

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Inniskeen** Ref: **556**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **294**
Category: **B** Date(s): **07/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	37	37
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	37	38
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	41	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	33	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36	37
TOTAL MARK	450	285	294

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome Inniskeen to the 2015 tidy towns completion and we appreciate your participation. It is noted that you have 7 members on your committee and we are pleased to read that you are going on a recruitment drive! Your approach to involving other voluntary groups such as residents associations, the active retirement group and the general public in your projects is commended and it is clear from the adjudication that it is proving successful. Well done on involving local businesses and it is great to see that they provide you with support and sponsorship. We are also pleased to see that you work with Monaghan County Council and we wondered if your committee has made contact with Fas or the County leader or Partnership programme? Well done on your communication strategy which seems comprehensive and we would encourage you to consider setting up a website to showcase your work and events and to encourage feedback from local residents and to identify future projects. We were delighted to read that both national schools in the parish are actively involved in your projects and we wondered if it is time to set up a junior tidy towns committee? Thank you for your completed entry form which was considered during adjudication and the hand drawn map is also a nice addition. Would it be possible to get the projects completed each year marked on the map as suggested in 2014? However, the application form should focus on the projects completed (and on the projects proposed under a separate heading) rather than providing a commentary of the different aspects of your village as this would make it easier for us to assess the work that you have done for 2015. In addition, please remember to be careful with the volume of information that you send in as your supplementary folder is a weighty document and much of the material (comprising photographs of events and so on) is not required. We would also encourage you to restrict the amount of this material that you send in for 2016. We were quite surprised to read that your plan dates back to 2012 and we would also recommend that you review this for the years ahead.

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

This was the first time that the adjudicator had travelled to Inniskeen and it proved to be a very enjoyable experience as the village has plenty of features of interest to engage visitors. We were delighted to see that there are a number of excellent historical buildings which are presented in very good condition. We loved McNello's in the centre of the village as it provides an excellent focal point for Inniskeen. It is particularly heartening to see that it has retained its original features such as the sliding sash windows. The Kavanagh rural and literary centre is both a first class reuse of the old Church building and it is a wonderful asset for your village to have. We are also pleased to see that the old National School building is being reused as a Community Hall. We admired the Church and Round Tower of St Daigs and it was noted that there is a heritage trail in Inniskeen, but we were unable to find any details of this. Could a map of the heritage trail be submitted in 2016? It is great to see that the more modern buildings of St Daigs National School and Inis Og are also maintained to a good standard. We were very impressed with the standard of presentation of commercial premises in the village with the previously mentioned McNellos, Magees and the Poets Rest all looking very well. The Credit Union, the fuel centre and the food store also deserve to be praised.

The Church at the opposite end of the village, with its unusual modern design was also admired. The committee is also commended on its use of public art and other artifacts in the village as the wooden Kavanagh statue is a lovely way to announce the authors association with Inniskeen. We looked for St Columcilles National School on the Blackstaff road but we were unable to locate it. Your application form lists 22 items under the built environment and a further 18 are included under the heading public spaces. It is recommended that only work that has been completed for the competition for this year is included in your entry form (and marked on the map) as otherwise, the projects can get lost in the detail and this leads to them being overlooked during adjudication – causing disappointment for your committee. However, this can be avoided by simply stating what projects have been done and what projects are proposed. Try and also avoid repetition as the Monaghan Walk is mentioned as a project under all categories. That said, it's a fantastic project and deserves to be praised.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

We were delighted to see that many high quality landscaping projects were on view during adjudication. We liked the natural stone landscaping beds with nice seasonal flowering plants at Finnegans Cross, while the landscaping beds at the entrance to the car park of Magees looked tremendous. It is clear that the committee does not miss an opportunity to provide landscaping as the planting on top of natural stone on the river bridge demonstrates. However, the explosion of colour provided by the planting at the roundabout (around the Kavanagh Sculpture and the High Nelly bikes) was a highlight for the adjudicator. We liked the natural stone bed between the Poets Rest and the Kavanagh Centre and the contribution made by the commercial premises of McNellos, Magees, the Fuel Centre and St Daigs School (with its window boxes) is also acknowledged as they looked exceptionally well. The circular natural stone bed with its colourful bedding plants was admired at the welcome sign on the Carrickmacross road approach. We were pleased to read that the committee is engaging in a native tree planting programme – the benefits of this programme will be seen now and for years to come. It is great to see that you have planted shrubs, trees and hedging that are bird and insect friendly at the Ednamo houses and the provision of seating on the River Fane walk is an excellent initiative. We were delighted to read that your committee is participating in the North South Peace Forest – this sounds like an excellent initiative. Well done also on providing a boat of flowers along the River but please indicate the location for 2016 as we were unable to locate it during adjudication.

