

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Greystones - Na Clocha Liatha** Ref: **261**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **316**
Category: **G** Date(s):

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	46	48
Streetscape & Public Places	60	46	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	41	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	28	30
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	15	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	36
TOTAL MARK	470	302	316

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Greystones - Na Clocha Liatha páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. Welcome Greystones and thank you for your entry. A different adjudication time to normal but rest assured your adjudicator this year is very familiar with lovely Greystones and knows only too well the hard work you have all put in all through the year – this year and many previous going all the way back to 1985! Well done on your well-organised set-up reflected in your comprehensive application form. With regard to your entry form, I only have two small suggestions for improvement in this category. One is to consider colour-coding your project numbers on your excellent new map e.g. red for 'Streetscape & Public Places'; blue for 'Green spaces & landscaping' etc. This will help your adjudicators in future adding clarity to your very busy map (a busy-ness that is only to be expected with such a well populated, busy urban area). The other suggestion is to elaborate a little more on your 3-5 Year Plan. Decide on whether you want to draw up a three or a five year plan and at its simplest form, present it in a table assigning years to different projects and delegating to different sub-committees etc. Such a Plan will help you see how much you have achieved, what you hope to achieve and help you plan the practicalities of who, how and where you can achieve those goals. You have a good size committee and a terrific number of volunteers which is as it should be considering how your great work is enhancing the quality of life for all in Greystones. You have established good links with many partners, stakeholders and sponsors and this is very important particularly in a large urban area. It is also very heartening to see you liaising with your TidyTowns neighbours in Delgany displaying the true TidyTowns spirit of reaching out and sharing information and time as everyone is working to the same ends of an improved environment for all residents and visitors. The generosity of Greystones Lawn Tennis Club and Greystones Library in offering free meeting space and facilities is more evidence of the great local community spirit. Many congratulations on the establishment of a Junior TidyTowns programme in Greystones – more inclusivity and a great investment in the future of TidyTowns in Greystones. It's wonderful to hear how energising this programme has been to all the Greystones TidyTowns volunteers and we look forward to future developments with this project. Thank you for all the individual school reports included in your submission, these give a comprehensive idea of work going on across Greystones throughout the year. Your work with Restorative Justice is a new collaboration this adjudicator has not come across before with TidyTowns but is a wonderful example of how our community-wide movement can reach out to include so many with the healing power of working together for the good of all at its heart. Good to hear of the Community Wellbeing evening in Greystones – these events are a great way of bringing people together who can help each other as you have found out.

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

You have a wide and varied area to cover from the historic village of Killincarrig right over to the new harbour and

marina areas. Killincarrig still retains its old village feel with many old houses displaying some beautiful vernacular architectural features. The new harbour has a completely different feel but it is developing well and is clearly being very well used for all sorts sporting and leisure uses. The expanded playground is terrific and was being very well-used on adjudication day. It is so perfectly located close to the beach and at the bottom of the town's main street. The heart-shaped bike racks bring a smile to the face in the centre of the town. They were being well used on adjudication day with lots of bikes locked on. The paving outside the train station looked very well with the metalwork wheelchair sign neatly sitting in to the cobbled stonework. Also the metal of the wheelchair sign tied in with the same metal used in the square tree surrounds nearby giving a beautiful integration to the streetscape. Clearly a lot of thought was put in to this streetscape design and it looks very well. The use of granite was also noted – the use of the stone type local to an area is so important and something that is unfortunately too often overlooked in Ireland. The outdoor seating of Greystones main street has become a great feature of the town – all through the year not just in the summer and it adds a great vibrancy to the centre of town. Keeping paths navigable for all is vitally important here but you are well aware of this so eating and drinking al fresco is a positive experience for all in Greystones. This also ties in with your philosophy in the Access Greystones Project and we look forward to more developments with this worthwhile and inclusive project into the future. Burnaby Park is a wonderful green oasis on the main street through Greystones and is clearly well-used and loved locally with more heart-shaped bike racks, good benches and a new drinking water tap – all brilliant ways to provide benefits to the people of Greystones. The new fruit trees are a lovely idea to have in the centre of town and we look forward to your future plans for more tree and shrub planting in the park. Good luck with your Historic Plaques project – these types of projects have gained even more importance in recent years with population movements and many people now living in Greystones who have no idea about historic events and people of interest in their new locality.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have many beds to look after all around the town and on approach roads. All were noted to have great herbaceous and shrubby perennials with lots of pollinator-friendly species used. These perennials clearly also help lighten the workload compared to the annuals used of old as well as giving a much longer flowering season as particularly noted in this unusually late adjudication. St Crispin's Field is a beautiful project (well done to Redford Residents' Association here too) integrating both the social and natural history of Greystones. Your use of the space around the old church building is perfect in this adjudicator's eyes! It is the perfect type of large grass area to manage as a hay/wildflower meadow thus cutting down on time and fuel needed with less grass cutting but you are also retaining the site's accessibility for the public by maintaining grass paths cut through the meadow which are always so enticing to the walker! The only point that could be improved here might be to install a simple compost system for the grass cuttings. At the moment they appear to be left in long grass/scrubby area behind the church building. It is a bit unsightly and rotting grass cuttings will leach nutrient-rich liquid that has the potential to run down into the local stream and pollute it. A simple three-box system (sometimes referred to as a New Zealand Box system) made of recycled wooden pallets can be enough and if managed properly by the local community could be a great source of compost for private and public gardens. The rustic picnic benches are a great feature – it must be such a lovely picnic spot here whenever the sun shines all the year round. The loveliest touch then is all the pollinator-friendly perennial planting you have around the church building. These give a colourful show for so long – still looking good in October for this unusual late adjudication but also harking back to pastimes when the religious orders were so good at planting for all sorts of uses – both culinary and medicinal. You can be sure that there would have been a garden of sorts in association with St. Crispin's when it was in its prime so your planting here is a thought-provoking touch as well as being of great benefit to our beleaguered pollinator species who need all the help we can give them. The Picnic Field was visited and the last of the summer flowers and herbs noted against the wall. Well done on your efforts to get the Community Garden going again. A vibrant Community Garden is a wonderful asset for any town or village and there are several wonderful examples around Ireland. Your Community garden was visited and it was clear lots of work had been done over the past year. It is quite a small space considering the size of Greystones and its population but land is of course at a premium! You have already put a lot of thought into the project and we look forward to its development and hopefully expansion in years to come. We're delighted to hear that you've signed up to no more herbicide use and are adopting a more tolerant approach to weeds – in many cases it simply involves looking at the world in a different light. Weeds are simply plants growing in the wrong place according to our human eyes only after all! The EIRE sign project is very interesting and one that several other TidyTowns groups have worked on around the coast. A fascinating part of our history that will not be forgotten thanks to your hard work. You have carried out some research already into the potential for a river walk along part of the Three Trouts Stream. This would be a wonderful addition to the area so we wish you well with it and look forward to its successful fruition.

