

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardaghey** Ref: **529**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **285**
Category: **A** Date(s): **08/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	44	45
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	32	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	33	34
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	34	35
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60	63
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	26	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	33
TOTAL MARK	450	274	285

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome Ardaghey to the 2015 tidy towns competition and we appreciate your continuing involvement. We are delighted to hear that participation levels in your village are high with a combined total of almost 25 members on the Development Association and Tidy Towns committee. This is very impressive. We are also pleased to read that you work closely with Foróige, Monaghan County Council and Fas / Tus. Is there a local leader company that can offer you further advice or funding? Well done on securing the sponsorship and support of local businesses – they clearly appreciate the excellent work that you are doing for your village. Your communication strategy is comprehensive and it is obviously working given the high levels of participation that you have achieved. However, some consideration should be given to developing an online presence as a website is a very effective way of publicising your work to a wider audience and for capturing feedback. We are delighted to read that you have been working with the school and that you have setup a junior tidy towns group. We urge you to consider delegating some projects to the junior group and please keep us up-to-date on any tasks that they complete. Thank you for your comprehensive application form that it was a great help during adjudication. While the submission was generally excellent and very user-friendly, one small improvement would be confining all projects to a single map (rather than three separate maps) – even if it has to be of A3 size or bigger. Your concise tidy towns plan is good and we loved the tabular format followed but some actions are a little vague. For example, under the wildlife section, could specific projects be included instead of a broad intention to 'develop the biodiversity plan'. Thank you also for your positive comments on the competition as they are much appreciated and we are delighted to read that it has been such a positive experience for you.

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

Ardaghey looked particularly well during our visit and a number of buildings stood out. The church is a lovely historical building which appears to be very well maintained and it also has attractive semimature trees and grounds. The school, which is located a short distance outside of the village, is similarly impressive as it achieves a high standard of presentation with its fresh coat of paint. The community centre nearby also looked well with its newly rendered front boundary wall and colourful planters. The committee is congratulated on its excellent work to the Forge. This historical structure, which is located in the centre of your village, is clearly of local importance and it is great to see that you are determined to see it preserved and maintained. The removal of the trees and ivy from the side of this building will no doubt reduce some of the risks posed to the structure in the short term and we wish you luck in your attempts to source funding for improvements works to the roof. We loved the ornate lamp stands that could be seen throughout the village and the absence of overhead wires is also acknowledged as it provides for a very neat and tidy appearance.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

We are delighted to see that your committee has been busy with a range of projects under this category. The planting of 1000 Blackthorn twigs as part of the hedge thickening project on the main approach road is an excellent initiative as hedgerows provide excellent habitats for bird life and wildlife as well as well as a high quality boundary treatment. We wondered if you have any other plans to plant native hedgerow? We are pleased to read that the committee has been engaged in planting Beech, Ash and Holly trees and the benefits of this project will be seen in your village for years to come. Were these trees planted to replace those that were removed from around the forge? The committee is commended on the high quality landscaping schemes that were viewed during adjudication. We loved the shrubbery to be seen around the village name sign on the approach from Lisleitrim. This is a lovely piece of work which appears very well maintained and which accommodates a very good range of species. The wildflower area adjacent to the shrubbery also looks well and it is great to see that the wildflowers have taken hold. The grounds of the Church are deserving of positive comment as the combination of neatly trimmed grass, semi mature trees and colourful summer bedding plants helps to enhance this nice building. The hanging baskets and fence boxes were also admired as they were particularly colourful and they helped to create a positive impression. The planters at the community hall also looked very well.

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

The wildlife garden adjacent to the forge is a lovely amenity and it is noted with approval that there is a very good diversity of species in it and that it does not appear to be overly manicured. We are pleased to see that the stumps of the felled trees remain – this is a very good idea and a sound approach as their removal could damage other vegetation and even the Forge itself. The overall presentation of the garden is exceptionally good as the timber fence has been treated and the field gates have also been painted. Has a survey been undertaken of the wildlife garden? It would be interesting to see if the variety of vegetation and plant species on offer provides for a good diversity of wildlife and birdlife. Similarly, we urge you to monitor the effects of leaving an area of uncut grass along the roadside verges – perhaps a survey could be undertaken of these verges and the wildlife garden by the schoolchildren? Well done on your other projects under this section – particularly your visit to the Clontibet Wildlife and Heritage Centre and we would love to hear if it provides the inspiration for new projects for your group. We note that your group provides food (in the wildlife garden) for wild birds during the winter months and we recommend that plant and tree varieties that provide winter food should be included in your future landscaping schemes.

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

This category has undergone an increase in significance in the last number of years in the tidy towns competition with a total of 50 marks now allocated to it – which is the same number of marks available for the built environment, landscaping and wildlife categories. We note that your application form includes a number of sustainable waste and resource management projects for 2015 such as fitting water butts at the community centre, improving the community centre by installing push taps, replacing bulbs with LEDs, providing a waste food bin, installing wall and attic insulation and inserting heating controls on the radiators. However, we were somewhat surprised to see that many of these projects were also presented in 2014 and we would encourage you to do more and to try to identify projects that are in addition to those that result in energy and resource conservation in the community hall. For example, why not install water butts in other locations in Ardaghey (such as at the Church) as the resulting rain water can then be used for landscaping in this part of the village. Tell us also about the attempts of your committee to minimise and eliminate waste when carrying out your tidy towns projects. Do you make your own compost (from grass cuttings and plant trimmings), grow your plants or use recycled materials for planters? Many other ideas for projects under this category can be found in the tidy towns handbook.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We are delighted to say that the standard of litter control observed during adjudication was exceptionally high with no litter at all spotted. Well done as this is an excellent performance, particularly given the vulnerability of the village to litter from vehicles and trailer passing through on the way to the Scotch Corner Recycling Centre. This strong performance indicates that your hard work in this category (which includes participating in the national spring clean and constant litter patrols) is proving very effective. The committee is also commended on achieving a very high level of tidiness with no weeds to be found anywhere and all road verges looking trimmed and roadsides and pavements appearing cleanly swept. As always however, improvements are still possible for 2016 – particularly with respect to a small number of signs. The wildlife sign in the wildlife garden is dirty and would benefit from a wash while the garda community alert sign and the road sign indicating a cross roads (both on the Lisleitrim approach) also need to be cleaned. The back and yellow road sign on the Monaghan approach needs attention and a field gate in this location would benefit from a fresh coat of paint. The road verge up from the Church is very untidy looking and we wondered if it is planned to resurface this in the near future?

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

It is noted from your application form that your committee regularly request support from residents for your projects and ask them to maintain the green areas and hedgerows in front of their houses. We are pleased to say that the residents seem to be 100% supportive of your efforts with a very high standard of presentation achieved during adjudication.

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

Your form indicates that you been very busy under this category and we were delighted to see your work at first hand. The new flowerbed on the Monaghan road (which we understand was planted by a local boy) was admired as

it helps to brighten up this approach. The committee is commended on mowing and maintaining all grass verges (whilst leaving a section uncut for wildlife) in the village as this makes a very positive contribution to the appearance of the approach roads. Well done also on providing signage to the graveyard and for cleaning road signs as this helps to give Ardagh a very neat and tidy appearance. We were also pleased to read that the road surface close to the chapel has been upgraded and we wondered if the road surface at the cross roads (leading to the school) could be improved? The timber fence at the wildlife garden also looked very well.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done Ardagh and congratulations on another strong performance in the competition. Be sure to give some further consideration to your sustainable waste and resource management projects next year and we look forward to seeing you again in 2016.