

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: Knightstown Baile an Ridire	Ref: 342
County: Kerry	Mark: 331
Category: A	Date(s): 17/06/2019

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	47	47
Streetscape & Public Places	60	44	45
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	43	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	33	33
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	21	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	39	40
TOTAL MARK	470	325	331

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Knightstown Baile an Ridire páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

Your committee of ten members supported by two part-time residents who do secretarial work and the junior members who do the webpage as well as the Tourist Office and local organisations is a great network. Meetings are held monthly intervals and work sessions happen three times a week from April onwards. You have a busy programme of work and liaising with other organisations, residents, voluntary groups and schools. You receive support from local businesses and public bodies. The use of Facebook, notice board newspaper etc., are your means of communication. The involvement with local schools is commendable and we note that the focus this year has been on climate change. Having two youth representatives on your committee is great for the future as well as contemporary work. We read with interest your description of how Knightstown has changed since you entered the competition 36 years ago. Well done to you and previous committees for their effort and success in making so many improvements. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention and a copy of the long-term plan (2019-2021). The map worked fine but may we suggest placing project numbers in a sequence to make them easier to find. Also, please correct the route of the Azamuth Walk for next year. Please also provide a legend on the map and save time perusing over and back through the application form to learn what the numbers represent.

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

We came across on the Valentia Car Ferry and it was delightful to arrive in Knightstown and to see so many buildings brightly painted. It was clear that a main activity is to ensure that buildings, street furniture and signs are well-painted. The Quay/promenade was delightful, and we admired the town clock structure with walls painted in red and the cornices in white. It is a stunning little building which we note was commissioned by the Knights of Kerry in the late 1800s and was also used as a weighbridge. Well done to the Tidy Towns committee on having restoration works completed in 2016 and the clock ringing out again after a period of 93 years. In another building, the old carriage is preserved, and the toilet block nearby also looked well. The Lifeboat building also caught our eye. Market Street was delightful with the colourful array and style of houses. The church of the Immaculate Conception looks well with its sandstone walls and limestone detail around windows and doors. It is great to see it positioned in a setting of mature trees, but we were surprised that the boundary wall is not traditional stone. Perhaps that can be a future project. The handsome stone piers and ornamental gates also pleased. The Royal Valentia Hotel looked very well with its white painted walls and cornice details in black and the Coffee Dock was very inviting. Saint John the Baptist, Church of Ireland situated at a junction between Middle Road and Old School Road is one of your Heritage buildings which it is important to preserve. The treed landscape adds enhancement to

the area. The Cable Station factory is an impressive historical building for Knightstown from where the first transatlantic cable was laid in July 1866 to Newfoundland. It was interesting to read Margaret O'Sullivan's message "Tom operated on today successfully" about the Easter Rising of 1916.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Cracow Park is the principal green space in Knightstown, and it has a fine modern play area. Portion of the very large grassed area has great potential for developing a reduced mowing regime that would encourage the development of wildflowers. Being located near the Hospital is an advantage if and when patients can take a stroll. This park connects with Azamuth Walk and is therefore accessible from the promenade. The area along by the seashore is a pleasant walk and the water wheel provided interest. In the grounds of the Church of Ireland, we enjoyed the Sensory Garden which was designed by Arthur Shackleton and opened in May 2005. Nearby, the sign for Altazamuth Walk was nailed to a tree; this is bad practice and it should be removed before further damage is caused to the tree. There is a delightful avenue of trees on the wheelchair friendly Altazamuth Walk from the seashore to Cracow Park with a seat placed on the corner where the pathway turns at right angles (not shown on map). 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:

Altazamuth Park is your new nature garden and it looked splendid on the day we visited. There was great growth although not many wildflowers. Unfortunately, the trees such as Malus evereste (Crab apple) did not survive the competition for water and nutrients with the surrounding vegetation. For them to survive, you would have to have an area free of competing plants (weeds) for at least one metre around the tree and to water them especially in May and June for the first two years. In an adjacent stream we noted Giant Rhubarb or Chilean Rhubarb (Gunnera) growing well. This is an invasive weed and should be removed before it spreads further. We note your involvement with the Community Garden at Chapeltown. Other actions listed in your application were noted.

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:

Many thanks for the information on Valentia Island Energy Co-Op aimed at using Hydrogen as a renewable fuel as an alternative to fossil fuels. We look forward to an update in next year's application. This category is about tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. You can help by first looking at the volume of waste that is generated. 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. You have listed 11 actions under this heading including reusable coffee cups, segregation of collected waste, an organic garden, water butts and using compost around trees,

Some other measures to consider are as follows:

- 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.
 - 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.
- 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:

Well done on collecting 26 refuse sacks in this year's annual County clean-up campaign and segregation of this material for recycling purposes. Working with the school on your anti-litter campaign and having regular litter patrols. It was a major achievement to have ESB and Telecom cables laid underground. Weed control is very good throughout. Removing refuse bins during wintertime was a great idea, some communities don't have any and instead give the message – Take your litter home. We didn't see any graffiti. We liked the sign on a pole at the corner of Peter Street about Knightstown being litter free, weed free and gum free. A rusty pedestrian kissing gate (part of) at the entrance to the old Cable Factory site needs anti-rust treatment and painting or removal. Otherwise, we are pleased to state that we found Knightstown very clean and tidy.

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

We note your mention that the coastal terrace buildings are protected structures (mentioned as #30 on the map, but we couldn't find a #30). It is presumed that these are around the former cable factory building and wonder if they are occupied and if so, do they have a resident's association. There is a significant piece of land in front of this complex and it forms an important feature for Knightstown. If they are owned by the OPW, then we suggest working with them to implement improvements, including landscape treatment. Glor na Farrage estate has fine big houses with gardens and open space. One tree on the open space is without any leaves so is presumed dead. There is great scope here for planting trees on the open space and hedges in the gardens. This would add softening and help to reduce wind. Most private houses in Knightstown are in good condition and well-painted.

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

The Welcome sign near the pier with information on Knightstown is very well done. Arriving by ferry is an enjoyable experience as the Quay/Promenade looks so well. It encourages visitors to stop awhile and look around before moving on. Road surfaces are in good condition and we noted the improved car park opposite the Catholic Church. We are pleased to learn of the awareness campaign about the biodiversity value of old stone walls. They are a nice feature.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a great pleasure to visit Knightstown and to see how much you care for your environment. Keep up the good work.