

# Tidy Towns Competition 2015

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardfert** Ref: **677**  
County: **Kerry** Mark: **267**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **02/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	36	36
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	35	36
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	34	34
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	27	26
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33	33
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>267</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Céad fáilte roimh Ardfer TidyTowns Group go Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara na bliana 2015. Thank you for entering the SuperValu TidyTowns competition and we hope that the competition will benefit you in your work. Thank you for your entry, your numbered map and the supplementary material. It is generous of you to acknowledge the contributions of other groups in the village and the support of business, school and Community Centre. Of course, the small number on your committee is a challenge for you but the support of the wider community often compensates for this weakness. The fact that you do not have a Junior TidyTowns does not restrict you from engaging with the school. It is heartening and encouraging to read later in your submission that the school has achieved 6 Green Flags. Well done to all involved and especially the school pupils. The adjudicator is delighted to read that you value both positive and negative comments from the adjudicator! It is good to read that you see the report as an objective assessment. The adjudicator senses a hint of frustration in your reply to the group's contribution to the village. Be patient. As the appearance of the village improves the positive mood becomes infectious among the residents and people will then become interested in non-appearance aspects of the competition such as concern for the welfare of wildlife and resource and waste management.

### Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:

Ardfert's ecclesiastical past is proclaimed from afar as the present Catholic Church and the cathedral walls dominate the skyline. But the Abbey, which is not shown sufficient respect in your map, is another significant site and well worth the walk. The Ardfer Parish building of old deserves investment. While the structure itself seems in a good state of repair, the surroundings are shabby. The tradition of providing retreats seems to be continued in that fine building down the road. The stately entrance gates at the junction also resonate of the aristocratic landlord class of the nineteenth century. It is great that that entrance is being made accessible to the public by the premises that now occupy it. Well done to the people who have retained the site of the tyreing platform. This is a most unusual feature, unique in the experience of this adjudicator, the information plate being of great value to this ignorant individual. Well done on its presentation. Great to see the handball alley being used, even if for hurling. Flaherty's and Mag Uidhir businesses also occupy fine buildings of cut stone, the brick window architraves are decorative feature, and are well maintained. Stone walls are a major element of the built heritage of Ardfer, walls that are often capped with different styles. In some cases parts of these walls have collapsed and need to be restored in the original style of the wall building. And while the built environment of Ardfer is steeped in history the building housing Little Voyages is an attractive modern building and the Ardfer Business Centre is very tastefully presented. Well done on the gates to the Cathedral. Now put the pressure on to replace the gate at the adjacent graveyard. Positive mention must be made of J Collins building. Superb presentation, the standard of painting and presentation that is required throughout. The adjudicator admired the Gaelige at the Ionad Tréadach as well as the building itself. Your 'Before' and 'After' photos illustrate your work very effectively.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

The Fair Green has always been of central importance to the village and one is pleased to find the lovely playground there which is now busy with a modern day sort of activity. The walls surrounding the Fair Green are well maintained and attractive. The trees a lovely feature. There can be no negative comments about the appearance of the Health Centre building but it is a pity to see the landscaping so badly neglected. Back you go for further negotiations with the HSE. At the entrances to most estates there is colour and variety that attracts one inside. A special well done to the proprietors of the premises at the Glandore Gate who bid one stop and drop in with the attractive planting. One notices the recent planting on the way to the Abbey. Window boxes and hanging baskets at the Spar and at the Abbey Tavern, for instance, help create a welcoming atmosphere. Maybe more floral decoration would help the overall appearance.

### **Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádurtha:**

The adjudicator is pleased that you are becoming more aware of the biodiversity of the area by attending information evenings on wildlife. The fact that you are being made aware of the possibilities of invasive species is worthwhile though the adjudicator feels that none were spotted. But there is always the threat. Working with the school is also commendable but you need to adopt one project yourselves. Just one. How would you feel about providing nesting boxes or bird boxes in the Fair Green for next year? That is just a suggestion but you need to become more project conscious. The adjudicator cannot justify the mark you have attained and so is reducing the mark by one.

