

# Tidy Towns Competition 2019

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Grange Con - Gráinseach Choinn</b>	Ref: <b>825</b>
County: <b>Wicklow</b>	Mark: <b>327</b>
Category: <b>A</b>	Date(s): <b>14/07/2019</b>

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	47	50
Streetscape & Public Places	60	43	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	44	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	31	33
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	13	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	40
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>327</b>

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Grange Con – Gráinseach Choinn páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. Welcome Grange Con and thank you for the intriguing translation of your village name. There must be a good story behind it and it explains the lovely dog sculpture in the village! Thank you very much for your comprehensive entry form. Your map is great, clear and easy to read. Two points that will improve it even more is to colour code according to category each project you refer to on the map as it's difficult to cross reference with the form while in the car or out in all weathers as adjudicators tend to be! Your 3 Year Plan is excellently presented, clear and concise. For a small village you've a great number of volunteers and a great number of local businesses and public bodies supporting you in your valuable work. You have attended a very impressive number of workshops in the past year. I like how the first method of communication that you mention is talking to each other on the street! This is where it all started with the Tidy Towns movement and yet most groups forget to mention this age old method of communication! Well done on your strong supportive relationship with your local school. The school curriculum is so packed these days that the teachers must be delighted with your support. Well done to all the pupils and teachers in Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire Fatima on attaining their 6th Green Flag for Global Citizenship Litter and Waste.

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

The new plaque is a nice commemoration of great community spirit in Grange Con back in 1902. The bell was heard chiming too and it sounded great! The new Capall agus Marchach sculpture is very handsome and perfectly placed. The Village Hall is a lovely building but looking a bit sad with modern windows and window guards. Is there scope to get a heritage grant to restore the windows and brighten it up? The roof looks in reasonably good condition.

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

Not one but two orchards planted in the last year - wonderful! Terrific idea to have a satellite orchard in the school. They will need careful management for the first five years or so, keeping the area at the base of the trees clear of vegetation as much as possible - but not using herbicide to achieve this! The car park behind the Village Hall is poor condition. You mention that it's rarely used so might it lend itself to being restored to grass? It could still be used for occasional parking but wouldn't a grass area beside the developing orchard and river Greese make a very attractive community space?

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

Well done on your biodiversity hotspots map. This shows great awareness of what you have and will also help you to plan ahead for potential biodiversity enhancements. Mallen's Wood Meadow is a lovely community asset. It had a lot of docks and ragwort which hint at fertilising/enrichment of this grassland in the past or maybe you are not removing the grass cuttings here? This inhibits wildflowers so a good idea at this stage would be to sow Yellow rattle seeds (source from Design by Nature in Crettyard) which will naturally slow down the grass growth. Then manage the area as a hay meadow with a first cut in early July, lift the cuttings and then a final cut in late September. After a few years, more and more wildflowers will colonise. Also mow a few more winding grass paths and maybe add a bench or picnic table? Swifts were heard in the village on adjudication day! As were swallows, housemartins and a yellow hammer! The Ballynure church grounds are beautiful and you have done great work here, however, we urge caution when it comes to nailing notices to living trees. This is not a good idea as it can cause infection and the same advice goes for bird boxes and bug hotels!

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

Well done to the school on all their hard work keeping up with all their Green flags. The best of luck with your new Big Pig Composter - you show great initiative in getting it. This will make for a great Community composting project with many other groups watching how it progresses for you I'm sure! Go Greener with Grange Con is another great initiative we will watch with interest in the coming years. We also note your registration as a SEC. Well done, you've been very active in this category.

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

Many congratulations on being awarded the best litter free award for all your Pure Mile work. This is fantastic and was very much evident on your beautiful approach roads. Well done on your attempts to get Grange Con to go herbicide free. 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. Perhaps an informative leaflet or local notice might help you in your efforts to inform all Grange Con's residents about the benefits of not using herbicides? Have a look at [www.pollinators.ie/resources](http://www.pollinators.ie/resources) for lots of helpful guides and posters ready to print.

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

Grange Con is blessed with many beautiful houses in various vernacular architectural styles. It is a pleasure to wander the village and enjoy these lovely examples of Irish rural buildings. Everywhere was very well looked after. This adjudicator has come across many water pump features but they rarely still work so well done with your pump!

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

All approach roads were absolutely beautiful. You are so lucky with all your wonderful stone walls and most importantly many, many mature trees with Oak, Beech and Ash being most prominent. Several of your grass verges were mown which always gives a tidy appearance at the entrance to a village. We always recommend that just one mower's width on the road side of the verge is enough thus leaving the all important grassy habitats at the bases of hedges and walls for pollinator nests. Keep up your requests to the relevant authorities for help with maintenance of your village. This is an important part of the role of helping the local community that Tidy Towns committees can fulfill. A point to think about in this Approach Roads category is that with all the beautiful mature trees that frame the approach roads to your village and are a huge part of its character that you need to be thinking of the future and working on a long-term replacement project for the trees. The best time to plant a tree is yesterday!

### **Concluding Remarks:**

This was this adjudicator's first visit to Grange Con and it was a delight. Keep up your wonderful work here and I look forward to a return visit to walk some of your Pure Miles and sample your new café when it opens.