

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tarbert** Ref: **350**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **296**
Category: **B** Date(s): **28/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	38
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	32	33
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	17	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31	31
TOTAL MARK	450	292	296

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Céad fáilte roimh Tarbert Development Association go Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara na bliana 2015. Thank you for entering the SuperValu TidyTowns competition yet again. Thank you for your entry form, the appendices, the photos, the map. Your map is a work of art and was a great help to the adjudicator as projects were clearly marked and numbered. Thank you to the provider. The adjudicator loved the idea of co-opting extra members onto committee for specific events. That must surely be an effective use of personnel. There is obvious enthusiasm for TidyTowns among you, judging by the frequency and regularity of your meetings. You evidently make use of the agencies that influence policy and funding for Tarbert, the Heritage Council being a stand out example. As regards the County Council, leverage is not only a great concept but a wonderful word! It is evident that you feel the appearance of the village had slipped over a number of years and that the state of heritage buildings had disimproved and these are major issues for you. You certainly are attacking problems with gusto. I particularly like the priority you give to cherishing your heritage. Nár laga Dia sibh. This adjudicator feels that your comments on last year's adjudicator's report are of interest to your committee but not to the present adjudicator.

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

There is no need for the adjudicator to point out the elements of this competition category that are a challenge to you and to the appearance of the streetscape. Lets focus on what is positive and ensure that the presentation of the Bridewell, the colour of Keldun guesthouse, the signage at Coolahans, the front at Enrights, the appearance of the Ferry House, Tarbert Rectory, Savages, The Credit Union, the Community Centre with its modern add-on, the Church continue to contribute to the vibrancy of the streets. Information panels on the heritage of a village draw the visitor into the background of a place so the information at the Wesleyan Chapel or on Dr Mac Riabhaigh or the 1893 drowning tragedy are appreciated. Dates as at the Church of Ireland and the Credit Union provide another insight into the development of this village. Your history wall is divine in concept, design, presentation, content and positioning in the historic part of the village. Old stone walls have their history written in the stone. One acknowledges that there are major challenges in the area of the old creamery but full marks to the artist. When an adjudicator is assessing the merits of the built environment of a village sewerage works are rarely noticed but in the case of Tarbert the adjudicator is delighted to see that works are progressing and will be an asset to the village. Your submission is most helpful in this section as it mentions works that a visitor would not notice, for instance, that parts of the collapsed wall have been mended or that drainage has been carried out in the picnic area.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

There are two wonderful highlights to your landscaping in Tarbert. One on the Glin Road is in the public eye and sets the tone of the welcome to the visitor, the other at the Forge Park is a hidden gem. The adjudicator loved that

island of landscaped area on the Glin Road and lauds your plans for further development. Thank you for the photos of the winter colour. The adjudicator did not spot the growth of the Japanese Knotweed but is pleased that you are seeking advice on its eradication. You might also get advice on the giant rhubarb that is becoming an infestation as on the approach from the ferry. As for the Forge Park the adjudicator loved the many elements of it whether these be the tree sculptures or the wheel or the newly planted bank or the sounds of the stream or the delightful pedestrian bridge or the appearance of the various surfaces or the connectivity with the Bridewell or the respect that the Park shows for your heritage and for an important trade which would be a mystery to the younger generations. Concentration on those features should not deflect from other lovely beds on the Listowel Road by the ICA or the hard landscaping at the memorials to the people who died in the wars or the 1893 memorial. Well done on the milk cans. Where window boxes are used they add to the character of the building and the street and this adjudicator would encourage more. The window boxes on the Shannon Bar provide a gentle welcome. The junction at the top of the street needs more than the six red tubs or at least their positioning needs more design.

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

There appears to be an overall healthy, informed awareness of the richness of your wildlife in the Tarbert area and also a concern for the well being of local habitats. It is clear from your appendices that there is an emphasis on the enjoyment of the biodiversity in your midst whether that be through the cuckoo walk or through promotion of your Leslie Walk or the sign for the Bird Hide. All arouse interest and in the case of the last two have the adjudicator racing about. A healthy experience. The adjudicator is impressed at your concern for the habitats on the river as shown by the feasibility study. Those concerns show that that your concern for the wellbeing of these habitats overrides priority given to landscaping for visual enjoyment. So the works along the bank are not for visual enjoyment but in order to protect those banks. The adjudicator lauds the work under the bridge to provide fish passes. The adjudicator took a part of the nature walk through the woods and trees and feels that this is a wonderful amenity for the locals and the visiting walker. In time one would wish for an awareness programme along the walk that would afford the possibility of being more aware of the surroundings.

