

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Carrickboy** Ref: **477**
County: **Longford** Mark: **227**
Category: **A** Date(s): **11/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	23	24
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	32	32
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	33	34
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	16	16
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	7	7
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	25	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	34
TOTAL MARK	450	222	227

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Charrraig Bhui! Welcome Carrickboy to the Super Valu 2015 National Tidy Towns competition. In your Entry Form you list only 2 groups who assist you - namely the local authority, and local shops. Perhaps you can look at the possibility of obtaining additional assistance in 2016 from other agencies and bodies. The Tidy Towns Handbook and other Tidy Towns committees could give you some ideas as to where you might seek more help/funding.

We note that you meet monthly. Your communication is via the parish newsletter and local media. We hope that you also circulate local minority churches in your area as well as the local church - where relevant. We would suggest that you consider adding some modern instant methods of communication which are sustainable and appeal to the younger generation - such as texting and Facebook. We are saddened to hear of the closure of your local school. However the children in your village will still be attending school in the locality. We would encourage you to engage with these local schools and to communicate with the youth, as they are the Tidy Towns committees of the future. Additionally, where the local school engages in the Green Flag programme the benefits percolate to the community in general - particularly in relation to the Sustainable Waste and Resource Management category.

Your map was lacking in detail. You have not marked any local landmarks/ buildings -for example the shop or the public house on your map. We would refer you to the 'How to complete your super Valu Tidy Towns Entry Form. In the guidelines you are asked to sequentially number each ('mappable') project undertaken for this year 2015, and to carry this numbering system through to the village map. Please remember to read the Guidelines carefully before submitting next year's Entry Form and map.

We do not appear to have received a Tidy Towns plan from you. We would encourage you to submit a Tidy Towns plan – a three or five-year plan will focus your mind on what you can hope to achieve – no matter how simple a plan it is. A plan need not be prepared professionally, but you should consult locally in preparing such a plan. You should also consider any statutory and non-statutory plans applicable to Carrickboy in drawing up your work programme. Please refer to the Tidy Towns Handbook for advice in relation to the preparation of a plan. It is essential to progress in the competition and to gain extra marks under this particular category that you submit such a plan in 2016.

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

Please try to keep the particular projects listed under their relevant headings. You have listed only one project under this heading - which project is not relevant to the category. "Planting flowers are cutting grass" belongs to the Landscaping and Open Spaces category. We therefore understand that you have carried out no particular project

under this category heading during the current year.

Quinn's service station has a nice stone wall which is a continuation of the existing stonewall on the immediate approach to the village from the Ballymahon side. The ochre gable of the shop/post office (which faces oncoming traffic to the village) would benefit from painting before next year. And the same can be said of the multi-gabled sheds etc. facing the same approach road on the other side - opposite the garage. The service station is neat but the large expanse of tarmac might be broken up by some shrubbery. We admired the peripheral shrub planting. We would like to see some Irish in use in the village - even in a small way.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Carrickboy is a good crossroads traditional village located in undulating landscape. The village setting is blessed with mature trees and good natural hedging. You indicate that the local C.E. scheme maintains the trees on the main road - and the flower beds on both sides of the village. (You do not indicate which road you consider to be the main road but we assume that is the Edgeworthstown to Cavan Road). We particularly admired the lovely simple uncluttered line of semi mature trees - some young trees and some slightly older trees - on the approach road from Ballymahon. Near the village the young copper beech trees formed a nice contrast with the surrounding green of other trees and grass. Keep to sustainable planting of native trees and shrubs in the soil and you will retain the landscape character of the village

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

You say that "birds nest in the high trees on the corner of the Longford Road." Have you conducted any survey to see what species of birds you have in your midst? You have not indicated any particular new project under this category heading in your Entry Form.

We observed what appeared to be fairly recent side hedge trimming. We also noticed some top of hedge trimming on the Longford approach road. We wonder if this was a safety feature carried out by the local authority or a village project. Remember that it is permissible to trim hedging along cultivated ground (e.g. gardens) throughout the year. However with regard to hedge trimming bordering non cultivated land - you are reminded that it is an offence under the Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2006 to cut vegetation in a hedge or ditch on lands not cultivated between 1st March and 31st August annually - this is for the protection of nesting birds. Before considering trimming any such hedges please consult with your local authority who will deal with this issue if there is a safety aspect involved. We also observed recent hedge trimming on other approaches. Whereas we note that you have indicated a Nature Sanctuary on the ground and referred to it as 'wildlife' on your map, we could find no public access to this site. Is it privately or publicly owned? Provision of access to natural amenities is very important.

We suggest that you consult the Heritage Office and the Biodiversity Officer of your local authority in relation to how to move forward with plans under this category heading. You should also read the Tidy Towns Handbook which is quite detailed on this category. The Heritage Council's 'Wildlife in Towns and Villages' booklet is also a useful resource.

