

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tallanstown** Ref: **852**
County: **Louth** Mark: **317**
Category: **B** Date(s): **25/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	56	56
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	42	43
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	38
TOTAL MARK	450	313	317

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Tallanstown is very welcome to the 2015 Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition.

Thank you very kindly for your exceptional entry form, concise to the point and all details included in a 10 page submission including appendices plus a welcome map and pictorial records of village related activities and work done over the last year.

This is a perfect example; from one the top 5 achievers over the last number of years in the competition, of how an entry form should be completed.

It also contributes to the waste prevention ethos- less paper.

It may not mean that the task of the adjudicator is any easier but it certainly allows for easier understanding of information contained within.

The adjudicator has to point out at the outset that as you are very aware it's extremely hard to earn additional marks when at the top end of the scale.

That said the village entry will be judged impartially and fairly as per the guidelines of the competition.

There's a massive buy in and support of your efforts by the whole community of Tallanstown which is to be expected as you were national winners 5 years back, doesn't time move on, and also you are one of the stalwarts of the competition having first entered all of 31 years.

As a seasoned committee you have adapted well to the new structure of the competition and have taken changes on board with good effect.

One has to commend the commitment of your volunteer core especially the 35 rostered for Litter Control duty I suppose it's a bit like a team being as good as yours subs bench.

Obviously the work has paid off as you with ultimate success in the Louth Litter League.

The Village of course has also benefited from success as the National Representative in the Entente Florale and Communities in Bloom competitions the legacy of which can be seen all over.

Links with the Local Authority, CES and TUS administered schemes and of course the wider local community are extremely strong and these have paid off handsomely.

Communication using the old trusted methods combined with modern social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Whats App, Viber and the like all contribute to getting your message out there in a professional fashion.

Good to note that you have appointed a School Liaison Officer and that the Junior Tidy Towns is so active.

Thank you for the positive comments on how the competition has helped your community to become more cohesive and also how you have a tourism benefit to the local economy by virtue of additional visitors.

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

The adjudicator has visited the village on a few occasions over the last few years and there has been additional ongoing improvement, understated in some instances, but effective in the overall context of the 3 year plan.

St Peters and Paul Catholic Church has been totally revitalised having been repainted in a very attractive combination of cement grey and magnolia, forgive me if I've got the exact colour mix wrong. This is focal point building in the centre of the village and it stands out even more as a result of this work. Vere Foster's sculptor is still to the forefront in the centre of the village and looked as if it was revitalised somewhat in the last year.

A few other properties both commercial and private dwellings have also been repainted and on the day of adjudication there were a number of people working on different aspects of keeping their homesteads up to the standard expected of them !

It helped of course that the evening was so fine.

Maguire Park was visited and the new soft tarmac walk was admired for design and quality.

You have discovered a novel idea on how to make positive use of redundant telephone kiosk for the benefit of the local community.

Congratulations to both commercial premises that won awards in the Louth Looking Good Awards but the standard of presentation of all commercial properties was very good with frontages, side and back areas all managed well and it would be remiss of the adjudicator to single out any one in particular.

The setting that the compact and tidy Take Away occupies is not one associated with such outlets even in villages and small towns.

The Adjudicator has to single out the School and Glide Rangers GFC, obviously hurling is not much in vogue here, for the manner in which these public places are maintained, due credit to the people responsible for their upkeep.

It is well accepted that Tallanstown is one of the jewels in the crown in the County and as such it is more than likely that it gets a fair hearing from Louth County Council if requests for infrastructural improvements are made!

The road surfaces, footpaths and street lighting were in top condition as one would expect from a high achiever.

The Village received a high mark in this category last year and it retains its standing this year and as alluded to it has a community support structure and outside resources available to it that other villages would not have.

Just as a matter of interest it looks as if the seat from the old Hogan Stand in Croke Park seems to have been removed from its former setting!

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

All one can say is that the village was resplendent in a mass of varying colours such was the array of floral arrangements to be seen in public places, on window boxes, hanging baskets and in private residences around the village and on the outskirts particularly Glyde Road estate which is slightly away from the village proper.

Of course there is a lot more to this section than double begonias, lupins, trailing lobelia and various shrubs such as euonymus, hellebores etc.

Lavender blooms still as popular as ever in the village.

Combination planting is very much to the fore in all areas of the village as well and this has been alluded to in previous reports.

The treatment of green areas and open spaces was second to none particularly on approach roads to the village.

Public seating was maintained to a high standard as were the communal planters and stone shrub beds.

This takes quite an amount of volunteer input to supplement work done by CE Scheme and TUS workers.

Maguire Park was in splendid condition with modifications and improvements such as the new path adding to it and it was noted that a number of new saplings were planted along the verge and were well protected.

