

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Portmagee** Ref: **348**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **307**
Category: **A** Date(s): **15/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	49	49
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30	30
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	17	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	32
TOTAL MARK	450	304	307

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Portmagee TidyTowns Committee are congratulated for the preparation you have spearheaded in entering Portmagee for the SuperValu TidyTowns Competition 2015. The adjudicator admits that the size of your submission frightened him at first sight. But the community based tone of your submission quieted the earlier fears. For there is no doubt but the TidyTowns movement is embedded in the community in Portmagee. Your Facebook page, which I visited later, endorses that view. The submission acknowledges the contribution of the natural leaders your community has provided for you. Every aspect of living in Portmagee gets a mention whether that be in sport, at school, on the sea or through special interest groups such as the Diving Club and all are mentioned in the context of facing the issues that are part of everyday life in the village. It is natural that any group would wish to win the TidyTowns top award 'eventually' but this adjudicator feels that your priorities rest elsewhere, in the pride that your work has generated in the local community, whether they live in Portmagee or hail from Portmagee. The photos are a great help in providing a taste of Portmagee life when the adjudicator is not about. This adjudicator would wish for one map showing the main projects worked upon since last year. It is nigh impossible to motor around with seven maps open at the one time and to escape the wrath of other road users. With that briary barb out of the way there is great credit due to the person who compiled your submission.

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

The first major building encountered was the school and what a start. Straight away the adjudicator was assured that the pride in the submission would be expressed in the appearance of the village. The school complex is beautiful and must be a wonderful environment in which to set out on one's formal education. No matter what one's faith one would be attracted off main street to visit the Church. Apart from your wonderful work with the semi circular beds the red of the railings and of the doors draws one in the direction of salvation. The information panel on the Church grounds directs one's attention to the remains of the Church of Ireland across the field and indicates the presence of an Anglo Saxon influence in earlier times. Further up the lane the graveyard is maintained with the same care as is found among the living. As we are on the religious trail the work at the Grotto is also divine. Well done on the presentation of the Community Centre, evidently a busy centre of activity. The toilets should be winning awards every year. The Tower has certainly benefited from your attention, the 'before' photo being most effective in this case. Business premises, for the most part, are presented with traditional signage and attractive paintwork that invites one to stop and stay. Soft colours on Skellig Mist and the appropriately named Cois Cuain provide a delightful contrast with the Bridge Bar and the Moorings up the street. The Pontoon must be a valuable asset to a fishing village and a departure point for the Skellig. Street furniture is a delight, those blue seats worth all of the toil, the picnic tables a joyful rainbow of colour. Signage is a treasured element of that street furniture. The painted boat is not only a heritage treasure, as is the pump, they add to the appearance of that area of the street.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Apart altogether from the lovely beds you mention at the Church one delights at the constant presence of summer colour at every twist and turn, and not just from summer bedding plants but also from perennials that are suitable to the salty seaside environment and shrubs that can withstand the stormy conditions of winter. Even in the wildlife garden one delights at the aroma of the carnations, without having to bend down. Compliments on the planting that has been done recently and on your awareness of catering for the needs of bird and bee life when choosing your plants. This holistic approach to landscaping is commendable and illustrates the awareness that has grown among you with regards to the purposes of landscaping and also is an illustration of your landscaping priorities. There are very few natural open spaces in the village, naturally enough but you have taken full advantage of the road widening at the bridge to create your own open space, your own water feature that reflects the surrounding environment, your own adornment and welcome to the village. While walls can be dealt with in the earlier section one wishes to comment on the rough plaster that is to be found all over Portmagee and is beautifully painted white. This feature accentuates the colour of the planting also as, for instance, on the wall at the front of the car park. While this adjudicator loves hanging baskets and window boxes he wonders if the instances of this floral display on the residences on the street need this colour. Hedging is to be found all over the village but especially in the less travelled areas. This hedging is delightful and compliments that natural wild hedging that also prospers. One notices that your young saplings are being wisely sheltered from the inevitable storms that will attack them. The adjudicator acknowledges that you will be disappointed at not gaining an extra mark. The adjudicator feels that the high mark you have achieved is a just mark.

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

There is a sense of enjoyment of the work you do in the wildlife section of your submission. The adjudicator is impressed that you are now sharing the knowledge you have acquired over the years with other Tidy Towns groups in Kerry. Well done. One would have loved to hear that radio programme on Kerry radio. One notices that your Dawn Chorus is a lot earlier than the normal. Maybe its because the migratory birds have touched down and are taking a rest before flying further inland. You mention that Fáilte Ireland have approved walks in the area. The adjudicator hopes that he did not miss a walk as he felt that this is an aspect of your natural amenities that is missing in Portmagee, excepting the Slí na Sláinte walk. But one hopes that these will materialise in the future although your 3 Year Plan is vague on details of these proposed walks. In fact your 3 Year Plan is for the most part a repetition of this year's activities except for mention of creating a community orchard which must be a real challenge in your environment. The wildlife plot is a delight, visually as much as from a wildlife viewpoint. The creative use of the driftwood shows your willingness to use your natural resources. The same can be said of use of the Valentia slate. As well as this plot being a must visit and dine area for birds, bees, hedgehogs and insects it is also a wonderful awareness project for young people who become aware of the riches of their surroundings and how we can assist the biodiversity of an area. Along Lovers Lane there is an outbreak of Japanese Knotweed. One also spotted it inside someone's garden.

