

# Tidy Towns Competition 2019

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dunlavin - Dún Luáin** Ref: **517**  
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **274**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/07/2019**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2018</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2019</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	32	33
Streetscape & Public Places	60	39	41
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	41	42
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	21	22
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	14	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33	34
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>274</b>

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Dunlavin – Dún Luáin páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. Thank you for your entry form, map and additional information. This adjudicator felt that Dunlavin is hiding its light under a bushel somewhat with your application! Dunlavin is a beautiful village with much to recommend it that this adjudicator hadn't realised before as I had only ever driven through and not stopped. Next year make sure to list all your ongoing maintenance work (M) as well as new (N) and future projects (F). I was over halfway through my visit when I realised there was a beautiful little public park in the centre of Dunlavin that I had missed noticing on your map. You have a good basic map with plenty of room at A3 size so next year make good use of it and use coloured markers to write numbers for the different projects which refer back to project numbers in the text – colour coded for each category. As your 2018 adjudicator pointed out, number all the projects sequentially – don't restart numbering in each category and then these numbers can be written on to the map. In this way you can be sure that everything is highlighted for your adjudicator who will probably be new to Dunlavin like me! Also you will have more space for text if your form can be typed next year – maybe this is a project that some of your helpful students in St. Kevin's Community College could help with? This volunteer effort should also fit in under the Gaisce Award. If the form cannot be typed then feel free to add pages to your entry form if you need to. You have a good number of volunteers and are doing great liaising with lots of public bodies and local businesses. Dunlavin looked beautiful on adjudication day and is clearly well looked after by its residents – this can only inspire more to join your ranks. You note that you are seeking help to get a three year plan started. This need not be complicated – a simple table listing your aspirational projects over the next three years, what category they are in and who or what group are delegated to carrying them out along with a column for marking your progress is all that is needed. It may be that there is someone in your community who is used to writing reports and tables who may not have the time to commit to Dunlavin TidyTowns regularly but might be only too willing to help with this once off project.

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

Dunlavin is blessed with a beautiful streetscape with many highlights. The old Market House building crowns the top of the street and makes a dramatic view coming from the Kilcullen road. It is great that this building is in public use as a library, very fitting and accessible. The granite cobbles here are very fitting in their surroundings. It is a shame to hear that they are slippery in wet weather. Make sure to get the best architectural advice if making changes here – your local authority architect and Wicklow County Council's Heritage Officer will advise. Also the The Heritage Council ([www.heritagecouncil.ie](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie)) in Co. Kilkenny have lots of practical advice for community groups managing old buildings and their surrounds. Road surfaces were noted to be patchy in places, keep up your requests to the Roads Department on this, your wide Main Street is very unusual and something to be minded. Many shops old and new were looking well on adjudication day while the evening visit meant many were closed, there were some interesting window displays – The Weaver's being particularly eye-catching and unusual. As noted above I nearly

missed the Public Park discreetly perched above the Main St. so perhaps a nice small sign or indeed just simply the words Public Park could be painted onto the gate pillars – something as elegant as the Park itself!

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

The new planting at Cow Green was admired. All the plants you chose are indeed pollinator-friendly which is great to see particularly close to St Nicholas N.S. who have lots of pollinator-friendly initiatives going on in their grounds. However, it was disappointing to see that the newly planted areas had been sprayed with herbicide along their grass verges. Unfortunately, this will have a negative effect on all your hard work for the pollinators as chemical herbicide spray poisons our precious pollinator species as well as plants and its overuse is a big reason behind their catastrophic decline in recent decades. Please use your knowledge of pollinators and their importance to inform whoever is spraying that it is not necessary here - a living green grass verge is much nicer than a dead brown one! Make sure to download your copy of the Community version of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan at [www.pollinators.ie/resources](http://www.pollinators.ie/resources) which gives great explanations and ideas for future projects. In Tidy Towns, the only time that herbicide use is necessary is for the treatment of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and even then it should only be done by professionals. Keeping the areas around young trees (less than 5 years planted) weed-free (and remember a weed is simply a plant in the wrong place – according to a human!) is important to help get the tree established. Manual weeding is always best for this – keeping on top of weed growth after the tree is planted. After 5 years, however, the tree will be well established and not mind grass growing at its base – think of woodlands and hedgerows where this is normal. Another really helpful guide available from the above mentioned pollinators website is the Pollinator Planting Code. This has lists of countless different plants, shrubs and trees to suit every situation, all of which are pollinator friendly. Please refer to this list for future planting as with our pollinator species dying of hunger, we really can't afford to ignore the problem and continue with pollen-less annuals being planted. The tubs at the library were very colourful but had few pollinator-friendly plants. If they could be planted with perennial geraniums (especially blue ones which the bees love and they'd match the tubs!), lady's mantle and astrantias you'd have colour from April through to October and wouldn't need to replant next year. Great value for money especially when the plants could be split and planted elsewhere after a few years! Also the flower beds in the Public Park and the Fair Green could be supplemented with some pollinator-friendly herbaceous perennials over the coming years. The two new weeping willow trees down the Lugatryna road were seen. This is another lovely little spot to take a rest by the babbling brook. The bench looked in need of a lick of paint but it is very inviting being so well placed by the stream and will be nicely in the shade of the willow in years to come.

