

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Moydow** Ref: **1377**
County: **Longford** Mark: **192**
Category: **A** Date(s): **27/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	23
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	24
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	23
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	16
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	6
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	48
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	26
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	26
TOTAL MARK	450	192

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Maigh Dumha! Welcome Moydow to this - your own first personal entry - to the Super Valu 2015 National Tidy Towns competition. We are delighted to have a new entrant from County Longford - a County which has achieved considerable success in this competition recently and in the past. We would encourage you to visit the successful centres close to you and to talk to the committees there - who would we are sure - be more than willing to help you in your first years of entry. We know that you were entered in 2007 as part of the drive by Supervalu to work with communities. You list an impressive number of agencies, bodies and businesses who assist you. However you do not mention the local authority – other than in relation to a name sign for the housing estate. No doubt you are aware of potential great help available from Longford County Council in relation to such areas as architectural conservation, heritage, approach roads, village streets, environmental awareness, and sustainable waste and resource management. We imagine that you probably do avail of some of these professional advice services. Perhaps you can fill us in on this next year.

We note that you meet regularly and this face-to-face communication is vital. However, 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 hope that you also circulate local minority churches as well as the village church - where relevant. We would strongly encourage you to engage with local schools in your area. These 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 very lacking in detail. We would refer you to the 'How to complete your super Valu Tidy Towns Entry Form (part 6)'. As you do not have any streets per se to name it would be useful if you showed and named each individual approach road to your village. 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 Moydow 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.

We note and admire your optimism and your hope in relation to how you see your groups' work contributing to the development of your community

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 five projects under this heading - only one of which really relates to the built environment – that is plans to paint the parish hall. Well done on achieving this project.

There is a great sweep into the village as one approaches the area in front of the church and Hall. This is a lovely setting for the buildings. The church building and grounds were presented very well, as was the Hall/old school. We admired the name plaque on the old school/Hall. The church grotto was particularly tasteful in its rockery/stone surround. The front wall of the hall could still benefit from a paint touch-up. Otherwise it looked very well. The parochial house(?) was well landscaped.

We would like to see some Irish in use in the village - even in a small way.

Unfortunately it would appear that your public house has been closed, and it is suffering from some neglect as a result. As this is in a very strategic part of your village we would encourage you to consider approaching the owners/occupiers to see what can be done to improve the situation. Please let us know the outcome next year. At least if the redundant rusting high sign could be removed – and some touch up painting carried out – this would be great.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Moydow is a lovely small village located in a verdant green landscape. There are some lovely mature trees around the village. Three of the five projects listed under the Built Environment category are relevant to this category. These are "To build flower beds in the village, to erect hanging baskets in the village, to keep grassy areas mowed/cut." We would encourage you to concentrate on planting native tree species and native shrubs in the village in preference to developing flower beds. Yours is a rural village and flower beds - unless they are developed in an informal way give an unsuitable urban appearance to what is essentially a vernacular rural Irish village. Hanging baskets can be used judiciously in neglected areas. However it is preferable from a visual amenity point of view, from a sustainability point of view, and from a water conservation point of view to plant in the soil only.

We very much admired the lovely meadow and tree grove behind the black creosote fencing opposite the church. The tennis courts at the back of the church were visited and these are a lovely well-sited amenity. In relation to the church grounds - whilst these were well presented we were surprised to find the three gates open, as this could lead to entry by animals/dogs neither of which visits would enhance the landscaping or grounds!

In completing your Entry Form you should only list the projects undertaken this year, or completed phases of continuing projects. Statements like "We need to plant native tree species in the village and we need to improve grass verges on the approach roads" should be part of your Tidy Towns Plan and should only be listed as projects if you have achieved these plans during the entry year. Entering the competition and filling out the form takes a little bit of getting used to. But the Guidelines are clear and should be followed. Should you have any questions in relation to completing your Entry Form we will always be happy to answer them. Your local authority and other more experienced local Tidy Towns groups would also be useful advisers. Do read the section 'How to complete your super Valu Tidy Towns' Guidelines very carefully. In fact we would say study it closely!

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

You mention managing the hedgerows on the approaches to the village in an environmentally sustainable way. However, you do not elaborate on how you hope to achieve this. We observed what appeared to be fairly recent hedge trimming around the Killashee approach leading up to the 50 K pH speed limit sign. 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. 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 the other village approaches.

We noted some use of weed killer and we would suggest to you - that in a small village you endeavour to weed manually - which is more environmentally friendly. Your County Heritage Officer would also be able to advise you in relation to environmentally friendly nonchemical methods of weed control. We admired the honeysuckle in the hedges and were very conscious of your bird population through the delightful birdsong – particularly that of the blackbird on adjudication day.

Provision of access to natural amenities and interpretation of habitats studied 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 for same. 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.

