

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dingle - An Daingean** Ref: **334**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **302**
Category: **C** Date(s): **16/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	45	46
Streetscape & Public Places	60	43	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	40	40
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	30	31
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	20	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	35
TOTAL MARK	470	298	302

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Dingle An Daingean páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

Well done on your participation in the competition for 34 years. It is great you have a committee of five members supported by ten volunteers who help as the need arises. Many organisations and public bodies support your work and you avail of local media radio stations, newspapers and facebook for communications. All three schools in your community actively support your works programme, some individuals also help in the evening after school hours. The efforts of your team has made Dingle more aesthetically pleasing and is appreciated by locals and visitors alike. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention. While the numbers on the map mean something to you who are familiar with Dingle and the application, they mean nothing to an adjudicator unless you have a legend placed alongside the map, so please work to improve this for next year. In addition, they are not in any sequence, making it necessary to continuously scan the map to find a number. The following could not be found on the map M2, M3, M5 - M17. The other problem is that so many items to be seen are in the town centre, thus that part of the map is cluttered. We suggest that the edge of the map could be cropped and allow space to enlarge the central area. So there are many suggestions here for your consideration for next year's application. The 3-year plan is noted but please indicate if the various projects listed were completed within the indicated timeframe. Please note that you can download a copy of the application form and fill it in on the computer. By that means you are not confined to the space as indicated on the hard copy and this would eliminate the need to insert sections with extremely small font which are too difficult to read. We also suggest that you aim to reduce the number and size of posters, notices and pictures attached to the application because they add unnecessary bulk. In that regard, rather than include such material, small pictures of the projects would help us recognise them when we find them.

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

The centre of Dingle was very busy during our visit, so the tourist season was in full swing. Most commercial premises were well painted in an array of colours, which perhaps was the most varied scheme we have ever seen. The yellow and green of An Droicead Beag stood out and we noted it has trad music sessions every night. A bicycle suspended from the upper storey wall was an unusual ornamentation. Beside it was Neligan's Bar in contrasting colours of blue with white windows and white end stones. The next house was yellow and green again and the one after that was greenish blue. The Dingle Pub was white with light green coloured window reveals and shamrock patterns on the wall. Other buildings were purple and blue, some a strong blue and the Temperance Hall was red with white windows. The B&B An Capall Dubh has an attractive curved sign over an archway on a stone-faced building. The Spar grocery looked well as did Fenton's Restaurant with blue walls, white windows and

yellow door. Murphy's Pub was painted cream with brown windows and The Diner had similar colours. Beside it, the Mad Hatters was pink with light green windows and doors; the Global Village was grey. The Centra premises has a greenish blue shopfront on a lovely three-storey building faced in stone. J. Curran with its traditional shop front of red/brown windows on a cream wall looked well and the three-storey building of Hannie Agness also cream painted walls and the traditional shopfront painted green. It also had four hanging baskets, so well done. The Garda Station was a large building painted in light blue. SuperValu is a large building that is most visible from the harbour road (The Tracks). Its combination of rendered wall and large stone façade corner is attractive, and the same stone is used for the car park boundary wall. Nearby, we liked the stone-faced dormer terrace building with four commercial units. Other premises that stood out for us were Aran Knitwear and Cois Ferraige Craft & Gift Shop. The Tourist Office is a significant building on the harbour and across the road, The Marina Inn was enjoying plenty of customers. The attractive Oceanworld Aquarium positioned on high ground has nice stone wall detail. On The Mall, we noted the freshly painted Calvary and the façade of a cottage beside it. The wonderful old CBS building is only partly visible, and we wonder if it is still in use. The old Courthouse building looks in good repair, but we wonder if it is still in use – for any purpose; it is an important part of your heritage.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and this should be your first priority. While we appreciate the challenges associated with the coastal climate, there are good examples of trees growing in the area, for example in the grounds of the CBS and in some other private properties. Therefore, we suggest that you pay more attention to trees. It is disappointing to drive along a new (inner tangent route) and not see any trees. Equally, along the harbour there are a few trees but scope for many more. In planting new trees, it is best to use a single species on a road or street for uniformity. However, it is not a simple matter of getting a few trees and planting them where you can. You need a street tree plan for the town and that should be prepared by a professional Horticulturist/Landscape Architect who will be familiar with site and soil requirements as well as the species that will grow in Dingle and enhance the streetscape. This is a matter that will require major input from Kerry County Council

