

# Tidy Towns Competition 2015

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardee**

Ref: **488**

County: **Louth**

Mark: **303**

Category: **D**

Date(s): **23/06/2015**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2014</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2015</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	53	54
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	38
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	38	38
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	35
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>303</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ardee is very welcome to the 2015 Supevalu Tidy Towns Competition.

Thank you for the comprehensive entry form with supplementary material including the 2015 update of the 2013 – 2016 Ardee Tidy Towns Plan.

The map supplied for the purpose of adjudication was top class and made the job of the adjudicator that little bit easier as it highlighted the relevant places under 5 headings and key to symbols.

This was the adjudicators first time to spend an extended period in the town and traverse the core area and outskirts.

There's quite a lot of input under specific headings in the entry form but it would neigh impossible to comment extensively in a 2 page report suffice to say that the adjudicator was fair and impartial in adjudicating the town. Ardee is a busy town as there is quite a lot of heavy traffic passing through during peak day hours.

You have a fairly onerous task in bringing all the stakeholders together and to get all working for the common cause – the betterment of Ardee as a town and active community.

You have a large committee of 19 but one assumes that there is a directive executive of 4/5 people that make decisions based on what transpires at regular committee meetings.

Well done on the appointment of a school liaison officer to link with the four main schools.

Getting full backing from the Town Traders Association is a testament to your efforts to date where you are seen as the main driving force in promoting the town in a positive manner.

The support of Local Authorities, CESchemes and TUS is vital to the work of Tidy Towns Committees all over the country and Ardee is certainly no different.

The input from the statutory body and other agencies has been recognised in your submission as have the roles of other town organisations and individuals with skills that contribute to the ongoing activities under the headings of the competition.

Communication methods are varied mixing the old with the new forms of social media such as facebook, twitter and probably whats app and viber.

The website "This Is Ardee" is kept up to date but it wasn't clear if this was a Tidy Towns or a private initiative.

Louth Tidy Towns Together certainly has had a big involvement in the promotion of what Louth wants from Tidy Towns.

Quite a few centres have adopted the "cloned" template type entry form, same format different info, which is fine so long as the adjudicator doesn't get entries mixed up!

Your dissatisfaction on losing your medal status is noted and again a number of other high performance centres in the county have expressed similar disappointment.

Overall the standard in this category was on par with last year and you retain the high mark awarded then

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

The adjudicator did not realise that town first of had a population of up on 5,000 and neither did he realise it was so big until he had to take to the streets.

It's an attractive town with quite a number on interesting historical buildings.

The town, whilst it has a fair number of run down and unoccupied premises, did not suffer the ravages that midland towns farther down the country did.

As you state in your input in this category the committee has taken a proactive approach to addressing the problems of both derelict and vacant premises.

Well done on making use of the vacant shop unit that was Woods Electrical in such a positive way.

Actually the frontage of what was Woods Electrical was quite attractive and fit for purpose for the Trashion Exhibition.

The following are the observations of the adjudicator on traversing the town and its outskirts.

The Educate Together School on the Monaghan/Tallanstown/Dundalk side was very well presented.

The very impressive house part of which houses Seamus Roe Solicitor business was very much admired, pity those pvc windows were ever installed this is one house that cries out for the retention of sash windows- it's never too late if the funds were available to the owner.

The Council Offices ideally situated in the Fairgreen were in good condition as it should be from the statutory body of the County.

Apace Pizza highlighted in your pictorial records was noted, Anderson name sign is a throwback to another era and one hopes that it can be retained if the premises is upgraded.

The premises that houses the barber shop on Irish or Main Street? Is a bit untidy looking but has an interesting account of the role of the Barber in Irish Mythology.

Enough digression back to the task in hand Kevin Commins Butcher and Bradleys Pharmacist side by side were admired as was the local Credit Union Premises.

The very fine St Marys C of I was undergoing some remedial work and it looked splendid in spacious well maintained grounds.

Leavys Options was undergoing a complete makeover on the day and the painter in question was taking stock and examining his very fine handy work.

The adjudicator wondered if the Ardee School of Music was now housed in what was once the Wesleyan Church.

Ardee Bookshop and Callaghan Butchers, love the canopy, were also well presented

J Liscoe shops front another one similar to Henderson and again one hopes that this name sign is retained.

Ardee Bread Company premises very well enhanced with murals that actually are quite realistic.

Brian Muldoons, celebrating 50 years in business started in the era of Joe Dolan, Dermot O'Brien and the like, so well done on going from strength to strength through the decades.

Lanneys Super Valu is a very large well run establishment on Ash Walk with ample car parking

Overall the business community have presented premises to a very good standard and have retained features that are part of respective premises.

Some plastic signs take somewhat from a few premises near the Post Office.

St Marys Catholic Church of modern enough design, The Monastery, NS Scoil Naisiunta Mhuire Gan Trocaire and Ardee Community School were vested and were very acceptable in terms of presentation.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

The committee has a pretty large area to cover in its responsibility for maintaining public green areas in the rather large number of housing estates, approach roads and the excellent public amenity that is the fairgreen.

It is testament to your ongoing work in this category that most places visited by the adjudicator the standard of planting and management of various green areas was first class.

The following is just a few observations and comments that give endorsement to your good work.