### **Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:**

The adjudicator has already congratulated the school's contribution through their Green Flag endeavours. But apart from this sustainability activity in the school the adjudicator feels that you are still not coming to grips with the objectives of this section. It is heartening that you include in your supplementary material the invite from the Environmental Area Officer to a meeting of Kerry groups held back in March. Did ye attend? Has there been any follow-up from that night. Meeting other groups is a great way to learn. Groups always seem to be delighted to share their experience and knowledge with others. Many of the Kerry Tidy Towns groups have developed experience and expertise in this section. Your Environmental Area Officer also seems to value sharing his knowledge with Tidy Towns groups. Some groups are more interested in landscaping and keeping the village litter free, both very important but regard for the environment is increasingly important also and increasingly valued in the Tidy Towns competition.

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

The fine footpaths that lead for some distance from the centre help create a tidy image of Ardfert. The restored appearance of the Cathedral adds to that sense of care. Walls that are maintained, and in the village centre the walls are not collapsed, also contribute to a tidy appearance. Your ability to target areas that need tidying is obvious from the photos you submit and the results are a credit to you so one expects action in areas that need a helping hand. The appearance of traffic signage needs to be examined. On one approach road the 50 and the Ardfert signs are partially hidden by foliage. A number of junction signs are in a very poor state and need to be replaced. The surface of the graveyard car park does need attention. The dumped material should be removed. One felt the surface must be a disincentive to visiting the Bring Centre as it is badly pot holed. Is it because of ongoing work at the Cathedral that the footpath has a rough surface? Paint the Church door. Well done on the actions you are taking to create a litter free environment in Ardfert. Great that you encouraged residents to be involved in the National Spring Clean. Yet there is litter. The cans show that young and adult are dropping this litter and it is a problem.

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

There is a wonderful mix of traditional cottages, of farmhouses, elder statesmen two storey houses, of bungalows and semi-detached houses throughout the village. There are fine stately homes as one approaches the village centre from the Tralee side. More modest houses on Station Road are delightfully presented. An unexpected delight is the row of houses and their fronts as one walks into the Abbey. An Fearran was the first estate visited. One loved the estate design with the clusters of houses. Then one also loved the unhindered open space which created the impression of plenty of space. This estate is also well presented but as there is little planting in the public realm there is a greater need for private gardens to create colour and texture. Walnut Grove provides the colour that one expects of an estate. Drop into the area of the back three houses in Páirc an Ghluinín to lift your heart. Casement View is a credit to many of the residents, other need to step up to the plate as their neighbours do.

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

One loves your Ardfert namestones. As one reads from your submission it would be taking one's life into one's hands to tend to the roadside verges on some of the approach roads. Yet there are stretches where the verge could be tidied and this would create a more attractive arrival into the village. Opportunities for such improvement are on the Ballyheigue and also on the Tralee side. A little tidying up would give a positive feel to the driver approaching your village. Make sure that by the time the motorist arrives in the village that they have formed a positive impression of Ardfert. A stand-out example of neglect is a grassy island verge beyond the school. Whereas along that road but further from the village centre the verge is mown and creates a lovely impression immediately. The Fenit road is the best presented. Well done on the road surface. The planting of the residents along the road adds interest as does hedging. Even the 'pretend' gable end draws the eye. Then the Presbytery, the Church, the building

beside and the housing all combine to create an attractive route to the village centre.

**Concluding Remarks:**

It is refreshing to read your candid comments about the extent of your ambitions and your role in promoting the quality of life in Ardfert. But do not lower those ambitions nor expectations because Ardfert needs your vigilance and contribution. You have a wonderful village to work on. In your interaction with the Residents Associations encourage young blood to get involved with you. I can almost hear the groans here: 'Sure isn't that what we have been trying to do for years!' Well good luck with renewed efforts.