We visited the Town Park and were disappointed with the standard of maintenance. Graffiti on a services box and many kerbside weeds greeted our arrival. The hard surface sports area looks unused as evidenced by weeds. Shrub borders on the boundary of the park are not maintained. There were a few trees around the park which were mis shaped because of the lack of formal pruning in their early stages of growth. The grass is maintained, but some of it could be allowed to grow wildflowers. The park seems little used and we are not surprised because it is located, behind buildings. Public parks should be placed in open positions where they are more accessible and can be better used. There is a case for the provision of a new town park in a better location elsewhere in Dingle and an alternative use devised for this site. Between the town centre and Dingle Skelligs Hotel there is a wide grass margin on the seaward side with several planting schemes of shrubs and flowers. This margin is well-maintained but some of the trees died and should be removed. Perhaps the trees were planted first and then the beds added afterwards. If that were the case, then the extra soil over the tree roots might have been the cause of their death. It is best to prepare beds and plant trees afterwards to ensure that they are at the same level as in the nursery. May we suggest that these beds might look better if the shapes were less rigid. There is no need to use timber or stones around beds, it restricts their shape. The traditional shrub/plantings usually didn't have such boundaries. An edge with grass usually works fine. This margin is an ideal place to plant a good line of trees to enhance the approach to the town. If shrub/flower beds are desired, they would best be placed away from trees so there is no competition for light, water or nutrients.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

Projects mentioned under this heading include walks and talks during Biodiversity Week, river sampling and waterways. Talks in the library on environmental issues, a new butterfly exhibition at Dingle Aquarium and plans to erect wildlife information display boards. At the corner of Avondale and The Mall, we noticed the little stream with natural vegetation (including buttercups, Buddleia and other plants) growing between the stream and the boundary wall whereas on the other side of the stream, there was a private garden with timber boxes.

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. 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.

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. In your case, you are continuing with the GLAN initiative which encourages businesses to support environmental improvements including the reduction of single use plastics. You also had a successful bulb swap, the Dingle Cupán and arranged talks on sustainability.

Other measures to consider 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.
- Using self-watering hanging baskets are a help in reducing the amount of water used and also the task of watering.
- Continue 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:

It is great to read that companies are willing to sponsor their staff participating in environmental improvement schemes, so well done to Salesforce for their contribution. Your team assist in many beach clean-ups and support the fishing for litter network, and you participate in the annual County clean-up campaign. There were plenty of recycling bins, and the area around them was clean and tidy. There were weeds at kerbsides and the base of walls in many places and we have already referred to the condition of the town park under Green Spaces and Landscaping. There were Litter and cigarette butts outside some pubs and on the streets. At the Courthouse a rusty shed opposite needs attention. Some directional signs needed cleaning.

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

The stone wall entrance to Ard na Mara residential estate is very nice and the houses are well maintained. There are some very small gardens and a several trees such as Mountain Ash. Some of these trees are struggling a bit and need attention. We suggest the supporting stakes and ties be checked as they can damage the stem. Grass is well maintained but perhaps too well, some of it could be let grow as wildflowers. There is too much use of weed killer at kerbs and base of trees.

Dingle courtyard has nice houses. The existing trees here are in decline, possibly resulting from construction. The advice of an Arboriculturist is suggested. The stone walls and piers with iron arches entrance to Greenmount estate is interesting The open space has great scope for tree planting.

Most private houses in and around Dingle are in good condition and are well-maintained.

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

Approaching Dingle from the Conor Pass, one is struck by the gable wall murals depicting life in the region and of course the explorer Tom Crean. The new ring-road is not shown on the map so we suggest the map be revised for next year. The GAA grounds are bounded by a high-quality stone wall and we were pleased to see more such walls in and around Dingle. The Writer's wall is a very interesting idea.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done on all the environmental improvement works done in Dingle. We hope this report provides stimulus and guidance for future projects. Keep up the good work.