

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castleisland** Ref: **328**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **281**
Category: **C** Date(s): **03/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	44	46
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	36	36
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	28	28
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31	31
TOTAL MARK	450	274	281

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Congratulations to Castleisland for taking part in the 2015 SuperValu TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your entry form which was a joy to follow, your map which also facilitated the visit with ease, your 3 Year Plan, and your colourful folder of supplementary material. It seems to the adjudicator that the work of many TidyTowns people down the years have enhanced many aspects of life in your town. There is a plea for support in your submission that suggests that maybe people are now taking your efforts for granted without dirtying their own fingers. If this is the case you must address this issue as new blood is the life support of TidyTowns enthusiasm, especially young new blood. Finding that new blood might be a priority for the coming year. Sometimes it happens that people feel that committee is 'tied up among a few' and they are as a consequence ill at ease about joining a tight knit group. Just a thought. But reading through your first section it appears to the adjudicator that you do benefit from a lot of support. 30 volunteers as well as the committee is a fine meitheal of hands. The business community also seem to value your work. You state that a public meeting on creating a Junior Committee was badly attended. While one can understand your disappointment the person who called the meeting has an interest so let your re-jigging start there. Your submission suggests to the adjudicator that you are still movers and shakers in the town. Well done.

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

The centre piece of the built environment of Castleisland is surely the mainstreet or should one say the boulevard. This is a street of many coats, worn over the generations and still it retains a majesty. One appreciates it more when viewed from the traffic light direction which is slightly more elevated and gives a better view of the upper storeys, storeys that have largely remained independent of the hustle and bustle downstairs. The plaster work on many of these is an art form. The treated limestone of the AIB a stand-out delight. Despite the down stairs, or the ground floor, being a street of many colours, these many shades seem to cohabit naturally, with one exception. Your centre piece of trees and sculptures add to the overall appearance and character of main street. There are many buildings acknowledged for their long contribution to Castleisland life by the information plates that add such interest for the uninformed visitor. The adjudicator had that experience at the Castleview hotel with its traditional front lettering, at the Carnegie Library which must be a nightmare to keep in its Sunday best, at St Stephans Church which is now the town theatre. The graveyard here is a credit to the people who maintain it. High gable ends present problems on occasion but one admired the plasterwork on the building at the traffic lights. The trip down Old Chapel Lane became a joyful experience. The walls of the old convent drew one into the magical convent front which after all those years still illustrate the devotion of people to their religion, the gardens a charm. Across the way the modern day care facility echoes the care that was provided by the nuns but in a modern setting. Schools are beautifully presented throughout. The Presentation school and the Church appropriately magnificent in appearance, a lovely part being the access to the nuns' cemetery. This town has its share of modern buildings also as in the Health and Leisure Centre, Dillanes garage, The Library and the Garda Station has an interesting design. There is a

building that houses among others the boxing club, very well presented in its functional role. As regards sharing your past the adjudicator thought the information on the Rhyno stone is outstanding.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The TidyTowns delight in preparing a town for the arrival of summer is to be seen all over town in the delightful hanging baskets on the poles and in the containers of marigolds and nasturtiums etc that dot the footpaths. A bridge is brought to life with its colourful hanging baskets. The river walk drew one into the wonderful experience of the landscaping in the park. One wondered what the hill was doing, did it have something to do with eventing or something until one read the inscription, an unsung local hero celebrated. Next surprise in the park is the wonderful amenity, a running track. As one admires the track the nose is assailed by the perfume from the array of wild and climbing roses by the path. This is becoming a great day out. At the other side of the walk there are majestic trees along with the natural wild growth. Great work has been done to hide a wall with planting and the erection of a protective fence. That work is now reaping its reward. Those tubs of colour at the major junction are vital to the appearance of that area. But the joys of summer are also expressed in the many hedges and perennial plants through the town experience.

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

One of the happy outcomes of walking around Castleisland without the aid of the map is that one comes on the river walk that leads all over the town and opens up vistas that a map would not bother with and brings one to places that the TidyTowns Committee might prefer if the adjudicator had omitted. A highlight of the visit was the river walk. Great facility. Lovely trees and hedging everywhere but the native hedge has been cut recently, certainly out of season. Watch that this is an isolated incident. The adjudicator could not figure why weedkiller had been used on the river bank. Watch out for you do have gunnera on the river bank that should be dealt with. The adjudicator is almost certain that there is knotweed on the bank also and encourages you to ask the experts if it is knotweed and how it should be dealt with. Trees planted in recent years by the river augur well for the future. On another part of the walk there is beech hedging taking root. The folder provided the adjudicator with information that would not have been as noticeable if dependent on the entry form alone.

