

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tarbert - Tairbeart** Ref: **350**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **320**
Category: **B** Date(s): **11/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	50	50
Streetscape & Public Places	60	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	42	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	35	36
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	22	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	32
TOTAL MARK	470	314	320

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

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

Your 8-member committee and the 17 volunteers have an active works programme. Meetings are held throughout the year and from April onwards, you have weekly meetings to arrange the work schedule. You also attend workshops/seminars on aspects of the competition. You receive support from local businesses, voluntary groups and public bodies. For communications, you hold public meetings and publish information in the Parish Newsletter, The Kerryman newspaper and you also have a website and a Facebook page. One of your members maintains regular contact with the National School for biodiversity. Another member is a leader with Tarbert Youth Club and another works with the Green Flag committee of the Comprehensive School. This involvement with local schools and participation in workshops is commendable. Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention. Please note that the numbers are very small, so please make them bigger for next year. Many thanks for attaching a copy of the 3-year plan (2019-2022).

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

The Memorial plaza on the corner of the R551 and the N69 is a nice feature which includes the names of local men who gave their lives in the two World Wars of the 19th century. The bronze harp with reliefs of the seven signatories to the 1916 Proclamation is also very well done. There are several flower beds here but if there is any symbolism or significance to their shape it was lost on this adjudicator. The bed surrounds dominate visually when it should be the planting that attracts attention. Seats here were being used by students. Across the road, in Forge Park, we admired the sculptures cut into old poplar trees. A pathway leads to a small bridge over the Green River and onwards to the Bridewell, a lovely old stone building where we enjoyed a coffee break but deferred a visit the museum for another occasion. It's great to see it being conserved and used for heritage value.

The walls of Keldun House B&B are painted yellow with the plinth, cornices, window and door outlines in brown and the Swanky Bar is coloured in blue and red. Further up the hill we admired a house festooned with window boxes and with two flags flying at the doorway. Brosnan's Daybreak shop was well presented, and Mochi's Restaurant looked well in yellow with a horizontal line in black and red. Russell's wall was a most interesting place to visit and to learn about the history of the area by reading the text in all the bronze Plaques. Even though the text is quite small, we were able to photograph them and study them later. Included are St. Senan, the Vikings, Maurice Fitzgerald, Lislaughtin Processional Cross, Carrigaline Castle, Tarbert House and the Leslie family who established the town, Tarbert Island Battery (now demolished), Tarbert Lighthouse, Tarbert old pier, Tarbert Island generating station and of course Russell's Stores.

Saint Brendan's Church is well maintained as is the small adjoining graveyard. However, some weeds are taking control on the outside and in some graves at the base of walls and they need attention. Still it was nice to see the few weeds rather than the sprayed area on the opposite side of the road. In contrast to many other cemeteries this one has plenty of trees. However, they are evergreen and with each year's growth, they are encroaching more and more into the graveyard. You will have to consider removing at least some of these trees, or the lower branches in the near future.

The Square is an important part of the town centre. The Ferry House is a three-storey building that looks well on the corner and is enhanced by good quality window boxes. Kennelly's Butchers form the opposite corner. Trees would add another visual dimension to this square; there's only one at present and it doesn't look well. The Marian shrine is very well maintained neat and tidy. Opposite the Marian Shrine, there is a stone wall and archway with a good quality information sign, a yellow bicycle and several styles of plant containers. The footpath near the wall needs cleaning. The paving surface here is poor quality and the yellow gate in the archway needs cleaning. On the corner with Main Street 5/6 green plant containers dominate the view with poor quality planting. The other houses in this square are well painted. It is time that this square was given the attention it deserves by having a total redesign that would entail repaving, tree planting and removal of all plant containers in favour of planting directly into the ground.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The sensory garden is lovely little park. The design is quite attractive, and the use of material is of a good standard. We enjoyed reading the different quotations. Our favourite is the one by G. K. Chesterton "There's a difference between listening and hearing – hearing is a sense, but listening is an art". The problem here is a lack of maintenance, weeds are coming through the payment. We suggest a new gate that matches the materials inside. The composting facility was noted.

The Comprehensive School is a fine complex on a spacious site which includes sporting facilities. Some trees are well established and look well but the younger birch trees are not doing well; we suggest they be examined by a Horticulturist/Arboriculturist. We admired several window box displays on private houses in Tarbert, so owners and residents, please take a bow.

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

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. In that regard, the biodiversity study done by Geoff Hunt is very relevant. Copies were made available to two pre-schools and we would hope they will include it in their biology and/or environmental studies. You have plans for improving the Green River and its banks and these are being pursued. You seem well orientated towards this criterion and are taking appropriate action. The sign for John F. Leslie Woodland Park looked inviting.

As a follow up to the biodiversity study, a habitat study by children from the National School would be worthwhile. 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. Well done on replacing the Christmas street light bulbs with LED and for utilising scrap timber for making the Fairy Trail. You have listed many ongoing actions under this heading and a few that are planned for the future.

The emphasis here really needs to be on reducing the volume of waste produced rather than recycling (which is taken for granted). 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?

In addition to your list of actions, 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.
- 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:

Well done on your campaign to remove pylons which are now gone from the Woodview estate. It is great that you are working with Kerry County Council on removing redundant poles and to make better use of existing poles by using them for several signs. The removal of 62 bags of rubbish from your area on the 18th April last by volunteers is a great achievement. The Clean Coast Group are to be commended for their work along the shore from Tarbert town to the Ferry terminal. Your regular litter pick operations assisted by the schools is exemplary as we found very little litter in and around Tarbert. Undergrounding of overhead cables when it does happen will be a major visual improvement for the town. Remember that sprayed vegetation looks untidy so it would be best to consider alternative means of weed control. Some areas of untidiness were mentioned under other headings in this report.

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

In Hazelbrook residential estate, some of the planting is a little overgrown and yet there are no trees or shrubs near the houses. We suggest a revision of the existing planting to consider more trees and hedges. In Doonard Crescent we liked the young birch trees which are still quite young. More tree planting is suggested on the open space and there is scope for wildflowers there as well.

The entrance road needs repair. We noted new beds under construction on the corners of the open space. In Saint Patricks Terrace, the houses look very well, and we admired the trees in the open space. Too much weed killer is being used here so we suggest an alternative approach that would look much better. Yellow and salmon coloured roses at the entrance were a delight.

Woodview Estate has nice houses and plenty of open space, but until more trees are planted there, the name is incorrect.

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

Road surfaces are in poor condition in certain places, such as near the Sensory Garden where it was difficult to avoid walking in a puddle. You have an action plan to work with Kerry County Council to have various road improvement schemes implemented. We suggest that renewal of the Square should be prioritised to enhance the town centre.

Concluding Remarks:

Our visit to Tarbert was most enjoyable. We hope you find some guidance for future projects in this report. Keep up the good work.