

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Portmagee -Port Mhic Aoidh** Ref: **348**
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 | 49 | 49 |
| Streetscape & Public Places | 60 | 43 | 44 |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping | 60 | 44 | 45 |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality | 50 | 34 | 35 |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less | 50 | 22 | 23 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 66 | 67 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 50 | 33 | 34 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 50 | 33 | 34 |
| TOTAL MARK | 470 | 324 | 331 |

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

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

You have a large committee of 12 members and an impressive 40 volunteers who assist with your projects such as the annual County Clean-Up Day. In addition to your Tidy Towns meetings, you also meet with officials from Kerry County Council and for workshops and other agencies that can assist your programmes of works. The list of contacts and agencies is too large to mention here. You take a multi-faceted approach to communications, including the traditional methods such as newspapers and modern social media. The involvement with the local school through a committee member being on the Board of Management and liaising for Green Flag status is commendable. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention but the legend was missing which means that the numbers are meaningless. Please ensure that a legend is written on the map in future, because it takes much longer if we have to go over and back through the application to understand what the numbers represent. Also, please arrange the numbers in a sequence which makes them easier to find. We appreciate that you want to make a good presentation with your application, but we find that a folder with plastic pages becomes a nuisance when visiting the site. The sun (when we have it!) reflects on the plastic which means we have to remove some pages in order to read them and then they can be difficult to put back in place. All of that takes time that would be better spent in looking around Portmagee. So, for next year, we suggest a much simpler application which need only be stapled and rather than placing photographs at the back, just insert them digitally (in a smaller size) within the text where they are relevant. That will also help to break up the text and make it easier to read. We also suggest that you prioritise the new projects first under each criterion because a total of 74 actions is just too many for the size of your community. The slogan 'less is more' applies very much in regard to the application. Finally, please arrange everything in portrait orientation, it is less cumbersome when sitting in a car. Many thanks for attaching long term action plan summary.

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

The Community Centre looked well in its newly painted blue colour and has floral decorations on the front of the building. The attractive Smuggler's Café is an impressive building which caters for outdoor dining when the weather is suitable. Beside it, you have done your best with an old roofless cottage. It is sitting on an important site and no doubt you would like to see it improved. The car park site at the entrance to the village had many campers and a clear sign forbidding overnight parking. The Bring Centre is in a convenient place for visitors, but we wonder if it could be relocated to a less prominent position within the car park. O'Connell's Foodstore and Post Office had large racks of postcards on each side of the entrance, which surprised us, but even if sending them is less and less

frequent, the pictures are very good quality for souvenirs. The traditional sign over the door looked well. More postcards were on display outside the white and blue painted Cois Cuain gift shop. The adjacent The Moorings and the Bridge Bar were painted red and all three commercial premises were adorned with floral displays. A large modern children's playground is located along the route to the Catholic Church. The church forms a lovely focal point at the end of a short road. We noted the new surfacing of the car park in front of the church. There are more car parking facilities at the rear of the church; a valuable resource in this small village; it also serves the local cemetery, located behind the church. Since there is still some space available in the cemetery, we suggest that trees be planted to make this resting place more like a park for your inhabitants final resting place and a pleasant place for their descendants to visit. Too many graveyards from more recent decades do not have trees in their grounds, but they can be seen in older cemeteries. All around here was clean and tidy and we liked the attractive stone walls and hedges. The Marina looked very well with some car parking as well as picnic facilities. It was tempting to take the trip to the Skelligs but no place was available for several days more, so we had to move on! Scoil Bhréanainn had delightful paintings of bird and fish life associated with your coastal environment as well as other items.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your coastal climate is a big challenge for establishing trees, especially with strong salt laden winds. In your situation it is suggested that trees should be planted as whips or transplants rather than with a stem that would require supporting stakes. The young trees should establish earlier. Therefore, it will be interesting to see how the Mountain Ash trees establish at The Waterfront B&B. We note the success of *Cordyline australis*, the New Zealand Cabbage tree; it will survive well as long as it doesn't get frost and clearly, it is very happy in Portmagee. Hedges are more successful for you and *Griselinia littoralis* likes your seaside location. We also saw good *Escallonia* hedges, which can have red flowers. Holly should also do well as its very waxy leaf can withstand severe weather. The car park at the village entrance is well done in terms of surfacing and the low stone wall boundary is nicely done with a wonderful collection of alpine and succulent plant displaying their best colours on the top of the wall. 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. Hanging baskets and window boxes on many buildings were done to a very high standard.

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

Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to achieve under this category. 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. Your Biodiversity Action Plan (2017-2020) is one such action in that regard and we are pleased to see that it deals with invasive species, plants for pollinators, a village bird survey, composting and some other items. The loop walks and the proposed woodland walk will be an important way of getting familiar with flora and fauna in a healthy way.

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 and you are not short of ideas in Portmagee as evidenced by the 18 items listed under this heading. We read with interest the role being played by Sean O'Laoghaire, a member of the CE scheme who is tasked with improving the environment in a sustainable and creative way. The herb garden is an important way of promoting healthy food and we note he is visiting schools promoting the message of how the past can help us build a sustainable future.

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.
- Regarding water usage, 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 reducing the number of litter bins in the village. Many other communities have done the same and found it worthwhile. Those who will use a litter bin will not throw it away and others will not even think of using a bin. The annual County Clean-Up is a great initiative and we note you collected 100 bags of rubbish, a large amount for a small community. The regular litter patrols are essential, and it is great you are continuing to be vigilant in that regard. As can be expected in a coastal village, some lampposts were rusty and there is a rusty roof in your vicinity also. Otherwise, we found Portmagee very clean and tidy.

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

Houses in the village have a lovely colour scheme so well done to all on agreeing a plan. Harbour View estate is well planted at the entrance. The grass is looking well as are the hedges.

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

We approached Portmagee from Valentia Island from where the village looks very well. It is fortunate that the R565 passes by the village and does not go through it. Being greeted by the EU Flag, the National Flag and the Kerry Flag is a delight and the car park near the entrance is a message to walk the rest of the way. The small grassed area at the village entrance is well maintained and all signs were clean.

Concluding Remarks:

Portmagee is a lovely little village and well done on the many environmental improvements done over the years and to your success in this and other competitions. Keep up the good work.