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

You are clearly aware of how important it is for us to help our beleaguered pollinators as shown around all your public flower beds, St. Crispin's Field and also ably demonstrated by your wonderful Bugs Green project. In addition, what is extra special about this latter project is how it is very clearly visible to the passing pedestrian and driver who may be stopped here waiting on the traffic lights. This is brilliant because a huge part of these types of projects is about raising awareness amongst the general public about how we can make small changes that can mean so much to our surrounding biodiversity. You are doing a lot on the raising awareness front as evidenced by the information leaflet you gave out at your Annual Family Fun Day. The Community Orchard is also a wonderful initiative and will provide a great community focus on into the future. There is potential here for more associated projects with some more pollinator-friendly planting and the associated lane and old mill building. We also were delighted to see the comprehensive list of the fruit trees present and their position. The addition of this sign adds lots of interest for the public and so nice to see lots of different types of fruit present too – especially a good number of cherry trees echoing the famous Cherry Orchard of old in nearby Killincarrig. A community orchard can also

inspire some great community events whether it's at blossom time in the spring or harvest time in the autumn, there's lots of potential for fun events binding the community together here in the future. The Mill Lane was walked and this indeed is a great asset to have a rural lane for walking to remind everyone of Greystone's rural past. The path surface is very good, making it accessible to many, however, there's potential for improvements to the hedgerows and planting along the path. Several invasive species are growing here to the detriment of native biodiversity-friendly species. Most of the plants growing along the central part of the path are the invasive, non-native and domineering Traveller's Joy (*Clematis vitalba*), Butterfly bush (*Buddleia*) and Fuchsia. Unfortunately, these species are the bullies of the plant scene out in the wild in Ireland and they push out the native hedgerow species which are of such huge biodiversity value providing nectar, pollen and fruit for a variety of birds, insects and mammals as well as year-round interest for human pedestrians passing by! It would be great if some sort of native hedgerow planting project could be carried out along this pathway – probably best managed in stages over several years. You are also keenly aware of your coastal natural heritage as evidenced by the Wicklow Aquanauts report included in your submission. It's great to see that these reports form part of the National Citizen Science Monitoring Scheme run by the National Biodiversity data Centre (who also produced the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and resources). The report makes for sobering reading but is so important for increasing local public awareness which in turn one would hope would help to protect our precious coastal habitats.

