

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Carlingford** Ref: **489**
County: **Louth** Mark: **292**
Category: **C** Date(s):

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2014 | Mark Awarded 2015 |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Community Involvement & Planning | 60 | 48 | 49 |
| Built Environment and Streetscape | 50 | 39 | 40 |
| Landscaping and Open Spaces | 50 | 37 | 38 |
| Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities | 50 | 29 | 30 |
| Sustainable Waste and Resource Management | 50 | 13 | 13 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 54 | 54 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 50 | 31 | 32 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 50 | 35 | 36 |
| TOTAL MARK | 450 | 286 | 292 |

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Carlingford is welcome to the 2015 Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition.

Thank you kindly for the completed entry form, excellent Map and 1 page 3 year plan which was concise, to the point and an example to other centres that attach far too much material for adjudicators.

It is always a pleasure to visit Carlingford as it is such a vibrant village and of course a popular place for visitors especially from the northern counties.

The committee of 12 has certainly succeeded in getting the community as a whole to support the effort that you're putting into projecting Carlingford as a destination village and also achieving year on year improvement the Tidy Towns competition.

The "Calling all residents" flyer is an excellent initiative to encourage new people on board and it is also a way of identifying skills within the community that would help you work and add to your volunteer pool.

The list of agencies and their relevance to you is reflective of the nature of your village and its standing as a heritage and tourism village.

No long convoluted explanations of how agencies are of help to you just a one liner.

The adage that less is often more is very much to the fore in this entry form.

Example: "Loughs Agency – consultation and advice for project works on streams and shores" simple but informative one liner.

There is an excellent mix of communication methods from the established like parish bulletin and local newsletter to the ubiquitous forms of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and now possibly What's App and Viber.

The adopted corner is a very innovative idea and one which will be referred in another section.

Having a schools liaison officer on your committee keeps you in touch with the local St Oliver's National school and possibly the Bush Community Second Level School which more than likely serves your community.

Well done to the National School on the ongoing pursuit of further honours in the Green Flag programme.

Credit also to the Scout Group on getting involved in the adopt an area scheme.

Forty years is a long time involvement in the Tidy Towns Competition and no doubt your aim is to eventual achieve national success once again.

The mission statement of the Community Forum suggests that there is certainly a pride of place feeling amongst the local population and from talking to a few locals they are very proud of what Carlingford has to offer to the visitor.

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

It's been more than a few years since the adjudicator actually took time out to traverse the village and see what has happened in the interim.

There has been some very pertinent improvements and facilities added on during that period and one notices from your application and referencing back over a few years reports that the majority of these positive changes have

occurred year on year.

The basic principles of presenting the built environment to its maximum is very evident as one walked about the place on what was a very busy day from a visitor perspective.

Positive comments were overheard from day visitors on how the place looked and what has happened since the previous year.

Individual business premises were presented to a very high standard and a few were in the throes of being painted. The promenade area was further enhanced with the additional new blue seating installed since last year and indeed simple things like painting of street bollards and cleaning of cobblestone paths can transform a place.

The following are a number of observations that the adjudicator made during the walkabout.

One noticed that Carlingford have embraced King John more than Limerick where he is often referred to as St John sometimes by the natives as well as outsiders!

The bollards around the Thosel Car park have an aesthetic value as well as a practical one where it will stop drivers mounting the green area.

The village map could possibly be situated in a more central place than on a boundary wall for the benefit of tourists.

Thomas Darcy Magee Monument was in very good condition enhanced by a fine planting arrangement.

The shop front of Valentines PO has a nice colour mix but maybe the fly posting on the window and items on the footpath could be managed better a similar comment could apply to D Savage the Victualler.

The Oyster Catcher Bistro has a nice colour mix and the van was the real deal "I'm all shuck up" I bet the designer was the graphic designer was delighted when he was let loose creatively on that one.

Cooley Credit Union a nice compact building, Murphys Cottage B&B small but good, Carlingford House is very fine 4 star accommodation establishment and Liberty Cafe had a nice canopy front on the day in question.

The restored Old Station House is one of the focal point buildings in the village and has an excellent protective railing in front.

Taffes Castle is Carlingford's oldest pub but the panel with the two musicians on the cable end wall seems to be a copy of a mural on cable end wall on a particular street in Derry!

McArdles and Carlingford Craft (mentioned in your entry form) and one of the most popular spots in the village

Dans Stonewall Cafe all deserve mention as well.

Public buildings such as the National School and Adjoining Community Hall, Both the RC and Presbyterian Churches were all presented to an acceptable standard.

One notices that there is a planning application on the centrally located shop premises at the corner of Newry Street for among other things a micro brewery.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The standard of both short term and sustainable landscaping arrangements was top class in the outlying areas as one entered the village as well as in the core of the village.

