

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinskelligs** Ref: **1481**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **230**
Category: **A** Date(s): **16/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	32	34
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	32	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	28	29
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	13	13
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	28	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	27	28
TOTAL MARK	450	220	230

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Na fáiltí geala roimh Ballinskelligs TidyTowns Group go comórtas SuperValu TidyTowns na bliana 2015. One hopes that your participation in the 2015 SuperValu TidyTowns contributes to your objectives and dreams for your lovely village. Thank you for your entry form and all of the supplementary material. On first perusal the adjudicator felt that the map would be of little help but was badly mistaken. It worked brilliantly for me especially as there was a correspondence between it and the hand drawn map. The context for the TidyTowns committee in the village is the local development group, a very effective starting point. It means that your work is not about appearances only but about the development of the village also. We in TidyTowns value contact with the school so a special mention for your school which has achieved its 4 Green Flags. Well done to all involved but especially the pupils. It appears that ye understand from experience that: "Bionn gach tosnú lag" but good to read that your projects are taking off now. You hope that TidyTowns will be "a conduit" to getting others involved. Accept credit for being the pioneers. Hopefully your example and the improved appearance of the village will spur others to come along also. You mention a 3 Year Plan but the adjudicator did not come across it.

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

Your map is a vital aid to an adjudicator visiting Ballinskelligs as the total built environment of the village is not readily accessible and stretches far beyond the village centre. The pier, the priory and its delightful graveyard, McCarthy's Castle could so easily be missed unless they are pointed up on that map. Your plans for a heritage trail are exciting and it appeared to the adjudicator that they are also achievable as there is a pathway already between the castle and the abbey. This would also be a wild wildlife trail as well as a healthy exercise. So get to work. The buildings in the village centre are presented with pride. The Church is your centre piece. Your submission prompted one to look up to admire the new roof and take advantage of the fine tarred parking area. The miniature Skeillig Mhichíl adds to the sense of remoteness and ecclesiastical heritage of the area. Sigerson's maintains its status in village life with its beautiful front. The village pride is also expressed in the presentation of the school and the Community Centre. The Cill Rialaigh design is a shock and unexpected surprise and delight. Then the action moves to the main road where one finds the commercial activity. The Post Office looks very well as does the Ballinskelligs Inn. The car park will surely bring order to the parking. Well done on your efforts regarding the derelict buildings at the core of the village. The Gaeilge is everywhere to be found even the modern company names at the business centre and also on the road signs, then the naíolann. Even the confessional has the sagart cúnta so this was a Gaeltacht community until recent years.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

A feature of the landscaping in Ballinskelligs is that natural vegetation is allowed express itself all along the roads

and on the old walls. Then individual buildings and estates lend their assistance to nature with shrubberies and bedding plants which create seasonal colour and varied design. The landscaping at Ionad Lae, Baile na Sceilge typifies that landscaping delights that one experiences in Ballinskelligs. There is delightful planting in this area of the village. The houses at the Duneagan junction express the pride that householders have in their front gardens. Cotoneaster on the GAA wall greens what could be an ugly wall. The tubs of flowers at the Post Office softens the built appearance. Likewise the planting at the Ballinskelligs Inn is a delight. The adjudicator is impressed with your poly tunnel activities. Planting your own herbs for local usage and planting your own bedding plants means that you will concentrate on flowers and plants that are suitable for the demands that your location imposes.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádúrtha:

While the adjudicator did not come across any bird boxes he lauds your initiative with the farmers. Your initiative with the organised walks on holiday week ends belongs in this section as well as in the residential section. These walks must be a way of making newer residents aware of the rich biodiversity that surrounds them. With the assistance of the Kerry Heritage Officer you may be able to add interest to these walks by including a wildlife theme as well as a heritage theme. As this area must be alive with habitats the adjudicator wonders what you mean when you mention creating a habitat near the beach. Japanese Knotweed is a problem, as on the way into the estate at the rear of the Church and across from the beach car park. The adjudicator feels that you are still making slow progress in this section.

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

Lets start with the school. Well done again to all involved with the Green Flag status the school has achieved. The next step you plan with the school is also a worthwhile one, the creation of their own garden in which the pupils will get to understand appropriate use of local resources and the management of those resources. All recycling projects are to be recommended. In fact any activity that reduces the community's reliance on landfill is commendable. Therefore composting is another laudable activity. But while the adjudicator found grass cuttings disposed of along ditches there is no sign of composting bins. A second Bring Centre down at the beach is laudable. The adjudicator senses that there may be a slight confusion between litter disposal and recycling or reuse. As a rule of thumb use of the word litter does not belong in this category. Next year include activities in the poly tunnel in this section as planting your own plants is seen as an element of resource management. For the coming year the adjudicator would like to see you study methods of eliminating your waste. The latest handbook from the Tidy Towns unit may prompt new activities among you.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

There are many challenges to tidiness in an area that has a busy main road passing through as in Ballinskelligs. Therefore your activities in this matter are an important response to the challenges that passing traffic creates. There is litter and there are signs of untidiness, some of which are mentioned elsewhere in this report. But your responses are praiseworthy. Your scéim bhruscair is an admirable idea and it gives the holiday residents a sense of belonging and of caring for their holiday environment. An inland adjudicator only thinks in terms of roads and paths. Your beach is also an added responsibility so well done on your beach work. You will be pleased to read that there was no sign of black plastic on the visit. Any vacant building can create an untidy image and its surroundings also deteriorate over time. At the junction there is an impression of untidiness that should be looked at, apart from the appearance of the derelict house. Restore that 80 sign. Be aware of grassy growth in front of buildings as at the caravan park, for instance.

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

The residential buildings at the heart of the village represent the traditional residential area of this village and these houses are beautifully maintained and presented. These buildings and the Church are the heart beat of Ballinskelligs. Those houses at the junction and across from the Church bind the village core together with their landscaping and their fresh painting. That is not to infer that all of the new estates do not belong. They are now a vital element of the built environment of the village bringing vitality, colour and a fresh layer of personality to the area. The first estate visited at Lios Lir set the tone for the rest of the estates for the day. A delightful experience, with its beautiful namestones, with its winding avenue and maturing hedges, stone front designs. Other designs have a more cottage appearance and rely on white or yellow paint to give them their distinct personality. There are two distinct residential areas of estates in the village and all are a pleasant experience to visit. Except in the case of just one estate these are all low density allowing each house develop its own characteristics. The adjudicator is not ignoring the beautiful individual houses along the roadway that bring colour and interest to the drive. The week end walks you are undertaking will help newer residents to belong and feel included in parish and village life and activities.

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

In this rural setting the key word to describe approach roads would be 'unspoilt'. That is your policy and practice and this adjudicator agrees with this approach. There are miles of roadway involved. Brownes shop must be part of Ballinskelligs but the 50 speed limit is still far away. Do not undertake impossible tasks. Manicuring would be out of character with the wild natural growth and vegetation. But there are exceptions. Where there is a fence or a wall to the front of a building that area should be maintained. Otherwise weed and grassy growth creates an untidy appearance. There are a few examples of this untidiness. You mention planting montbretia on the roads and the adjudicator advises you to be forewarned because it takes over and chokes other natural growth. Yes it looks lovely in summer but there are other seasons also.

Concluding Remarks:

There are a number of parts to your submission and to the village that the adjudicator liked. The poly tunnel has great potential, that potential you can work out for yourselves. The scéim bruscair and the holiday week end walks should aid in bringing local and holiday maker together as parts of the one community. And your trail plans are a really meaningful, exciting venture. Ach is ábhar díomá dom meath na Gaeilge.