

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Coolboy - Cuil Bhuidhe** Ref: **1986**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **285**
Category: **B** Date(s): **15/07/2018**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	42	43
Streetscape & Public Places	60	39	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	35	34
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	22	23
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	15	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36	36
TOTAL MARK	470	280	285

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Coolboy – An Cúl Buí páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. Welcome Coolboy and thank you for your entry form and map. Your hand-drawn map is very good, just a little small. Please spread it out onto a full A4 next year. Its layout is wider than long so it would probably work in landscape rather than portrait format. Well done on all your links within and outside the village. You have a good number of volunteers to count on and lots of support from local businesses and public bodies. You clearly value the beautiful locality that you live in but we are sorry to hear of the loss of your post office and the valuable social hub it provided in Coolboy. Sadly this problem faces many communities in rural Ireland now. Many are coming up with their own community based solutions so look to them for inspiration - excellent Co. Wicklow examples are The Village Pantry in Rathdangan and The Hub in Kiltegan. The great community spirit you foster with Coolboy & District Tidy Towns means you have a strong base from which to find a solution that will work for your village.

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

Coolboy village was very well presented on adjudication day. The lovely layout of houses around the central village green is a wonderful feature and full of character, especially with the added interest of the south Wicklow slopes and hills.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have a nice picnic area out the under the shade of sycamore trees on the Carnew road. We can see that you have gone to the bother of planting pollinator-friendly plants in the beds here. However, all around the planters, the picnic benches and the grass verges have been sprayed with herbicide. Herbicide overuse is one of the reasons why our pollinator species are drastically declining in recent years. The unnecessary overuse of herbicides in Ireland in recent decades has contributed to the serious decline in the populations of our pollinators. We have lost 17% of our bumblebees alone since 2012. So it's imperative that we do what we can by providing lots of food by way of long flowering herbaceous perennials, leaving grass verges for their nesting habitats, letting wildflowers flower instead of mowing and strimming them away and not using poisonous herbicides.

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

The Butterfly garden was inspected and only Buddleia was seen. The idea of a community butterfly garden is a terrific one so well done on the concept, however, a few guidance points are needed. Firstly, the river bank here is not the best spot as it's a narrow road here and doesn't lend itself to people stopping to admire any butterflies as

this adjudicator found out! Secondly riverbanks are important habitats and any kind of development on river banks needs to be approached with caution as soil movement etc. can lead to loose soils entering the river system which can cause problems to aquatic species. Thirdly while attracting the butterflies, Buddleia is a problematic invasive species that is not recommended in the All Ireland Pollinator Plan because of its invasive habits! All that said, the idea of a butterfly garden is lovely and please spread the idea to include all other pollinators as butterflies are actually only a minor group when it comes to the ecological services of pollination! Have a good look at all the wonderful ideas and guides freely available to download at www.pollinators.ie/resources Most especially print out the Pollinator Planting Code as this should be your go-to list for whenever you are choosing plants - it has lists for every kind of situation a Tidy Towns group can face and all are pollinator-friendly. Then maybe you might consider picking a more prominent spot in Coolboy to create a wonderful feature of a butterfly and pollinator garden making sure everyone knows about how important it is that we support our beleaguered pollinators. The Mill bridge area was admired but it does need a colour injection! Have a look at the Pollinator Planting code mentioned above for a few ideas to jazz up the flower bed here. Your much-loved Horse Chestnut tree on the Green is a wonderful feature of Coolboy. You are clearly very fond of it but be careful how it's treated! We noticed that a 'Don't litter' sign had been nailed into the tree. It is never a good idea to put nails or screws into a living tree trunk as this can result in infections which damage the tree, sometimes fatally! Disappointed to see herbicide had been used all around grass verges here too. Your efforts to inform Coolboy residents of the importance of wildflowers are very commendable but may we suggest other ways than passing out wildflower seeds? Wildflower seeds are to be found in shops all over the country now but they are problematic in that nearly all the packets are sourced outside Ireland and therefore contain seeds of plants which are not wild or native in Ireland. This can lead to unforeseen problems with plants becoming invasive or hybridising with and changing our own native wildflowers. Instead seek inspiration for all sorts of community projects to raise awareness at the above mentioned pollinators.ie website or perhaps make a community event out of raising biodiversity awareness with something like a batwalk followed by a community barbecue or a local community Bioblitz.

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

Well done on the much needed water butts. This category can be a hard one to work with. Make sure to inform yourselves on all the possibilities for projects in Coolboy. The Wicklow Co. Co. Environmental Awareness Office will be able to help with information and inspiring workshops etc!

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Coolboy looked very well on adjudication day with several residents out doing their bit to clean up around the village. Delighted to hear you had a T.Y. student work with you this year. Spreading the Tidy Towns word to the next generation is vital for the future of all!

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

Good to hear that you liaise with all the Residents groups in Coolboy. There is potential for some of the green areas to be mowed under a different regime in order to encourage wildflowers to flower. Leave the first cut as long as possible until at least the end of April and then only cut once a month after that and you will be surprised at the number of wildflowers that will appear without any wildflower seeds being sown! Lovely grass paths can be mown through to entice the walker.

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

The entrance road from Coolafancy features lovely stone granite wall but unfortunately the base of the wall has been sprayed with herbicide - this is unnecessary and unsightly. Grass verges are very important for pollinator species nesting habitat so they need to be conserved. This is something to be mindful of when strimming - leave the grassy base at the bottom of walls and hedges. Also be mindful of bird nesting season when hedge cutting between February and August inclusive. Our feathered friends need all the help we can give them!

Concluding Remarks:

I enjoyed my first visit to picturesque Coolboy and look forward to a return to see how you are getting on with your various projects.