Congratulations on getting so many volunteers involved in your signature make over project which has been completed in the last year.

The resulting improvements were viewed by the adjudicator and one has to be impressed with the amount of work that went into these enhancements.

The community spirit certainly is to the forefront in Carlingford and this adjudicator has not witnessed such a concerted involvement in anywhere else in the County.

Not alone were adults involved but the younger generation are acquiring skills and an idea what commitment is all about.

Very impressed with the installation of a screening panel to prevent children from possibly getting hurt

The adopted corners scheme has proven to be a winner and the results of this can be seen around the village, a very nice cobblestone bed was noted at the Thosel name stone.

Further to the above there were a few other planting arrangements that took the eye of the adjudicator; a lovely sustainable arrangement at the junction near the gable end of the Abbey Lodge B&B, a little arrangement with name stone and featuring standards such as euonymus in honour of the bould King John, a multiplicity of tubs with traditional annuals all along the promenade adding so much colour to the area.

Well done also on providing a bit of colour for the winter visitor and maybe one will get a chance to see these later in the year.

Let's not forget the well maintained park that houses the unique and excellent Leprechaun Museum.

Overall the standard in this category was very high and deserving of an increase in marks.

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

The commissioning of a wildlife notice board for the wildlife sanctuary is noted and this certainly will add to what is already in place.

This is a fine amenity that serves an education resource on wildlife for the local school children who of course were involved in its construction.

I'm sure that you get a lot of school tours to the village as on the day of adjudication a group of kids from neighbouring Meath were off on a hike out of town.

If the sanctuary is not included as a place to visit maybe it should be promoted as such and now with the information board being installed it will be a starting point for a bio diversity school tour

The Wildlife Observation Point was visited and it is a tranquil location where one can relax as well as doing some bird watching.

The adjudicator sampled some of the Greenway in nearby Omeath and intends to come back at a later stage all going well when he may bring his trusted older Raleigh framed bike.

Is the data base of plant life in the sanctuary up on any website or available in pdf format or hard back copy?

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

The measures included in this section tend to dwell more on the waste reduction, reuse and minimise elements and these are very laudable but this category is now trying to encourage more need to address the prevention of waste ethos.

www.localprevention.ie is a good source to start when researching information on trends and new developments in the area of waste prevention.

It is also recommended that one consult the EPA website to find out what is the status with the National Waste Prevention Strategy.

It is good to note that salvaged material was used in the production of the bridge at St Michaels Terrace project and also in the now nearly compulsory bug hotel.

The Trashion fashion trend has certainly taken Louth by storm and the re use of farmers feed barrels as flower troughs is an excellent idea.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

A varied programme has been put in place to combat litter problems that may arise in the village.

Carlingford has a greater need for these constant anti litter measures as the place has high volume of people coming to visit on a regular basis.

The standard on the day in question was very good considering the heavy inflow of visitors and very little litter bar a few wrappers on the village green was seen.

Some weed growth was noticed in a few parts of the village core area near the main Sli Na Slainte sign on the promenade, at the base of stone wall on the road up to the sailing club, on laneway from Newry Street on to the main road and a few other points on Thosel Street.

There's an area where the sign for Carlingford Sailing Club Bar and Restaurant (Ghan Road?) is placed that has a broken wall and over growth coming on to the street.

One appreciates that it's a hard job to keep everything pristine and that you have as stated put a programme of control in place.

The village is free from unsightly overhead wires which make the street scape more visible and attractive.

There is a multiplicity of signs in the village and these, with the exception of a few, are clean and visible.

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

The standard in this category was very good and the following is the observations that the adjudicator made on his walk about.

Market Court was in good condition in a central location in the town with properties presented well and ample parking for residents.

Trinity Close a very well maintained established estate with some nice planting arrangements at the entrance.

Oliver Plunkett Park is one of the best maintained local authority housing areas viewed by this adjudicator during travels over the years, the green area being punctuated with two wonderful shrub beds.

St Michaels Terrace which has had the royal treatment in landscaping terms is equally as attractive with residents presenting homesteads to a very high standard.

Another area to give due recognition to was Harbour Cottages a relatively new development.

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

The entrance in from Omeath is very well presented as was the main entrance in from the main MI.

Verges on both were kept in accordance with good practice for the preservation of wildlife.

Well done on retaining your silver medal in the Louth Litter League 2014 competition and its re assuring for a visitor when seeing this as it gives a very good first impression of the place.

All of the side areas, except for on mentioned in the tidiness section, were well presented and clear for both vehicle and human traffic both of which can be quite heavy at peak times.

Weeds have been removed from the slip road to Newry this year.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit Carlingford after a good number of years and enjoy the experience which will have to be repeated at another time when it will be purely leisure. You are wished well in the future.