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

I had a very pleasant wander around the grounds of Scoil Nioclás Naofa on my adjudication evening visit. There were lots of biodiversity and pollinator-friendly projects to admire and all with colour and fun in mind – the pink croc bird house looked very cute! A good understanding of the importance of biodiversity in our lives and looking after it for our own benefit as well as that of other species is evident through these projects. Just please use that knowledge to pass the word around your community to ensure that the unnecessary use of herbicide is not repeated and practices such as leaving the first annual mowing until April/May in order to let the all-important dandelions flower and then not mowing as frequently in order to let other small flowers like daisies, buttercups and clovers flower. Another important measure is to make sure to leave grass areas at the bases of hedgerows and walls as these are where our bumble bees nest and hibernate. This is why we suggest on the entrance roads to towns and villages where possible just mow one lawn mower's width along the roadside edge of the verge and leave the inner edge up against the wall or hedge to grow and you'll be rewarded with a lovely show of wildflowers such as the swaying heads of Cow parsley in May and Dog daisies in June. You have several open green areas in Dunlavin so there is scope for a change in mowing regime. Have you thought about leaving a central area of the Fair Green to grow longer – managed like a hay meadow with its first cut in early July, remove the hay and then have a final cut in September? Before you know it you'd have a wildflower meadow in the middle of your village for very little work! Another lovely feature would be to mow a couple of grass paths through the meadow to invite the walker. It must have been very disappointing for the planned Railway Walk not to work out, these things happen. However, this adjudicator took the time to walk out to the St Nicholas Well and I was captivated by the beautiful vistas of the West Wicklow-South Kildare landscapes. Could this walk be developed a little bit? The fence along the boundary with St Kevin's Community School was very bare and crying out for a native hedgerow of Hawthorn, Holly, Elder, Hazel and Blackthorn to be planted along to mirror the hedgerow on the other side of the path. This could make a fantastic wildlife corridor and a future Pollinator Award Project perhaps? The Wicklow Uplands Council may be able to help as they have carried out great work on walking trails with other Wicklow communities.

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

Well done to Sweet Taste Coffee shop on the use of recyclable (hopefully compostable?) coffee cups – spread the word on this and hopefully by next year all the coffee outlets in the village will use them too. This concept is spreading like wildfire around the country at the moment and makes great sense. You mention a sustainability-themed meeting was held in Dunlavin, this is great – maybe future projects will emerge inspired by what you heard! It is a shame that you have not yet got a recycling centre set up in Dunlavin, hopefully this will be remedied as soon as possible – you yourselves realise already the importance of recycling and living more sustainably. Well done on the Dunlavin Borrow Swop and Share Facebook page.

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

From having no Pure Mile projects last year you now have several on the go so well done. This project has been very successful all across County Wicklow as evidenced by my visits all around the county this summer. Congratulations on collecting 300 bags of rubbish during your Clean Up Day on 24th March – you must have had a

huge number of volunteers to collect so much – well done to all. Linking with your neighbours in Stratford and Grangecon is another great initiative that will bring dividends to all. No litter problems were noted on adjudication day. You express a worry about dog fouling and it is a problem in many urban spaces. Keep up your good work here because none was noted on adjudication day so it's working!

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

Well done to all Dunlavin residents, everywhere looked well basking in the sunny summer's evening of adjudication day. The new Laurel hedge was seen. Just a note to say that while hedges are to be welcomed it is a missed opportunity with regards to planting native, shrubs which will provide pollen for our hungry, beleaguered pollinators as well as providing interest year round with flowers in spring, berries in autumn etc. Laurel is one of the foremost invasive species causing problems in Ireland's native woodlands so maybe the next hedge in Dunlavin could be Hawthorn or something else listed in the Pollinator Planting Code! Lots of nice perennials were noted and the Willow Arch on the Sparrow road was very eye-catching!

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

Dunlavin's graceful and peaceful streetscape is complimented by the picturesque country roads that approach it. Perhaps you might try the narrow verge mowing along some of the parts closest to the village entrances. The bench and fowerbed at the Tober Road-Station Road junction was lovely and filled with pollinator-friendly plants buzzing with bees. The granite marker at the Cornus tree perhaps could be moved out slightly from under the tree so it could be seen more easily and it together with the pump and bench could become a more integrate feature with a little planting of something like lavender near the bench perhaps – the bench here is in a lovely little sun-trap.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

As you can probably tell I really enjoyed my visit to Dunlavin and I look forward to watching you progress through this competition in the future.