

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castlebellingham-Kilsaran** Ref: **1036**
County: **Louth** Mark: **279**
Category: **B** Date(s): **24/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	50	50
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	37	37
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	35	36
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	23	23
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	33
TOTAL MARK	450	275	279

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Castlebellingham/Kilsaran is welcome to the 2015 Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition.

Thank you for the comprehensive entry form, biodiversity management plan summary and 2013 village and works plan.

The map was a little hard to decipher but it did help the adjudicator to identify places that were relevant to the process of adjudicating.

The 2013 work plan is slightly irrelevant in the present context as the adjudicator needed a one page update for 2015 to see what has been done over the last year that said the detail is in the body of the entry form document. Your committee of 8 has done immense work in presenting the village to such a good standard across all categories.

Good links have been forged with the local business community and organisations such as the local GAA.

The financial assistance in the form of a grant from Louth County Council would be the envy of many other centres around the country so well done on achieving this support.

It is recommended that a summary of the existing 3 year plan which ends next year be submitted with next year's entry form.

Communication methods are mixture of the tried and trusted newsletter and local papers combined with a presence in the Louth Tidy Towns Together website which the adjudicator linked into.

The committee should consider using forms of social media like facebook, twitter, what's app where one can get instant access to the wider public especially the younger population.

Good to see a strong bond with Kilsaran National School which has its own web presence hosted by scoil.net and has been very successful in getting its third green flag through progressive project work in different disciplines.

50 years entering the competition is some achievement and no doubt the tradition will continue on to the next generations.

Thank you for your endorsement of the competition and what it has meant to your community and yes the village has improved in visual appearance since this adjudicator was here a good number of years ago.

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

The improvements that you have listed in this section are significant and the committee has to be congratulated for encouraging these improvements some of which the committee may have been part of.

It would have been of interest to the adjudicator if the name of the new owners of the hotel were mentioned in the submission.

The adjudicator did discover that the Corscadden Family who have hotel interests in Cavan and Kerry now own the Bellingham so well done to this hotel group for investing and re opening as a top class hotel.

St Marys RC Church in Kilsaran was visited and it was in splendid condition and again credit is due to the parish council who look after the up keep of the church.

The National School, which has already been commented on in a previous section for its success in the Green flag programme, is a fine school with ample access for pupils, parents and teachers.

O Connells GAA Grove Field development is a fine facility now with an outstanding clubhouse that many other larger clubs would envy.

The bollards at the ticket entrance is a very good idea as it stops lads from just driving up and abandoning cars randomly as they rush into matches at the last minute.

The following commercial premises appealed to the adjudicator for a number of reasons condition, presentation of frontages and colour; McBrides a nicely presented tidy bar in the traditional style, Foleys Tearooms lovely colour scheme with complementing flower baskets it looks as if it was closed on the day of adjudication and the thatch roof was under repair, Whites Pharmacy, Blades Barbers a simple frontage in black and red, The Credit Union Building in Kilsaran looks very well and has ample off road parking.

Both pubs mentioned in your submission P J Byrne and the Brewery Tavern are also well presented.

Strand Manufacturing in Kilsaran has a well organised industrial premises with a tidy yard for trucks and product.

Both Castlebellingham and Kilsaran have more than a couple of obvious derelict properties that are not mentioned in this section and the adjudicator would ask the committee to give a status input on these for to next year's competition.

One appreciates that it may be outside the control of the committee to influence the owners of these vacant and derelict properties but they should be commented upon at least.

Finally the adjudicator is at a loss to understand how a two storey premises which has obvious historical links to the town of Castlebellingham is in line to be knocked and replaced by a two storey retail building with 34 car spaces if the planning application is approved.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

There has been a lot of good work done in this category since last year and the adjudicator visited the areas that were identified in your submission as well as making some observations of his own during the course of his walkabout.

There are a number of unoccupied premises on the Dublin road end of town where business have closed and that area looks a little forlorn maybe prior to next year the committee might consider putting a few suitable planters the brighten that street.

At the corner leading into Crescent View two derelict houses make that area look a little tatty and even a temporary solution such as a few shrub planters would give the place a lift until a permanent solution is found.

The Stabanon Road junction is an excellent feature and the gazebo really added to the excellent and colourful planting arrangement.

The committee might consider adding a few extra containers of annuals to the well maintained diamond area at the Clogherhead/Annagassan Junction.

The beautifully maintained rose bed at the Tallanstown Belfast sign post was admired for the good condition of the roses and this was further enhanced by the hanging basket of old reliable trailing petunias.