The sensory garden is as always properly maintained and various plants and herbs identified by notation signs.

Overall the standard was, as to be expected, very good.

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

The Field Names of County Louth is a rather interesting concept and project and the adjudicator did some research into it to find that it was initiated in 2012 and received support through public funding and private sponsorship.

It stands to reason that being such an arable landed county that something like this would prove to be so popular throughout the County.

Two such designations one "The Hall Field" and the other name forgotten- bad note keeping- were observed during the adjudication walkabout.

10 new initiatives since last year were noted and these further enhance the existing ones in place.

What stands out in this section for this adjudicator at any rate is the full on involvement of the National School well done to pupils and teachers and the school liaison officer for achieving a 5th Green Flag for Bio Diversity.

Also the work done by Junior Tidy Towns Committee in undertaking the fish population survey on the Glyde River in conjunction with the OPW Ranger will be a useful pike of research for interested parties in the years to come.

The other improvements were noted and they also contribute to a strong performance in this category which merits an increase in marks.

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

Communities are now coming to grips with what is required of them when submitting initiatives in this particular category.

Most places have come from a low mark base because of the way the category was previously set up.

What impresses one in this category is the number of small but contributory projects that the committee has undertaken in the last year.

A book exchange programme is not rocket science but the fact that an unused utility such as a phone kiosk can be adapted as a facility for this purpose makes the project so appealing and a perfect fit for what is required under this category

Putting used field stones to good use in the repair of stone walls is another simple but effective waste prevention

option.

Trashion Fashion has become popular in Louth but your approach in mentoring second level pupils is the best way to impart knowledge of how to reuse waste materials properly.

The work undertaken in this category is deserving of an additional mark.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

First place in the Louth County Councils Litter League in 2014 is a top class achievement but unfortunately any slight bit of litter observed will stand out in a village that has such high standards.

The adjudicator observed a few random pieces, including two plastic bottles, near enough to the core area of the village and in Maguire Park.

Dog Fouling is a no in the village and there is no excuse for dog owners as there are dog waste bins and a number of notices reminding people of the need to be vigilant and clean up after one's canine does his or hers business. Not so sure what the Doggie Ambassador programme is all about -it sounds like an internship for dogs- but one presumes its part of the anti dog fouling measures in place.

Despite possible local competition rivalry with neighbouring villages it was good to note that the communal spirit is very much alive in Louth.

Litter bins done in village themed colour with Tidy Towns logo very attractive and innovative.

The Village is extremely tidy but again anything slightly out of sync stands out.

A back area which is relatively exposed in the vicinity of the Church is still in a rather messy condition by Tallanstown standards and it would be beneficial if the owner was approached just to make small improvements prior to next year's competition.

A development sign opposite Glyde Cottages on the Castlebellingham Road looks a bit grotty simply because it just looks out of place where it's positioned.

Weed control was good and kerbsides were relatively free from farm related activity residue.

Well done on the provision of supports such as high viz vests and gloves for volunteer litter pickers.

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

The adjudicator didn't realise that there were eight residential areas in the village and surrounds.

The standard of presentation of all the estates was, as always, very good and in some cases exceptions and credit is due to the residents of all estates for the manner in which they have presented individual homesteads and gardens.

Tallansfield Manor seems to have been revived somewhat in the last year and it looks as if a few properties that were vacant have either been purchased or rented.

The work on the Glydeview Estate across the road was viewed as well.

Reynard still holds court on the way into the excellent Castleview Estate and Louth Hall Cottages hold a certain appeal for this adjudicator.

Chestnut Grove, Glyde Road Cottages and Rathbrist are established and very well presented housing areas where communal green areas are so well kept

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

First impressions of place are often formed as one enters from approach roads and certainly the standard of excellence in this category is set by places such as Tallanstown.

Ongoing work has seen simple but effective improvements over the last year.

Verges are maintained in accordance with good practice, saplings planted a few years back are now maturing nicely.

Village flagpoles, pleasant name signs and ecology trail information boards and the insect hotels help to give that inviting feeling as one enters the village.

It takes quite some work to maintain these road entrances to such a high standard that great credit is due to the personnel that work on CE Schmes, where would Rural Ireland be without them, for the effort and dedication they put into their work.

Maybe the Committee might include a similar comment under Section in next year's entry form,

I've no doubt that these people are well appreciated by the community of Tallanstown but no harm to acknowledge it on the form.

Concluding Remarks:

As always it's a pleasure to visit Tallanstown especially on beautiful summer's day to appreciate the vibrancy of a village at its best. You are wished in the future and the adjudicator has advised his friends to take time out and visit if in the immediate area.