

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: Rathdangan - Ráth Daingin	Ref: 1538
County: Wicklow	Mark: 262
Category: A	Date(s): 14/07/2019

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	37	40
Streetscape & Public Places	60	37	39
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	35	36
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	18	19
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	11	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	31
TOTAL MARK	470	250	262

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Rathdangan – Rath Dáingin páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. Welcome Rathdangan and many thanks for your entry form and maps. It is immediately obvious to the visitor that you have a wonderful community spirit alive and well in Rathdangan. Indeed, you undersell yourselves with your entry form a bit! Thanks you for marking projects N, M and FP within the text but you could also number the projects sequentially and then put those numbers on your map with an accompanying key (no matter if this means your map goes to A3 size). As your list of projects extends you could also colour code the project numbers according to category e.g. red for Streetscape, green for Landscape etc. This is just a helpful suggestion in order to make sure that future adjudicators don't miss all the work that you do – especially maintenance projects which take up time and merit ongoing marks every year too! I am so impressed by the community service offered by The Village Pantry to Rathdangan! It is a beacon to all small rural communities around Ireland – wouldn't it be wonderful if all the small villages around the country suffering with Post Office, pub and shop closures could be inspired and follow your example? Also congratulations on the self-publication of your local history book 'Heather, Hills & Hearth'. These publications are vitally important in preserving the local stories and heritage which are at risk of being lost in the fast-changing modern era.

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

You are blessed with a the most beautiful backdrop to your village in Rathdangan with the mountains ever-present except when the mist descends no doubt! All the buildings in and around the village looked well presented and maintained. The playground looked very attractive and was being well used during my visit. Killamoate church provided a lovely few moments of peace admiring the breath-taking beauty and colour of your precious Harry Clarke stained glass windows. Great to hear that you're working on the railings here – perhaps a project that next year's adjudicator will see come to fruition. Well done on your clean up of the John Moore monument and Tober Owen. These are all important parts of your local heritage which you clearly treasure in Rathdangan.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Cranereen graveyard is beautifully situated and struck me as an obvious place where part (or all?) could be managed as a wildflower meadow. Practically this would simply involve less mowing – leaving the first mowing until May and then only mowing once every three or four weeks. Mowings would need to be lifted for composting because they enrich the soil and discourage wildflowers if left in situ. Potential here for a future Community Composting project perhaps? By mowing less often, the wildflowers species already present would have enough time to flower and set seed and you will likely be surprised by the diversity of species already present. The stone

font known as the Holy Well was looking a bit sad as its water was murky and filled with grass cuttings – maybe the immediate area around it could be planted with some small perennial plants such as the native, pollinator-friendly Lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*) leaving a buffer between the font and the grass cutting? You have several nice planted areas all around the village. You acknowledge that supplementary planting is needed as you lost some plants during last year's drought. Use this opportunity to plant pollinator-friendly plants which will provide colour for months on end and being perennial will only need planting once! Download your free copy of the 'Pollinator Planting Code' at www.pollinators.ie/resources This really helpful guide lists plants suitable for every situation – helping you to make the most of your landscaping in Rathdangan by adding lots of colour as well as providing food for our all-important pollinator species. Another benefit is that these herbaceous perennials can be split in coming years and moved to other beds thus saving Rathdangan Community Council money as well as time! Great to see that you chose the native, pollinator-friendly Hawthorn for your new hedge. As well as lots of biodiversity hawthorn gives great interest through the seasons with its beautiful blossoms, deciduous leaves and berries in autumn.

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

Well done on your management of the areas around the playground, it looked great on adjudication day and a nice natural-looking buffer between the playground and the fields behind. Make use of the community version of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (free to download at www.pollinators.ie/resources) for lots of ideas for the future in your public spaces- you're making a great start by allowing the dandelions to flower – they are crucially important to bumblebee queens awaking from hibernation in spring. There are also lots of other resources available to use at the pollinators website that will help with your future plans to promote biodiversity awareness – another important function of the Tidy Towns movement.

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

As mentioned above The Village Pantry is a shining light demonstrating all that is good about community spirit in Ireland today. It definitely is contributing to a more sustainable way of life in Rathdangan by reducing the travel necessary for many of Rathdangan's residents. These kind of solutions will become more and more important heading into a more sustainable future way of life for rural Ireland. The Local Link bus services are another route to better sustainability and informing people about the service is really important. Wicklow County Council have been notably active in installing low energy public lighting around the county so hopefully next year's adjudicator will see them in Rathdangan too!

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Rathdangan was litter-free and very well presented and tidy on adjudication day. Well done on the on-going effort that goes into achieving this result.

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

All the residential areas and houses around the village were looking lovely in the evening sunshine of our visit.

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

The new village welcome signs were all noted. Planting around them is not necessary but if you do, make sure to consult the Pollinator Planting Code mentioned above for lots of ideas and advice about the best plants for the situation. The best way you can promote biodiversity at your approach roads is to follow the pattern of just mowing the roadside strip of grass along the road verges entering your village leaving the grass and wildflowers to grow thickly at the base of hedgerows or walls because this is where many pollinator species make their nests.

Concluding Remarks:

Your strong community spirit is clearly strong and thriving in Rathdangan, keep up your great work as you cherish your past heritage as well as the present through the various projects you run such as your recent book publication and the ongoing running of the Village Pantry. This was my first visit to Rathdangan which was much enjoyed and I look forward to a return.