

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Shillelagh - Síol Éalaigh** Ref: **937**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **240**
Category: **B** Date(s): **15/07/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	36	38
Streetscape & Public Places	60	30	31
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	31	34
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	18	20
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	8	9
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	44	46
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	31
TOTAL MARK	470	226	240

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Shillelagh - Síol Éalaigh páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. Thank you Shillelagh for your entry form and accompanying information. The new heritage trail booklet was most informative, however, on a practical note it was difficult for your adjudicator to use the map inside the booklet during their visit. By all means use the map featured in the booklet as a base map for your entry to the competition in future but projects do need to be marked on the map with a coded number system according to which category the project falls into, otherwise it's too easy for an adjudicator to miss seeing projects you have worked on. Simply number your projects sequentially within the text of your entry form and also use these numbers on your map. Better still colour code them according to the category. You've a very healthy number of visitors for the size of your village and together with the support you receive from local businesses and public bodies Shillelagh Tidy Towns looks to be doing very well. Working with your local schools will be a worthwhile future project as it is of such benefit for both parties. For next year's entry it will also be a good idea to include a three or five year plan. This can be a simple table outlining your plans for the next few years, who will carry them out and when. Make sure to include all your ongoing maintenance projects too.

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

Your village must be one of the most beautiful in Ireland. It is blessed with a beautiful sylvan setting and fantastic vernacular granite architecture. Your new heritage trail booklet acknowledges this heritage. This new heritage trail does need some sort of noticeboard/map placed prominently in the village. This adjudicator was met by some lost Dutch visitors looking for the heritage trail that they had heard about but could not find online or by asking in the local shop. Your proposed Wicklow Uplands Village map sign will address some of this but only the village centre by the looks of the draft you attached to your entry form. The Courthouse is a beautiful building right in the heart of the village, it'll be great to get it all painted up for 2020. Good luck with the Shillelagh to Arklow Greenway Project. This will be one to watch for future competitions.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Well done on the work carried out in both the Fairgreen and the Village Green. How lucky you are in Shillelagh to have two greens in the village! The new shillelagh sculpture looks great and is well complimented by the lovely planting scheme around it. The bumble bees and butterflies were loving the lavender there on adjudication day! No fountain had been installed yet but next year's adjudicator can look forward to that. You also appear to have a mowing scheme in the park favouring longer grass and wildflowers - several species were in flower on adjudication day and were looking lovely. An additional feature recommended here would be to mow a couple of winding grass paths through the meadow to entice the walker! The Fairgreen makes another pleasant place to go walking and

again your mowing regime is letting wildflowers bloom. Unfortunately, the invasive Himalayan balsam was spotted growing along the Derry river at the footbridge - you may know about this already but if not it needs to be reported to the authorities (both Wicklow Co. Co. and the National Parks & Wildlife Service because the Derry river forms part of the Slaney River SAC) for professional clearance. Seating and picnic benches would be ideal here too although you may already have this planned. The large grassy areas here are also ideal for a few mown paths. Where possible, manage as a hay meadow for maximum wildflowers – i.e. first annual cut in early July, lift the cuttings and a final cut in September. With all your public area planting schemes please refer to the very helpful 'Pollinator Planting Code' (free to download at www.pollinators.ie/resources) .It is incumbent upon Tidy Towns groups all over Ireland to do their bit for our all-important pollinators who need as many flowers as they can get – many are currently dying of hunger because we have been planting flowers that either have no pollen (most annuals) or else have flowers so showy with their double flowers (e.g. begonias, petunias, lots of roses) that the insects can't physically access the pollen! The Pollinator Planting Code will give you many planting options with perennial plants that only need planting once and give colour for months and months each year as well as provide food for our all-important pollinators.

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

A visit was paid to the beautiful cork oak tree in the church grounds. This is an amazing tree looking very healthy and happy in its position overlooking Shillelagh. It is clearly treasured and the cordon around it with several Pollinator Plan signs were noted. If the Parish Select Vestry were agreeable a step further could be taken inside the cordon to manage the area like a meadow in order to let the wildflowers blossom. Many graveyards are managed in this way where the first mowing is not done until late April/ early May thus letting the spring flowers such as Cowslips and Primroses blossom. Then the grass is only cut maybe once a month letting other small wildflowers blossom through the summer. The pollinators are clearly happy here a Honey bee swarm was noted on the eastern side of the church roof! The grounds of School No. 1 were visited across the road. It was great to see all the outdoor space for the pupils, however, it was disappointing to see unnecessary herbicide use underneath a Pollinator Plan Managed for Wildlife sign ironically! Overuse of herbicide is a big reason for the decline of our pollinators species Ireland in recent years. The Coolattin Gardens estate wildflower meadow sounds lovely but I couldn't find it on adjudication day and it wasn't marked on your map. Make sure to mark it on your map for next year's adjudicator. Great to hear that you are working with the NPWS helping to manage the invasive Rhododendron ponticum in nearby Tomnafinnoge Wood. The fight against 'Rhodo' is happening nationwide and our native woodlands need all the help we can give them unfortunately. As noted above your pollinator-friendly planting scheme at the shillelagh sculpture was working a treat on adjudication day.

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

There is lots of potential for future projects in this category. Have a look at localprevention.ie/tidytowns for inspiration and ideas. This category is gaining more and more in importance and relevance with each passing year.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Everywhere was looking tidy and litter-free on adjudication day so well done on all your hard work here. The derelict garage in the middle of the village is a difficult problem and out of your control but continue to liaise with the relevant authorities and hopefully a solution will be found. If spruced up the garage could have a certain vintage charm to it!

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

It sounds like you liaise well with the various residential groups in Shillelagh. This is very important and worthwhile and it shows in that everywhere looked well on adjudication day.

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

The Carnew Road outside the Kerry factory has a long length of bare soil between the granite wall and the trees behind the bank. The bank is crying out for summer colour. It would make a great planting area for a potential future pollinator project! Perhaps Kerry might like to come on board and sponsor some herbaceous perennial planting along here? You can refer them to the business version of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan freely available at www.pollinators.ie/resources where they will also find the Pollinator Planting Code which as mentioned above is full of planting suggestions for all sorts of situations – shady, sunny, damp or dry conditions etc. Another bare bank outside the school on the Tinahely road this also shows great potential for a colourful village entrance through some herbaceous perennial planting. The Pure Mile Project has been a great success all across Co. Wicklow – it greatly compliments and adds to your work in Shillelagh.

Concluding Remarks:

Visits to Shillelagh are always enjoyable with its green sylvan setting beautifully setting off its granite buildings. The work you are carrying out is enhancing the quality of life for both resident and visitor to Shillelagh. Keep up your great work and I look forward to my next visit.