

# Tidy Towns Competition 2019

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Ashford - Áth na bhFuinseoige</b>	Ref: <b>902</b>
County: <b>Wicklow</b>	Mark: <b>310</b>
Category: <b>C</b>	Date(s): <b>14/07/2019</b>

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	42	45
Streetscape & Public Places	60	43	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	45	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	30	31
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	22	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	31
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>310</b>

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Ashford - Áth na bhFuinseoige páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. Thanks you for your entry form, 3 year development plan and Nature Management Plan. Many thanks for your detailed map with sequential numbers for your project – this really helps the adjudicator who does a lot of forward and back between your report and the map while at the same time making their way around Ashford! The structure of your committee is very good and we particularly like to see how you have eight sub-committees this is a great way to delegate and get lots of work done. In future entry forms it would be most helpful to your adjudicator if you could use a different font or perhaps italicise your answers. This makes your answers stand out and ensures the adjudicator doesn't miss anything. You clearly have a great reach across your community with a terrific long list of all your supporting bodies. Also fantastic to hear that there are Junior Tidy Committees in both schools – you'll have no shortage of members on into the future in Ashford! Your 3 Year Plan is very comprehensive and is part of your overall strategy of breaking work down in to categories and delegating.

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

The two new benches on the bridge looked very well, facing the river and turned away from the busy road. The Wicklow Uplands Council Interpretative Board hadn't arrived in time for adjudication this year but next year's adjudicator will have the pleasure of reading it – these type of boards have been noted in other parts of County Wicklow and they are excellently presented and most informative. Ashford is unfortunate with the number of derelict/half built sites on its Main Street. It is acknowledged that there is little Ashford Tidy Towns can do about it, just keep putting on the pressure and hopefully things will improve with time. Hopefully next year's adjudicator will be able to comment on the newly re-built Ashford Fair Petrol Station! The planned expansion of Ashford Studios is good news for the area.

### Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The newly planted areas at the Main Roundabout were admired. They're still looking a little raw and some of the tender new plants were badly in need of water on the hot adjudication day but this area will reward you into the future as it develops. The use of so many perennials is great, sustainable planting – this flowerbed will be beautiful for years without the need for more money spent or plants planted and most importantly all species are pollinator-friendly. Whilst the hanging baskets and window boxes at the Chester Beatty Inn hotel are stunningly beautiful to our human eyes they are unfortunately of no food value to our beleaguered, hungry pollinator species. By way of compensation, the boxes along the path outside the Inn which currently contain shrubs (which have no flowers in the height of summer when the pollinators are out flying looking for food) could be planted with

herbaceous perennials thus adding lots more colour and food for the hungry pollinators. Make sure to download your copy of the really helpful National Biodiversity Data Centre guide on what plants to pick for where in their 'Pollinator Planting Code' which is freely available at [www.pollinators.ie/resources](http://www.pollinators.ie/resources) It is acknowledged that Ashford has to put up with several derelict and closed prominent sites along its main street. However, you also have many assets, one of which is the beautiful green backdrop of the tree covered hills and the wondrous Mount Usher Gardens. This green backdrop could be enhanced even more by planting the existing planters on the main street with colourful and floriferous pollinator friendly perennial plants. The structure of the main street would likely benefit from some tree planting if it were possible. Perhaps when the re-building projects are going on an opportunity might arise?

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

As noted above you put a lot of hard work into the new planting of the large beds at the Main Roundabout. They will provide a beautiful entrance into your village here at the junction of the roads from Dublin and the mountains. Also if you have not done so already make sure to download your copy of the community version of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and the Pollinator Planting Code from [www.pollinators.ie/resources](http://www.pollinators.ie/resources). These will provide endless inspiration and very practical lists of plant species that will suit all sorts of situations providing colour for human interest and pollen for pollinator food. Part of Tidy Towns work is spreading the knowledge the group has about managing our surrounding environment in a more biodiversity-friendly and sustainable way. Ugly brown strips of dead grass were seen along various roadsides and other places in Ashford on adjudication day. It would be great if you could use your knowledge of the importance of minding our pollinator species to advise those who are using the herbicides – it is likely that they just don't realise the long-lasting damage these poisons do to our environment.

### **Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:**

Your entry in the sustainability category makes for interesting reading. You have a clear understanding of all the different aspects to this complex and sometimes difficult category. You are very lucky to have such great local expertise and when such help is offered make sure to use it! Your sustainable and waste audit is a good idea to help you gain insight into your own and local businesses energy use and waste in Ashford. We look forward to future projects that will result from this audit as you use it to make for more sustainable living in Ashford. The work on sustainability projects carried out by Ashford Studios is very impressive and will hopefully inspire more such projects both in and outside of Ashford. Good to hear about the LED public lighting coming to Ashford too. There lots going on in this category in Ashford, well done.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Very well done to Ashford on your graffiti-free status. We are sure this has been hard-won. With such a busy thoroughfare through your town keeping it litter free must be very difficult. So all your great work is acknowledged here, take a bow Ashford Tidy Towns! This has been achieved through a well-thought-out system between your three different pure miles, your collaboration with TUS workers, your regular litter picks, your little black spot focus and your engagement with local schools. Keep up your great work in this category as it's paying dividends.

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

There are several housing estates and lots of different residential roads in the Ashford area. It's good to see that some of the newer developments have been completed. Your strategy here is clearly working well too – you have put a lot of thought into your system of inclusion of the many estates – this is a great example to other towns as it exemplifies what Tidy Towns is all about – improving our surrounding environment in all sorts of ways and doing it together. The best of luck to all participants in the Ashford Residents Area competition this year!

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

You mentioned in your entry form that ivy removal is undertaken. As mentioned in your Nature Management Plan, ivy is one of our most important biodiversity-friendly plants and therefore its correct management is very important. It provides pollen and berries in winter when nothing else is out and it also provides hibernation sites for bats, butterflies and moths. Best to seek ecological advice for ivy clearance. It will be great to have a safe path leading all the way out to the M11 Roundabout from Mount Usher – the addition of a cycle path while they are doing it would be even better as the cycle out from Wicklow town or Rathnew would be so much safer. Many cycling tourists were noted in this part of County Wicklow during adjudication. If there is enough space it would be good to see a grassy border left between the new path and the road thus keeping the rural feel to the approach road.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Well done Ashford Tidy Towns on all your hard work. You have a great committee structure and lots of good strategies and plans, keep it up as clearly you are making great strides in improving the quality of life for both resident and visitor alike in Ashford.