page to promote awareness of nature and biodiversity is a great idea. Well done. We are pleased to see the interest in the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and wish you well in that venture. 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.

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. Your town is certainly making its contribution as evidenced by the numerous relevant activities mentioned in the application. Well done on these initiatives.

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? Well done to the Muire Gan Smál Primary School for achieving a 6th Green Flag for waste and litter and to St. Joseph's Secondary School for its 2nd Green Flag for energy. Other items mentioned were the use of led bulbs by 18

businesses and community transport for the senior citizens within the community.

Other measures to consider are...

- Contact your waste contractors and try to find out what amounts of material is being recycled and determine if there is a trend.
- 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 also the task of watering.
- Working with retailers to cut down on packaging and 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.

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 application details your actions under tidiness and litter, and we note for example that you are vigilant in monitoring posters and advertising signs. You have taken care to wash signs, litter bins and seats on the river walk and you are painting some derelict buildings. That is great work, and we realise the size of the challenge for you because of the size of the town. A garage on the Limerick Road needs improvement; painting would help. Overhead wires throughout Castleisland present visual clutter. We suggest you work with Kerry County Council to progress these being placed underground as the next opportunity.

In regard to litter, you have regular patrols with the support of volunteers and working with the Litter Warden. There was small amounts of litter in the car park in front of the library and some kerbside weeds. An overflowing bin was observed outside Centra and some litter beside it as well.

Attention is needed for some buildings in Main Street. For example, Buddleia is growing from a wall beside #75 Main Street and several chimneys have strong weed growth present and there are weeds in gutters here also.

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

It is a great plan for each residential estate to have its own Tidy Town group that maintains their local area. Most residents are very proud of their homes and take good care of their property.

Bawnluskaha Drive is a small estate with an impressive entrance of stone walls and stone piers and attractive houses, and we were pleased to see established street trees. The approach to Clonough estate is very pleasant and we admired the fine stand of trees on the open space. The road here is in poor condition. An older estate is Desmond's Avenue where we noted hedges were planted in some gardens, adding important softening to the estate. St. John's Park entrance is highlighted with a name stone and some associated planting.

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

The emphasis by your group under this criterion is on painting and litter picking and we could see the product of your action. We admired the well-painted fence at Morans. You are commended for paying attention to the roundabouts on the by-pass. Well done.

Concluding Remarks:

Having a committed group working to improve their local environment is a great achievement so we congratulate you on your efforts to date. We hope this report provides some guidance for future projects.