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

Under this category heading you say that all businesses and homeowners segregate their waste. However waste and resource management requires that you endeavour to lessen the amount of waste you create in the first case. There are many ways in which you can endeavour to lessen the amount of waste you produce as householders, farms and businesses. Have you looked at the Tidy Towns publication in relation to Sustainable Waste and Resource Management - the updated version sent to you as an updated section of the Tidy Towns Handbook? Have you considered trying to organise a community Sustainable Waste and Resource Management seminar or talk? Your local authority County Environmental Awareness Officer would be a good person to contact for advice. You could increase your marks in this category as a community by taking on board some of the suggested projects in the publication mentioned above. We hope that in 2016 we will hear about your efforts to progress further in this area. We strongly suggest that you choose some simple starting point from the project examples given in that publication, and let us have details for 2016 as to how you have raised awareness, and also as to how you have completed any practical steps to prevent or reduce waste produced across your community. The Green Schools programme is of great assistance in this category, as young people learn in detail how to make progress with regard to sustainable waste and resource management whilst achieving various stages of the Green Flag award. Even if your school is closed, the school-going children can get involved at whatever school they attend.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We note that you have a cleanup day. Is this day associated with the An Taisce national Spring Clean project? We acknowledge the efforts your residents and the CE workers make in keeping the village tidy.

One street light was noted to be bent/tipping. The concrete block wall opposite the garage would benefit from plastering and the surface of the hard shoulder in front of the wall needs renewal.

The adjudicator was quite disappointed with the presentation of the village pump on the Mullingar road, as the surrounding enclosing cream coloured walls were very dirty. The setting of the pump is simple and attractive, but the lack of maintenance detracted. The ochre colour walls and red shed doors on the Mullingar/Edgeworthstown Road corner were also in need of painting and the footpath and road edge at this point required sweeping. The wall at the immediate corner is in need of repair.

We observed a small amount of litter on the Cavan approach road involving drinks can/ paper cup/paper. This is probably the result of passing traffic.

Road signage in general was clean and the signage around the crossroad area was in good condition. We would strongly suggest a unified gate painting programme, including field gates, for the entire village and approach roads.

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

There are some well kept properties and gardens in the village and on the approach roads. We know that it is difficult to maintain boundary walls on busy trafficked roads – especially during wet seasons. But you are doing well in this area. You have escaped the problem of unfinished housing estates.

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

You referred to a space 'on the corner on the Mullingar road' being 'owned by the Council and that you are unsure of future plans in relation to this space. We are not made aware as to exactly what space you refer to, as you have not shown it on your map.

The approach from Ballymahon gives a good impression of the village. We admired the nice simple grass corner on the approach from Ballymahon and the village name sign located in a lovely rockery-type bed with shrubs. Like last year's adjudicator we consider that the low concrete block wall on the right-hand side just beyond the blue name sign on the Ballymahon approach road should be planted, as should the concrete block wall just beyond the 60 K pH speed limit sign on the left-hand side and right-hand side opposite. Generally concrete block boundaries would be improved by planting. Walls stained with red fungus growth should be power washed or painted - such as the stained access splay just beyond this 60 K pH on the same approach road. Some barbed wire on top of walls in places close to the village looked poorly and might be replaced (if wire is necessary) with softer wire meshing such as sheep wire.

On the Longford Road approach we observed a very young tree planted on the road margin on the left-hand side on exiting the village. We consider this tree to be in danger and dangerous. It is an odd place to plant a tree so near the road carriageway - or perhaps it self seeded. Perhaps you can move it successfully to a new location. On this approach we admired the simple setting of the Carrickboy black and white sign which is sited on a neat grass margin. However the sign was dirty. The suburban type development outside the speed limit on this approach has setback areas which would benefit from being surfaced. There is an overgrown boundary on the approach to the 60 K pH. The stone seat insert in the stone wall recess was admired. On this approach also we noted a block wall splayed entrance with a machine parked directly inside. The gate at this location needed painting.

The Cavan road was open only to local traffic because of a diversion. Nonetheless we proceeded outwards to the speed limit signs. On approaching the village from the Cavan road the uprights of the 'do not pass' signs just in front of the blue Carrickboy sign are in need of painting. We admired the lovely stone walls and beautiful tree mix again on this approach. Field gates are in need of painting along this approach. Part of the large directional sign Mullingar/Longford is obscured by tree growth. The tree should be pruned/ replanted if possible. A long length of timber fencing needs repair in quite a few places as one approaches the village on this approach road. In time perhaps a dry stonewall or a stone wall with lime mortar might be provided instead of the timber fencing. Could the silage storage area and block shed/part block wall be screened as one reaches the village? This farm complex is located just behind the new footpath on the left hand side. A rough area inside the footpaths here on both sides needs surfacing.

On the Mullingar approach we noticed some recent hedge cutting and a weedy set back area. The hedges and grass margin looked well. The 'prepare to stop' sign on the right-hand side was partially obscured by vegetation. There is a plethora of signage along this approach. Would there be any chance of amalgamation in discussion with the NRA/local authority? The 50 K pH sign on one side was missing, only the speed limit sign on the right-hand side was in situ.

Concluding Remarks:

Thank you for your entry Carrickboy. We hope that you continue with your good work and we wish you the best in your endeavours for the future. Go n-éirí libh!