

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Currow - Corra** Ref: **897**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **312**
Category: **A** Date(s): **25/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	42	43
Streetscape & Public Places	60	36	38
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	39	41
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	31	31
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	18	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	67	68
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	39
TOTAL MARK	470	303	312

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Currow Corra páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

For a village of less than 200 people, you have a strong committee of 6 members supported by another 15 volunteers, and you get help from the local youth club and local housing estates. Well done. You benefit from the Rural Social Schemes, FAS schemes and are supported by Kerry County Council. Your means of communication are local newspapers. It is great to learn that children from the local school help with your projects. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area (it was very useful) with project locations marked for our attention and some photographs. Congratulations on being a participant in the competition for over 25 years and we are pleased to learn that the view of locals and visitors is that the village has been improved as a result.

The Action Plan 2019-2021 is well structured; you have ownership of the plan. In regard to attachments, we suggest that they be bound separately and there is no need to have them laminated. If the picture sizes are reduced, you will have less pages. That would be much easier for adjudicators and prevent pages getting lost.

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

The church of the Immaculate Conception with its Roman arches is a lovely building and an adjacent bell tower; the bell being quite visible. We admired the ornate gates and railing panels. Trees and shrubs in front of the church are well maintained. The car park at the rear of the church really caught our eye because so much effort was made in greening the surrounding walls. In our reports, we usually recommend to communities to plant ivy on the walls to soften their appearance and here in Currow, you have done just that. It is the best example we have ever seen so well done and we also liked the birch trees. School Mhuire agus Niamh Treasa looked very secure with closed gates and planting on both sides of the entrance. The large car park serving the church and the school has a good surface is well marked; we admired the hanging baskets on the poles here. We were pleased to see ivy growing successfully on the private boundary wall of the farm building across the road, another good example of softening a hard surface. The Community centre looks well, and we liked the mural on the adjacent old Forge building. McCarthys Foodmarket looked well and we liked the old beech tree growing in the adjacent site. Top to Toe and Hub Beauty Salons and the pub are fine. The old Post Office is to let, and the old creamery is for sale. It is very untidy at the rear. This is an important large site near the bridge and no doubt, you are anxious for a new use as soon as possible. The large Grotto is very well constructed with natural stone that is enhanced with ivy climbing over from the back and also trees and shrubs. It was clean and tidy. The GAA have very good grounds surrounded by mature trees. The club house which was opened in 2011 was well painted.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

There are two cemeteries in Currow, the larger and newer one is St. Michael's Cemetery which is almost full and the older Killeentierna Graveyard a little distance away, up a laneway. It was interesting to compare both cemeteries; the older and smaller one has yew trees and some shrubs whereas the newer cemetery, with the exception of a small evergreen tree inside the wall and a group of Zantedeschia (Calla Lilies) on a grave, has no softening at all, even though the graves are well maintained. The wall and railings at St. Michael's are fine, but some parts need attention/painting and weeds removal at the wall base. Some rubbish was dumped inside the wall. The stone wall boundary (with the style) of the older cemetery adds great character and the hedge at the car park is good. We liked the range of plants grown here, including, Zantedeschia (Calla Lily), Geum, roses, lilac and Hydrangea. The little park between the school and Parkmore residential described in your application as a flower meadow is a commemorative garden for the 1916 Easter Rising. It is an unusual design, being simply a collection of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. If there is a symbolism in the design, it is not obvious. We liked the planting arrangements around the village and commend you for using perennials such as Lavender which are bee-friendly. We were pleased to see limited use of plant containers because they require more 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:

The wildlife sanctuary is well done, and the geese were excited with our arrival. We note you had it cleaned out with a machine and that local schools use this area for nature studies. For centenarians in your community, you have trees planted trees. What a nice idea, and it is great that you have celebrated three such community members (two women and one man). What surprised us was the choice of tree, a poplar and Mountain Ash. These are not good choices because they are short lived trees. Oak trees can live for 1,000 years so that would have been a better choice. A plaque to Julie Barry, a woman who died in the Titanic was also noted. There was a lot of algae in the lake; have you explored means of controlling its growth?

Other than the sanctuary, 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. 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:

Items mentioned under this heading include recycling old clothes, water conservation (what are they?) and a bottle bank. 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.

Some more ideas for you to consider as future projects are....

- 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.
- Regarding water usage, 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, reminding people to re-use shopping bags, and 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:

Currow was quite litter free during our visit so well done on your various efforts in controlling litter. It is great that you have the support of the primary school and the Youth Club and they will carry that culture into the next generation. Recycling banks are conveniently located on the roadside, near the church car park. In times past, such facilities were placed in conspicuous locations to encourage people to use them. Since most people are now familiar with their use, it is a good idea to place them in less conspicuous locations and have them screened. Perhaps you would consider that idea for the future.

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

Near the bridge, we admired an attractive building with a lovely round wing. The old lodge needs cleaning and

repair; we liked the murals painted in the windows. Glenbrook B&B has a fine balustraded front wall and is well landscaped. Many other private gardens on this road have high hedges. At Parkmore estate, we liked the treatment of the entrance name stone, but suggest that the flowers in front of the stone hide the name. The young beech trees here are well established. Houses and gardens looked well. Lakeview housing estate is an old estate. There are plenty of trees and hedges in the gardens; some kerbside weeds that need attention. Many individual houses in and around Currow are in good condition and well maintained.

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

At Lisheenbawn Cross, we liked the bilingual welcome sign and using both sides of the stone. The picnic bench has heathers and fuchsia plants growing in and around it, so some maintenance is needed. From here to the village centre, the approach is quite nice, with the native vegetation enhancement. The Currow sign was dirty. The triple arched stone bridge looks very well and well done for the hanging baskets over the side wall. In and around the village we liked the treatment of boundary walls which have established climbing plants presenting a green softening to the approach.

The lime kiln reconstructed in 2010 was nicely presented and maintained. It also forms a welcoming point for visitors to the village. The combination of stone walls, gravel and plants here works very well.

Concluding Remarks:

Congratulations on your efforts to improve Currow; we hope our report provides some guidelines for further improvements.