There was a myriad of what could be termed planting arrangements and green public places not to mind the large number of some very fine private gardens so it was inevitable that some places were missed during the adjudication walkabout

The adjudicator was impressed that the green areas at the double roundabouts on the Monaghan/Dundalk entrances were being cut and tidied.

The Wildflower area identified by a nice notice board was admired.

The adjudicator felt that the shrub bed on the actual roundabout was becoming a little choked and needs to be addressed accordingly.

The Fairgreen which had a lot of diverse activity going on was very well maintained and the green areas were cut.

The Southern Corner Rockery was very attractive and certainly effective as a visual spectacle, getting those two boulders in there alone was some task.

The enhancement at the other end of the green was also viewed.

The Failte and Ardee flowerbeds were in the throes of being completed and will blossom even more as the summer goes on.

Your advice to visit Scoil Mhuire Gan Trocaire at Moorhall and one certainly was not disappointed with the exquisite planting arrangement.

Throughout the town all the hanging baskets and flower towers seen by the adjudicator were filled with the usual array of colourful annuals like trailing lobelia and petunias.

An additional mark is very much justified for the additional add on work that has taken place since last year.

### **Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádurtha:**

The town's people are very lucky that they have this very fine Railway Walk to enjoy. This is such a haven for all

forms of diverse wildlife and full marks to the committee for ensuring that additional enhancements such as planting of edible fruit trees and native hedging will further contribute to attracting more forms of wildlife. St Marys GAA Ground on the Drogheda Road was also visited and the sensory garden is such a fine amenity for relaxation.

The Club Facility is also a superb amenity that offers different option to the community as well as looking after its main objective that of promoting its games.

One admired the very attractive club crest.

The wildlife panels on the main street entrance to the Riverside Walk are a very useful source of information on various forms of wildlife associated with the Ardee area.

The adjudicator at the end of his adjudication took time out to visit the exceptional Sensory Garden in St Josephs Hospital and it was a very calming experience after the stress of walking streets side streets and crossing roads at wrong places.

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

This is the category that caused most problems for centres in its previous format.

It has now been revised to reflect the need for communities to consider ways of not alone reducing waste but more importantly preventing it.

Quite a lot of what you submitted under this category fall under the reuse definition, some are quite unique to Ardee at present at any rate !,most are initiatives that the adjudicator has seen replicated in other centres in the County. It would be in the interest of the committee to revisit [www.localprevention.ie](http://www.localprevention.ie) and indeed the EPA website and see what defines the National Strategy for Waste Prevention which one assumes has been rolled out by the Department.

The Repak website is worth visiting to see how they implement a waste prevention policy for their business.

Maybe the Louth Tidy Towns Together executive or indeed the Louth County Environmental Officer would be in a better position to advice than this adjudicator on matters related to waste prevention.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Lots of good work being done by the committee in this category in promoting the message of litter control and general tidiness.

Everything can't be perfect in a town the size of Ardee and there are more than a few negatives to report so let's get those out of the way first

There was litter in the river at the entrance to the river walk off Bridge Street ,at the entrance to the Community School in John Street, a large amount across the road from Near Buy Shop at the cordoned off vacant site, inside the wall at the Fairgreen and at the top of the town on Irish Street.

Some standard street signs should be commissioned for Ash Walk, Barretts Lane and Boat Trench as these are not identifiable at present.

The pedestrian crossing at O Connell Street Junction and further out near the war memorial should be repainted as the white lines have faded.

Similarly some stop stencils on the road have also faded and need to be repainted.

Dereliction is no more a problem in Ardee than anywhere else but there were a few obvious culprits which you as a committee are probably aware of.

On the positive side as reported in another section a number of people were out upgrading their premises.

Some poles in the town centre were being painted by a council maintenance man who was really supportive of the work the tidy towns committee was doing.

The adjudicator realises the work that has been ongoing and the need to keep the message of good litter control to the forefront but this was the situation as found on the day.

The Doggie Ambassador Programme is a new one on this adjudicator,if it works fine but I'm more of the opinion that owners of canines should be civil minded enough to adhere to the rules and ensure that they have their own bags to pick up dog doo.

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

The adjudicator visited all the estates mentioned in your submission plus the following Mulladrillen, the old established St Patricks Terrace, John Street and a nice complement of older houses on Moorhall Hale Street. The standard of presentation was very good overall with the exception of a few that had post maintenance, bad fencing or dirty boundary walls.

The work that you have been doing with residents associations is certainly paying dividends because the vast majority of people are supporting you by keeping their homesteads up to a respect actable standard and that's all is what should be expected of them.

There were some very nice examples of well maintained and enhanced communal areas and one presumes that these are maintained by residents of those areas.

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

The resultant work on the Kells Road from last year's adjudicator's comment was visited and it was very acceptable. The main entrance from the double roundabout on the North side of the Town was well maintained and that particular area creates a good first impression as one enters Ardee.

The new section of cycleway at the Monastery School was also noted and photographed as a cyclist just passed by.

The improvements at the Bank of Ireland, John Street, Hale Street and Bridge Street were noted and have made positive and practical impact on these areas of the town.

Overall the committee has responded very positively to recommendations in last year's report and was able to

mobilise resources to do the work required.

The Branded Name signs are very attractive and will create a recognised association with Ardee.

One additional mark is justified for the positive reaction to comments in last year's report

**Concluding Remarks:**

It was good to visit Ardee and take the time to traverse it properly; it's a busy but progressive town and one which this adjudicator will visit again in the future. You are wished well in the future.