We note that you have a local gun club and we suggest that you might engage with them in relation to perhaps a

wildlife survey.

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

Under this category heading you say that you raise awareness of your activities through the parish newsletter. We assume you mean activities under this category heading, but you have given us no indication as to what these activities are. Have you looked at the Tidy Towns publication in relation to Sustainable Waste and Resource management – the updated version sent to you as updated handbook extract. 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. As already mentioned the Green Schools programme may be ‘a way to go’ for the village. Even where villages do not have a physical building of the school present - nevertheless the school-going children from such villages can get involved at whatever school they attend. You could - for example - get some of the community to survey how much food they waste in a week! Check out the ‘Food Waste Challenge’ on www.foodwaste.ie for guidance Promoting waste prevention ideas and initiatives are a big part of the Tidy Towns Groups’ role in this category. Can you tell us how you will communicate good practice to the broader community?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Under this category heading you referred to a project ‘to improve the general area to the village’s only housing estate’. Projects in relation to housing estates should be included under the category Residential Streets and Housing areas. What we want here in this category heading are projects in relation to tidiness and litter control throughout the village in general. The village is generally tidy - so you have a good basis from which to work.

We noted two public lights which were leaning. A public light opposite the church on an old wooden pole looked odd in relation to the other metal village light poles. Is it necessary to have two poles in the tree growth area opposite the church? We noted two-sided fly posting (for the Longford show) as well as another fly post on the same pole opposite the church.

Broken timber fencing opposite the housing estate entrance might be reinstated. Some weed growth was observed along the footpath edge between the housing estate and the village. A missing tree (empty stake) here also needs reinstatement. There were some dead branches near the gate in the black creosote fence area opposite the church. The road outside this creosote fence would benefit from resurfacing. Some dead branches were also observed in a hedge on the approach by the housing estate.

We would suggest that the container be removed from the GAA site if possible as its blue chipped paint looked unsightly. The vast unsurfaced car park at the GAA might be softened by some judicious landscaping. Perhaps it may be possible to paint or plant along the boundary wall to the road at the GAA site. The road junction sign on the GAA road approach/minor road needs cleaning. The village was almost litter-free apart from a tiny amount near some roses on the Killashee approach.

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

There are some very well kept properties and gardens in the village. We would encourage you to lead the community in the planting of native trees and hedges and shrubs, as we noted a considerable amount of non-native planting generally in village gardens. The housing estate looks well but had upswept edges to the open space. There were a few weeds at the junction within the housing estate (at the corner along the open space). We consider that perhaps more planting/landscaping could take place on the open space without impinging on the play area. There is as yet no name on the housing estate although you say that you will engage with the local county council and the builder to have an appropriate sign erected at the housing estate. We hope that this will be bilingual sign and that perhaps you might use a natural local boulder to inscribe the estate name upon.

The ‘for sale’ grey single storey house in the village and looked reasonably well - but could be improved through reseeding the immediate road edge, weeding the road frontage, by painting the porch roof fascia and painting the adjacent gate.

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

Your entry under this category heading states that you keep the approach roads tidy and litter free and grassy areas mown. On both sides of the village setbacks require surfacing. The area around the blue generic village signage on entering the village from the Killashee direction looked rather poor as the surrounds were unsurfaced. However, as traffic cones lined the immediate area we understand that this is a temporary ‘work in progress’ situation. We noted that part of the letter ‘o’ in the village name was missing. Some broken branches and a broken post and wire fence on this approach might be removed/fixed for 2016. Up to the 50 K pH speed limit sign the road at the edges were rather dirty but this could be the result of the road works in progress but also might be related to agricultural machinery activity. Inside the 50 K pH approach on this approach road the approaches to the village were very neat. We admired a stile in a nice simple green set-back area. Just beyond that setback we noted a concrete wall area which had some overgrown vegetation. And we noticed further hedge cutting of recent times at this location also. Please refer to our comments under the Wildlife and Natural Amenities category. On exiting by the Killashee approach we noted that one of the 80 K pH speed limit signs was dirty. The road traffic signs were generally very freshly painted. You actually say that you want to get signs erected ‘slow through village’ under the Built Environment and Streetscape section - which project is more relevant to this particular category. In general we would highly recommend that you consider painting all field gates in the village and on approach roads in a uniform

colour. The road outside the GAA site requires resurfacing. The edges need finishing and the cut grass along the hedge line opposite the GAA site should be removed. Other areas of the village would benefit from road resurfacing.

Concluding Remarks:

We note that it is your intention to use this first year to engage with the local population and to create an environment where you can improve and upgrade the amenities of the area over time. We hope that your enthusiasm is recognised and rewarded and we look forward to your continued participation in the competition. We wish you continued success. Go n-éirí libh!