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

The adjudicator loved the 'Good as New Sale' poster on your Facebook page. And then I saw it was for 2013. No marks! I had expected more material on this category on your Page but alas no. Your photo montage shows recycling, reuse, water harvesting and planting. All worthwhile activities in this category. The adjudicator would like you to include the happenings in the shelter bed as an element of your resource management as well as some landscaping projects. Well done to the school on the timber frames of vegetables. But while your list of activities shows that you understand the requirements of the section one feels that you are still scratching at the surface, that many of the happenings on the list are convenient bag fillers for you. This is described as a list of projects undertaken this year. The stand out good concrete example of your work is the installation of a second water butt at the back of the Community Centre. Very good. But one feels that you have not taken ownership of this section just yet.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Tidiness is a major issue for any village situated on the front line of every battering that a coast gets from the Atlantic weather fronts. One must not under estimate or under state the challenge that keeping up your appearance in such circumstances creates. Occupied buildings are forever under siege and yet buildings along the street are admirably protected with their many coats of paint. There is no blown debris from the fishing port. No sign of blown black plastic or white plastic. Even the unoccupied premises seem immune to the constant attacks. The street is a conduit for so many vehicles from summer dawn till dusk but shows no adverse symptoms from all of the visitors. Litter has to be sought out and the adjudicator was relieved to find the odd bottle but could not find anything that had been lying for a period. Your paint work on the kerbing has the effect of being giving definition to the surroundings, thus creating a neat appearance. All resurfacing has a tidiness impact. Attention to mown areas seems to be regular thus adding to the neat appearance. Natural ditches express themselves freely but do not interfere with pedestrian or motorist. Road marking are fresh, parking is disciplined and the demand for parking is great. So what more can be done? Why is it that shops selling post cards seem to need to display their stands on the footpath on a sunny day and house them inside on a wet day? The adjudicator saw Portmagee on both a sunny day and a rainy day! Embattled pedestrians have no choice but to step onto the busy street. Delighted that you mentioned the phone box as there would be no way of knowing. The car salesman has done a wonderful job on his compound. Well done on the painting of gates and of their appearance. The red up around the Church seems to be your favoured colour. One came on one bad gate up around Harbour View. Moilligh Daoine ag Siúil are traffic calming measures that encourage the pedestrian.

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

An important residential area is the core of the village which despite what must have been significant transformation over the years on the sea side of the street still retains the main structure of the traditional village with the long line of two storey dwellings, once dwelling cum premises, and all so delightfully painted. Treatment of the reveals provides an attractive contrast with the main colour. From the West End one notices the chimneys of these buildings and these add to the character of the street. A few ruins are so well treated that they seem as naturally set as their antiquity deserves. These give a glimpse of how the street might have looked in a previous generation. That presentation is a major challenge to a sea front village. Then the lanes off of that main street are also centres of accommodation as along Lovers Lane, delightful. The more recent estate development and the ribbon development along the main roads contributes to the lovely village appearance. The houses in Harbour View have a delightful coordinated appearance, the maintenance of the area as meticulous as all over. Individual houses on the approach roads are delightful, and assist the welcome to the village with their design and colouring. What appear to be an estate of holiday homes is not of the usual standard of presentation. In time one expects that landscaping will be improved in Ocean View.

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

Lets start with the bridge as an approach road. Wonderful work indeed in your painting and how painstaking. Your signature approach road is of course the Cahersiveen road and what a welcome. Yet you are not satisfied to let that approach stand still as you further your ideas. The colourfully painted bridge is a hint of how effectively paint will be used in your presentation of the village. The next feature to be admired will be your treatment of the junction, a matter mentioned also in the landscaping section. But the adjudicator arrived from the far side over the hill, an experience in itself and got the pilot's view of Portmagee before landing in the village. From up in the Kerry sky one feels that this insignificant settlement will not delay the busy adjudicator. One is still on the runway into the village when one sees the imaginative mosaic work on the school wall and now realises that departure time will be somewhat delayed. This approach road is marked by the unfolding delights of the housing, houses all presenting themselves delightfully and with pride. Fáilte an Caladh is full of meaning for the Irish traveller and provides a welcome for all. Well done on your work at the bridge. The adjudicator is reluctant to mention Lover's Lane as a back area but as an area less travelled. Lovely and made all the more meaningful by your information slate which like all other information slates in the village deepens one's appreciation of the village heritage, whether that be of the couples' flirtations along the Lane or a potted history of the national School. And those information slates are wonderful pieces of street furniture. The resurfacing must have improved the appearance of the area. One is glad that those old wild ditches full of native plants and teeming with wildlife survived the resurfacing job.

Concluding Remarks:

In order to appreciate the endeavours of your TidyTown groups over the years the adjudicator stood outside the Community Centre and imagined how the surrounding area might look were it not for the devotion, dedication and imagination of the people who created the ordered beauty all about that facilitates and is welcoming to local, visitor, pedestrian, motorist, fisherman and chough. Then there is the ubiquitous white, all over. Yes, you are entitled to feel proud of your achievements.