

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Grange** Ref: **1708**
County: **Louth** Mark: **275**
Category: **B** Date(s): **17/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	39	43
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	25	26
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	28	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	34
TOTAL MARK	450	261	275

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Grange is very welcome to the 2015 Supervalu Tidy Towns competition.

Thank you for the most creative entry form received to date by this adjudicator it is a credit to both the Chairperson and the committee.

The supplementary material supplied was of equal calibre covering the work in progress, before and after pictures of projects completed in the last year and also the events attended by parish members.

The Cooley Scenic Drive map and legend serves as a reminder that the adjudicator needs to come back to this idyllic part of the country for a leisure visit.

Well done also on awards achieved in the Louth Looking Good and Louth Litter League competitions.

It was the adjudicator's first visit to Grange and it certainly was a pleasant one.

The 12 committee members and 40 co volunteers deserve immense credit for effort put in to maximise the potential of the village to the fullest in the last number of years.

On the adjudication day a few people were out doing work on own properties or cutting grass verges as was the case at Murphy's Garage area.

You have excellent relationships with the Louth County Council, other agencies, local population and the business community who have been generous sponsors of your work.

The Men's Shed concept is to the fore in the area and no doubt this acts as resource for you as well.

Methods of communication are a mixture of old and new and the Christmas card to every household in the parish is an excellent idea as a thank you to the local people.

The website presence is good and the committee should assign one or two people to keep content up to date.

Good to note that you have strong relationship with primary and national schools and well done to both of them for success achieved under the Green Flag programme.

It's heartening to read the positive comments resulting from your involvement in the competition and the fact that your participation has impacted on other groups around the area.

An increase of marks is warranted in this category.

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

St James RC Church was in splendid condition and was after being painted.

It is good note that the local pub has been refurbished and reopened unfortunately the adjudicator did not have the time to avail of hospitality.

Further down a boundary wall could do with a quick coat of paint as it was getting stained from traffic residue.

The quality of the extended footpath all the way down by Rath Abbey residential area was top class and the pebble feature at the base of the post and rail fencing is complementary to the overall look.

Similarly road surfaces in the core area of the village and on the outskirts were very good with a few rough patches

on the link roads such as the Acre.

Barry's Shop and Post Office was well presented with a fine concreted area that allowed good parking in off the road.

The Bush Second Level school was in very good condition and looked as if the extension was in the stages of full completion.

Murphy's Garage is a throwback to a different decade and it was in good condition with the old style lettering still prominent.

The Mens Shed premises was in top class condition which was down to the work of the group members.

Other elements of their work were noted around the village.

Finally the quality of stone walls was out of the top drawer.

An increase in marks this year is justified.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The standard of landscaping both sustainable all year round and the beds of annuals was of very high quality.

As one enters from the main R175 you have to be impressed with the array of double begonias in the tastefully designed An Grainseach timber containers no doubt made locally by a group from the Mens Shed

The Village Pump could be enhanced with a new planter of annuals and it would add to that particular feature although the adjudicator is aware of your concerns after the robbery last year.

Other equally impressive features were observed on Kindlons Green and well done to the generosity of O Neills Garden centre for sponsoring this area.

The Green area opposite Murphy old style garage has some maturing saplings and permanent seating for one to relax and chill out.

The Bush Park and aforementioned area were in the throes of grass cutting on the day and the man in question who seemed to be from a more northern part of the island was very informative and keen to impart knowledge about the area.

A few green areas are earmarked in your plan for further permanent planting and you are wished well with this.

For the large volume of mixed work that you have done in this category especially over the twelve month period an additional mark is awarded.

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

Well done on the realistic initiatives that you have undertaken in this category such as clearing Grange Pond and restoring it as a natural haven for various species of wildlife.

The new pond habitat panel which was installed in March of this year is very nice piece of design and most informative.

The involvement of Monksland National School in wildlife initiatives and environmental awareness particularly the coastal study is duly noted.

Links with the national school children are a vital cog in providing the building blocks for a future generation and we look forward to seeing more of this type of collaboration with both schools in the future.

The community garden at St Andrews Church of Ireland was visited and will further develop over the years.

A good body of work has been done in this category and there is more planned for the future.

This warrants an increase of one mark.

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

This category has been revamped for a primarily to encourage the concept of Waste Prevention as distinct from waste management.

Grange Tidy Towns committee has demonstrated by the number of excellent measures put in place since last year that it is committed to good waste management practice and conservation of energy.

The SOS idea fostered by the school is novel but very in tune with energy saving.

For next year's competition the committee should consider giving more thought to project ideas that are geared to waste prevention.

www.localprevention.ie is an excellent website to start with for ideas also consult the EPA website for an update on the National Strategy for Prevention of Waste.

Consult with the County Environmental Officer to see if any upcoming information nights are planned for the winter months ahead.

For the new measures that you have undertaken an increase in marks is justified but do concentrate more on waste prevention over the coming year.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The standard in an overall context of litter control and general tidiness was good and the committee has worked hard to get a positive message out to the community.

The involvement in the spring clean up is noted and was on par with the exceptional effort that was put in the county under the An Taisce Clean up days.

The careless tractor driver has certainly been chastised for his lack of awareness! but maybe it was an accident and difficult for him/her to negotiate that particular.

The tractors in Louth seem to be particularly big and move fairly fast on those narrow roads as experienced by the adjudicator.

Well done to the owner of the newly refurbished hostelry to encourage patrons to put their butts into a bucket provided for their convenience.

Bits of litter including milk carton observed at a new stone wall entrance into a property on the Acre road and it

looked like somebody was after a lunch break.

Good to note that rusty poles have been removed as these are often such obvious eyesores in rural villages. A few untidy side areas were noted in the walkabout and all you can do as a committee is to keep encouraging people to be civic minded, I'm glad that the pesticides used in the spraying were of the organic variety.

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

Rath Abbey is a very well maintained and presented housing development and it is surprising that it is not mentioned in this section under your submission.

What have included are more aligned to the built environment but there maybe a cross over in one or two instances The village is a mix of well maintained private residences and the commercial properties already mentioned in the built environment section.

There are a number of well presented farm houses and yards that the adjudicator noticed on his walk about as well A very impressive stand alone house on extensive grounds can be viewed on way down from Church to the shop and if one looks out from the fence a cluster of relatively recent individual house some on elevated sites can be seen.

Overall the standard was very good and deserving of an increase in marks

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

Entrances into the village especially off the R175 were very good and outstanding at Rogans Cross.

The back roads like the Acre which connects on to the R173 to Carlingford were kept well and the side lane up at the back of the Church were relatively tidy.

The road up to Monksland and on to the beach, whilst a little tight, was very acceptable.

The standout feature for this adjudicator was the quality of the bi lingual stone name signs to be seen at The Irish Grange and at the Bush near the junction for the road to Templetown.

Features enhance entrance and another one was the new wall at the stream near the Bush which had the backdrop of a boundary wall transformed by themed murals.

Grange has probably the best examples of entrances that the adjudicator has encountered during his time in the county but it's only a personal opinion.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit this lovely idyllic village most of which was hidden away and enjoy its charm that unfortunately is not too readily available in rural Ireland anymore.