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

You have been very active in this category over the past year – well done - you have a great grasp of the many and various issues involved in this complicated but hugely important category. Greystones TT hosted a number of community awareness events this past year with a particular focus on sustainability issues. This is great to see because raising community awareness about many environmental issues is a huge part of the role of TidyTowns groups. Great to hear of you and Delgany joining the Sustainable Energy Community Programme – this will bring so many benefits to your locality as well as the rest of the planet! Well done on your two new Community drinking water and refill stations at Burnaby Park and the South Beach Playground. Using reusable drinking water bottles and getting away from single-use plastics as you have been championing in Greystones has been a prominent media issue particularly over the last year and yet publicly accessible drinking water taps and fountains are hard to find so it's great to see you leading the way with this project. Keep up your great work here and we look forward to hearing about new taps in future years. Greystones is known for its many great cafes and restaurants so well done on your 'Every Cup Counts Campaign' encouraging these businesses to head in the right direction. It was interesting to hear how you talked to local teachers and found that they feel that local resources for green educator training are insufficient and how the Greystones Junior TT committee are going to step in to the breach! This sounds like a very clever community-led initiative and we look forward to hearing more about it in the future.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done on all the various clean-ups you have organised and run over the past year. You have a large area to cover with a large population resulting in much more litter occurring than other areas no doubt but everywhere looked well on adjudication day proving both the efforts of your work in actual litter clearing and in getting the litter-free message across. Well done to the Junior group for all their hard work tidying the beaches this year. It's a great idea to have such a focus for the Junior group and one that they can immediately see the rewards of all their hard work – hopefully Greystones residents and beach users know and acknowledge this too – certainly this adjudicator heard about it from Greystones residents. Your Marine Litter Sign looks great and is very informative – one that could be shared with coastal communities all over the country. The Aldi wall along Mill Lane was looking very clean and white on Adjudication day – well done on your hard work with removing graffiti here. Your plans for a mural here sound very exciting and as you say will put the Mill into context in the local area – we look forward to this project's completion. For any sections of the wall that are not covered by the mural then a practical solution to ensuring no more graffiti problems would be to plant something like Firethorn (*Pyracantha*) which gives good wall cover and a terrific show of blossoms in spring followed by gorgeous berries in autumn thus feeding both pollinator insects and birds. Different varieties could be planted with yellow, orange and red berries. The Stream of Consciousness project is terrific – what a wonderful way to raise local consciousness about our environment! Also the liaisons and communication involving yourselves in Greystones TidyTowns and local schools is great to hear and the information plaque for passers-by is a really important function of this project. Clearly Greystones TidyTowns works very hard on liaising and communicating with local businesses and other groups – this is ably demonstrated by how you solved the cigarette butt problem at the Aldi building. This kind of work is TidyTowns at its best and indeed most powerful – facilitating local changes that improve our local environment so much. Your idea about sharing a machine for the removal of chewing gum is a very good one – no doubt many of your fellow Wicklow and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown TidyTowns groups would be very interested and enthusiastic.

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

There are a large number of housing estates in Greystones and several were visited on adjudication day. Indeed, the vibrant mix of very old, mature and younger housing areas all around Greystones is a wonderful feature of the area that makes for pleasant and varied walks around the locality. It is great to hear of all your liaising with the different areas and particularly inclusion of the newer areas. Communication and consequent inclusion is so important. Have you thought of having an annual 'Estates competition' with different categories i.e. best garden, best pollinator-friendly project etc. These competitions have been run with great success in other areas and can help especially when you are dealing with so many different estates as it fosters sub-committee development in different estates which helps with work delegation for your already very hard-working TidyTowns committee! Your email sent to the different residents' associations was packed with very helpful information and lots of good ideas. It was great to see you directing people to www.pollinators.ie/resources where there is so much helpful and most

importantly, scientifically-backed information freely available in a very accessible form. Just one small word of caution - 'seed bomb' use in public or wild areas is not recommended because we don't know what species are included and therefore run the risk of introducing invasive species or non-native genotypes that could hybridise with our native wildflower populations and result in them being less well-adapted to Irish conditions. The simple conversion, however, of open grass areas to wildflower meadows through changing the mowing regime to that of a traditional hay meadow (i.e. first cut in late June, last cut in September and all cuttings lifted away) will result in local wildflowers gaining a foothold and providing a lovely show very quickly without having to buy any seed at all!

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

All your approach roads look well with lots of imaginative and pollinator-friendly planting. The planting on the bank across from the South Beach playground still looked good after what must have been a long show of colour this year. A very pretty feature noted on adjudication day was the profusion of Mexican fleabane daisies (*Erigeron*) growing on the kerbs of the various roundabouts on the southern approach roads to the town. They were growing at the bases of the metal pedestrian barriers and really jollied up these grey areas without causing any impediments to visibility for drivers. The effect is lovely as well as being very pollinator-friendly and should be copied at lots of boring, grey path kerbs with barriers all over Ireland! With Greystones history as an old fishing village, there are several old lanes around the town. These lanes are wonderful features full of character and deserve looking after. The projects you run such as the Stream of Consciousness add another dimension to these lanes which is to be commended. Also please see comments in relation to invasive species and the potential for native hedgerow expansion on Mill Lane above in the Biodiversity section.

Concluding Remarks:

You are a dynamic and very active group and the wider Greystones community is very lucky to have you! You are on top of all the categories and display great knowledge and interest in all. You are lucky to have such a beautiful area as Greystones to live and work in with its mix of beautiful architecture, coastal habitats and rural hinterland. It is clear, however, that you know and cherish this so Greystones has a bright future ahead with you looking after it. Congratulations on all your efforts this year and we look forward to your progression in the competition on into the future.