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

In this section the adjudicator appreciated the supplementary material found in the folder. The adjudicator commends you for the projects you have mentioned. It is always a good sign of a town when the schools work at gaining their Green Flags. Well done to all of the pupils, teachers and parents involved. You mention a number of reuse activities in Castleisland and all are practical ways of reducing waste. You are conscious of food waste and you exhort people to be conscious of food waste. You also exhort locals to shop locally, another important measure, as is the purchase of loose fruit and veg. The examples you give in your folder show that wonderful work is being done in the schools. But none of the photos suggest a cross-generational approach to sustainable living. Does this reflect what is happening on the ground? The community garden is a hands-on sustainability project and looks used and productive. Well done on the projects listed in your 3 Year Plan. But somehow the adjudicator wants more. I suggest you study the latest suggestions from the TidyTowns Unit with regard to sustainable living. There are definable projects listed that the adjudicator feels would encourage you.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Despite the Pandora's box of colour on main street the adjudicator felt that all fell into its own place and space in an ordered and attractive manner. Yes, vacant premises always are a challenge to our tidiness ideal and your efforts certainly soften the effects. How one wished that John Lynch Tiles and WI Prenderville 1798 could be magic wanded into their original glory. Painstaking work has been done on the concrete fence on the Limerick road. But there are tidiness issues, especially in the back areas of the town. Those will be mentioned under the approach roads section but suffice to say that weeds or tattiness or old paintwork detract from the general appearance. Shabbiness often results when premises become vacant but owners are hard to pin down and frustration follows for the TidyTowns committee. But a poorly presented gate or shutter is not unmanageable. The snooker building one expects is in use and it needs a face lift. Your efforts regarding litter awareness and clean-ups are laudable. Well done. So it really annoys the adjudicator to find cans or bottles in sacred places like the river walk. You will be pleased that St Stephens graveyard was litter free. Well done to the man who targets cigarette butts as these are not a problem.

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

Some of the approach roads have provided the housing opportunities for many generations. The road that most appealed is the Farranfore road. The bungalows nearer town are delightfully presented and seem to have been painted yesterday. The same can be said of the two storeys nearer town. Estates visited exuded a sense of pride in where we live, houses maintained, landscaping to soften the concrete mass, open space mown. But there is an estate that is an exception in its presentation and treatment of its open space despite having a wonderful hedge of roses, red hot poker, montbretia and hawthorn. This estate needs intervention. In another estate apart from two window boxes and a flourish of roses at one house there is no floral colour. Then the opposite can be said of Castleview Drive where the fine mature trees grow in peoples' front gardens. Then a wonderful oak up at the top of the estate. Delightful. Lovely that estates are given a name on a namestone at the entrance. Riverside Drive is a great experience. Residential buildings are not confined to the roads or main streets. The Chapel Square apartments are hidden away in the bowls of the town and will provide challenges in the future when maintaining appearance.

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

Great to see your name sign, modest though it may seem, honoured in a bed of flowers on the approach roads. There is nothing to slow one down on some of the approach roads to Castleisland as, for instance, there is little of interest on the Limerick road until one is almost at the lights or on College Road until the delightful housing just before the town. Contrast that with the Farranfore approach. Starting at the roundabout right to the junction there is something to attract the eye all of the way. Firstly there is the wonderful roundabout. Then for the most part it is the houses and their front gardens that catch the eye. The bridge is delightfully bedecked with the hanging baskets. Even the businesses on the Tralee road create interest. Back areas provide a challenge. One is always tempted to travel down a lane with a name like Spout Lane, especially when there is a bit of attractive plaster work to spark attention. The same temptation drew one down a lane that spoke of Tigh na mBocht. What do you think the adjudicator noticed that did not please?

Concluding Remarks:

This adjudicator can see why everyone thinks ye are doing a great job and lets ye at it! Well the first part is justified, ye are doing a great job despite what must be almost insurmountable problems. But you face your issues. The adjudicator fears that he may have increased that list of issues but with your experience, your expertise and your determination he too can leave ye at it. And expect results.