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

Your committee has certainly been busy under this category. The sensory element that has been provided on the River Fane walk is a lovely addition to a very attractive amenity and well done to the committee for helping the scouts to build an insect hotel and wormery. We are pleased to read that the Monaghan way walk is popular with both residents and visitors and we wondered if there any plans to provide interpretive wildlife signage along it? Perhaps the schools would like to get involved with this project? The directional signage to the walk is first class and it was easily found during adjudication. Your application form states that the committee will be participating in a range of projects under this category in the years ahead which include; bat monitoring, identifying ways to improve the habitat in the village, monitoring mayflies on the River and monitoring the numbers of grey and red squirrels in the area. These are all excellent projects to be involved in and we would encourage you to keep us up-to-date on your progress in 2016. We will also encourage you to try and involve the schools or the scouts in these projects if possible as this 'learning by doing' approach provides a very effective way of raising environmental awareness.

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

The committee is reminded that this category has increased in importance in recent years and it has been allocated 50 marks – which is the same as built environment, landscaping and wildlife and amenities. Therefore, it represents an excellent opportunity to increase your marks and improve your performance in the competition. We are pleased to see that the committee is doing their bit in terms of waste minimization by mulching grass cuttings, reusing old barrels for rainwater harvesting and making your own compost. Have you considered growing your own plants for your landscaping schemes? It is great to see that your committee is also working to encourage other residents in Inniskeen to engage in waste minimisation and elimination by organising seminars with the Councils environmental awareness officer. We were also pleased to read that you attend to carry out a survey to see how many people are composting and we look forward to seeing the results of this survey in 2016. We read with interest that residents are now recycling more and putting out smaller bins and we wondered if this could be monitored? Perhaps questions that address how people are minimising the amount of waste that they generate could be included in your survey? It is not recommended however that newsletters are produced as a means of promoting waste reduction. Remember that the newsletters themselves will represent paper waste in time and public notices, online messages or texts can be just as effective and do not generate waste. Other ideas for projects can be found in the tidy towns handbook.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The standard of litter control observed during adjudication was very high and it was obvious that your litter control efforts are proving effective. It is great to see that the spring clean event was well supported and that it was a resounding success in 2015. Small amounts of litter persist in isolated locations with litter spotted between Finnegans Cross and the railway bridge, on the Dundalk approach road and on the green area in Dun Ard. But overall, this was an impressive performance. We are also delighted to read that the committee is working hard on your projects under this category which include; weed removal, litter control and preventing dog fouling. The results of this work can clearly be seen with neat and tidy pavements and cleanly swept roadsides and public areas. As always, there is a little room for improvement. An untidy layby was spotted adjacent to the picnic area on the approach road from Lacklum with an untidy field gate opposite. We are pleased to see that was no issues with head less sign poles this year so well done on your work to address this issue.

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

This is a very strong category for Inniskeen as some excellent residential areas were observed during adjudication. The adjudicator was most impressed with Dun Ard and it appears to be one of the best kept estates in the county. We loved the central triangular green space with its high quality landscaping beds (one of which contained roses in full bloom) at each corner. In addition, we liked the landscaped banks on the entrance road to the estate which were very well maintained and accommodated a diverse range of species. The name stone, painted agricultural machinery and semi mature trees were also admired. It is further noted that a wild garden has been added and that there are further plans to provide new seats, bins and planters. We were pleased to see that the new residents association at Deerys Terrace also achieved a good standard with their landscaping beds at the entrance, its wooden name sign and attractive seat. Well done to the residents of the Ednamo estate for their work and the issues with St Daigs estate were noted.

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

We are pleased to read that some of roads have been resurfaced and that these works are continuing on a phased basis – it is recommended that this project is included in your tidy towns action plan. The approach roads were generally good with the approaches from Carrickmacross and Finnegans Cross looking particularly well. The Lacklum road was generally good but the verge maintenance on this approach was considered to be somewhat mixed with some areas appearing to be overlong and untidy looking. Well done also on your projects under this category. We observed the old ploughs on the Carrickmacross Road (opposite the Church) and the High Nellys at the roundabout added interest to this key entrance to your village.

Concluding Remarks:

We were delighted to visit Inniskeen and experience the excellent work of the Tidy Towns Committee at first hand and see the significant progress that you make with each passing year. Keep up the good work and we look forward to returning in 2016.