The immediate near Foleys gives a very inviting look at this busy junction.

This adjudicator would not be the greatest fan of old tyres painted and used as flower containers as they can get very tatty.

I would suggest that you take on this area as a landscape project for next year and try and re vitalise somewhat.

The seating area in Kilsaran is very well maintained and good use of used pallets and what might seem as a contradiction the painted tyres her look well,

The Crowing Cock area would benefit from some camouflage planting next year as it is a major eyesore in an otherwise nice part of Castlebellingham/Kilsaran.

For the work done an increase in marks is merited but do get advice from Louth Tidy Towns Together or Louth CC prior to tackling the areas highlighted for treatment over the coming year

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

The attached Annagassan Castlebellingham Biodiversity Plan is a bit dated judging by the dates of entry so maybe this needs to be reviewed with the help of the County Bio Diversity Officer.

No mention was made in this document of the Dee/Glyde controlling invasive species study by Queens University Belfast and which is featured at the bridge on Dublin Road exit.

A rather strange omission one would think but you have alluded to it in your entry form without any comment on its importance.

Projects you have undertaken this year have been noted and welcomed but one would ask the committee to consult with the County Bio Diversity Officer to discuss an update of the original Bio Diversity plan in light of changes that may have occurred in the intervening years.

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

The recycling centre in Kilsaran was extremely well maintained and it is also housed in an area that has ample parking and easy access for users.

The protective and camouflaging wall sponsored by the local credit union is very practical feature.

The other measures including the already motioned seating are very worthwhile features but the emphasis is this category is very much on the need to prevent waste thus contributing to the reduction of the national waste mountain.

www.localprevention.ie is an excellent source of information on both waste prevention and the continuing need to

manage what is produced effectively.

The EPA website gives an update on the status of the National Strategy for Waste Prevention and also it would be worthwhile keeping in touch with the County Environmental Officer to see if any relevant information nights are being planned for the winter.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

At the risk of causing an internal split in the parish the pockets of litter discovered during the adjudication walkabout were in Castlebellingham itself!

The amounts were not significant but there is a potential black spot in the village at the hoarding where people seem to discard wrappers and cigarette butts this seems to be the bus stop area

The derelict properties issue has already been dealt with but there are some side areas that were a little untidy in both "villages" and the owners of these need to just keep them free from weed growth.

The streetscape of the village wasn't unduly taken over by overhead wires and the footpaths were free of clutter with one or two exceptions.

The new bins with the tidy towns identification were of good design and sturdy in construction terms.

Well done on managing the Bring Bank on a daily basis it has already come in for positive comment in the previous section.

You have done quite an amount of work in this category to get the message of both good litter control and general tidiness across to the local population.

There are a number of negative factors that are outside your control and hopefully some of these will improve over time.

For the work done an increase in marks is justified.

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

St Marys Villas in Kilsaran was visited and indeed it's a fine well established housing development with a real pride of place.

Its looks as if the residents there are well established through the decades and the residents and its association deserve immense credit for the effort put in to keep the area looking so good and attractive.

Crescent View is a nice compact estate with tree lined entrance; it's a pity that the entrance is negated somewhat by the derelict property adjacent to it.

Bellingham Green a relatively new development looked very well, maybe the green area needs to be enhanced somewhat.

Beech Grove on the Clogherhead Road is very nice development with well maintained green areas and some fine individual gardens

Riverview Crescent in Kilsaran is another compact development that looks well and landscaping features are maturing nicely.

Gort Nua which was opened in 2005 is indeed in fine condition and well done to the residents on attaining the award in the Louth Looking Good Competition.

The adjudicator notes that the name stone features the name of the then minister and the "dignitaries" who were present on the day of the opening, a rather self indulgent practice which hopefully has been dispensed with.

Overall the standard was good and on par with last year.

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

The entrances in the village were all in an overall context well presented with verges cut back in accordance with good practice and signs visible and clean.

Road surfaces for the most part were good as should be expected and road markings were clear and not faded.

The Dublin road entrance has been further enhanced by the new improvements at O Connells GAA Grounds.

The Clogherhead Road while a little tight had the verges cut neatly as one enters Castlebellingham.

The standout entrance for this adjudicator is the entrance into Kilsaran at the Stabannon Junction with its excellent name sign and planting scheme.

The Tallanstown Road was also in very acceptable condition.

Concluding Remarks:

It was good to come back to Castlebellingham and Kilsaran after a good number of years. You are wished well in the years ahead.