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

Your group is now pro-active in this sustainability section of the competition. It is heartening to read of the courses attended since last year and to read your appendix on Food Waste. All of these projects help raise awareness of reducing your carbon footprint and of making better use of your resources. Do not be disheartened at the number that attended to composting workshop. Those attendees are interested and may commence composting themselves. As a follow up to the three projects mentioned you might meet the people who attended with a view to finding if their new awareness changed their behaviour towards waste in any way. A survey of a sample of households would inform you if your Stop Food Waste has had an impact. The value of courses needs to be assessed. So there is a project for the coming year. Have you had any response to your encouragement of the installation of the water butts? The adjudicator likes to read of the book rental scheme in the school. Again a chat with the teacher involved would give you an idea of how successful such a scheme is. Let with next year's adjudicator know how your discussions regarding the Eco Unesco programme have gone.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

As in the other categories you have your finger on the pulse in this category also but the adjudicator is disappointed with the overall tidiness of the village despite your efforts. Sorry. There are a number of contributory factors that are within your control. Many of the grass margins need more regular mowing most notably along the approach roads. Watch out for weeds. There are a number of shrubberies that need weeding. There are a number of poles that stand idly. The standard that one wishes for in verge mowing is to be found on the way to the Church of Ireland. Fencing is also an issue in places. Near the Forge Park there is a tree that needs its support removed. Road surface is an issue, of which you are aware. Your submission shows that you are very much aware of the poor condition of the road surface in the areas you mention and hopefully there will be a satisfactory outcome. You are also active on the matter of the condition of footpaths. It seems to be compulsory that cars park on the footpath in Tarbert. Road width cannot be the problem. that could not be the problem. All of these issues impact on the appearance of the village. There are stretches that cry out for a road sweeper as grass and pebble debris create a neglected appearance. Well done on your litter work. Your shop fronts son the street left one in no doubt about your intentions. The photos tell their own story. But you must be watchful at all times. There are still litter louts about.

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

There are many fine residences on the approach roads, fine in design and in the surrounding landscaping. These houses enhance the appearance of their surroundings especially on the Glin and Listowel roads. Many of the residences on the streets also maintain the traditional appearance of the village but the inevitable deterioration in the appearance of unoccupied buildings detracts from the overall image. It is great that estates are given name signs and those signs are most attractive in both languages. A feature of the estates is the openness provided by open space and generous spacious entrances. One loved the contrasting colours and texture of the planting at Hazelbrook and the planting along two walls in Woodview Estate. Of the estates the favourite is St Patrick's Terrace. The houses are well presented, the landscaping is varied and attractive, the view is panoramic, there is a sense of care and of pride and the bed of roses a special treat.

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

The picnic area on the Glin approach is a most welcoming feature and that sense of wellbeing continues as one

gets nearer to the village. An attraction of that approach is the steep decline and incline to the village junction. The appearance of the buildings when one leaves the ferry is positive and of great importance to first impressions of the upcoming village. So that delightful sweeping, winding approach from the ferry with the forest of trees and the estuary for company could be a deciding issue on whether to stop and dally or to drive on. Attention must be given to the kerbside weeds and to weeds at the wall base on this approach, long a stretch though it is. There is some planting on a gravelled surface, the planting is gapped and for the adjudicator did not impress. Either that stretch needs to be replanted or it might be better to leave the gravelled surface unplanted as those shrubs do not enhance to appearance of the mighty trees that are a wonderful backdrop. Benches along this road add to the serenity of the surroundings. The walls are most impressive. One wondered if the shrubs, planted some time ago, on the Glin approach need renewal.

Concluding Remarks:

The adjudicator was most impressed by the content and structure of your submission. There is so much to be impressed by in the work that is ongoing in the village. You have a hands-on attitude to the issues that concern Tarbert. The disappointment for the adjudicator is that more care is not taken of grass verges as these impact greatly on the overall impression one takes away with them from a village. Your village highlights are wonderful.