

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Threemilehouse** Ref: **553**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **260**
Category: **A** Date(s): **15/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	31	33
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	32	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	36	38
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	20	21
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10	11
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	35
TOTAL MARK	450	249	260

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

We are delighted to welcome Threemilehouse back to the 2015 tidy towns competition for your second successive year and we applaud your decision to build on your progress in 2014. We note that you have a new committee of 7 dedicated members and that you enjoy the support of Monaghan County Council and Tus. It is strongly recommended that these links are maintained and that assistance is also sought from your County Leader Programme. Your communication strategy seems sound and it is noted that you make use of social media. Have you considered an online presence such as a website? Well done on involving the schools in your work and we have no doubt that the 'junior litter pickers' are a great source of help in trying to control litter in your village. Thank you for your completed entry form and map as both were a great help during adjudication. The map could be further improved if a single A4 page was included with explanation of each of the map numbers. This would enable the adjudicator to understand all numbers on the map without reference back to the entry form. Have your committee considered preparing a 3 to 5 year tidy towns action plan? This is recommended as it will enable you to identify projects under each of the tidy towns categories in Threemilehouse and achieve a balanced approach to the competition. It can also earn you extra marks under this category!

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

The village of Threemilehouse is centred around the junction of the Monaghan Road, the Newbliss road and the Corcaghan road. There are a number of prominent buildings with Conors Pub being the most visible. This period building of traditional design achieved a good standard of presentation and the features adjacent to it comprising of a pump and seating areas add further interest. The Post Office and Shop can be found directly across the road from Conors pub and it also achieved a good standard of presentation. It is further noted that the central point of the village forms a bridge over a small stream for which no name was visible. Could a name sign be provided for this? Other significant buildings in the village include the Church, which is an attractive historical building that occupies a very prominent position overlooking the village. The National School Building is located directly opposite the Church and it appeared to be undergoing some improvements at the time of adjudication. The newly painted timber fence on both sides of the main road (and at the Cois Abhainn estate) looked well while the new place name signs on the Cabra Estate were spotted. The boundary comprising concrete posts and wire fencing along the Sports Centre lands was observed and we are pleased to hear that is proposed to screen this by using a hedgerow.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

A number of attractive landscaping schemes were observed in Threemilehouse on adjudication day. We liked the natural stone gravel-based planted beds that could be seen on the approach road from Monaghan and we applaud your decision to use a good variety of perennials and evergreens – as no doubt these species provide year-round

colour and interest. We also liked the perennials which could be seen in the bed opposite the Post Office. The natural stone planted beds to the front of the Cabra estate comprised of roses in full bloom and colourful seasonal flowering plants looked very well. The concrete painted planters on the boundary of the car park to the rear of Conors Pub also helped to brighten up this area. An excellent diversity of species was also spotted in the large bed which could be found in front of Lynchs shop but we were unable to spot the newly planted trees. Nonetheless, we urge the committee to continue to engage in treeplanting where possible. The approach from Newbliss was reasonable as the planting here did not reach the standard of the landscaping bed on the Monaghan approach road.

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

The committee is commended on implementing the suggestion of the 2014 adjudicator by planting a hedgerow along the wire fence boundary of the Sports Centre. We are also pleased to hear that this project will be undertaken in conjunction with the football club. No work appeared to have been started on adjudication day and we would recommend that a native hedgerow is used. It is further noted that a number of other good suggestions were made in the 2014 adjudicators report and we wondered if any further consideration had been given to providing a walk behind Cormacs premises? It was noted during adjudication that Kinaclay Lough is located near to your village and the village itself accommodates a small river and we wondered if either of these natural resources has been considered for wildlife projects? It is likely that both the small river and lough are rich in biodiversity and it would be great if a survey could be undertaken of either one? Perhaps the school would be interested in forming a nature trail to the Lake or along the River? A survey could also be undertaken of these habitats and the resulting information could be used for interpretive signage. Projects such as these would not only provide for excellent natural amenities (for residents and tourists alike) but they will also help to raise local awareness of biodiversity.

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

This category is now much more significant in the competition than previously with a total of 50 marks allocated to it – the same number of marks that are available for projects under the built environment, landscaping and wildlife and natural amenities categories. Given that the marks for Threemilehouse are lower in this category than in others, it represents an excellent opportunity to increase your overall marks in the competition. The 2014 adjudicators report listed a number of suggestions for projects under this category which included; teaming up with the school to identify waste minimisation and elimination projects and contacting the Council and requesting that an information evening on waste minimisation be held. We wondered if any progress had been made with these suggestions so please let us know in 2016. Don't forget to tell us about what your committee is doing to minimise or eliminate waste. Whilst it is noted that rainwater harvesting is taking place in Threemilehouse, we are interested to know whether you make compost from the grass cuttings from the verges and plant trimmings for use in your landscaping schemes? Do you grow your own plants or use recycled materials (such as waste timber) in your planters and other landscaping schemes? 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 report that Threemilehouse was virtually litter free during adjudication with just one single piece of litter to be found on the stretch of road between the Sports Centre and Conors Pub. No litter can be found anywhere else in the village and this is considered to be a very impressive performance indeed. However, we would love to hear a little bit more about your successful litter control strategy. For example, how often do you undertake your litter patrols? Are any areas within the village given more attention than others? Please let us know in 2016. The standard of tidiness was also very high and it is clear that the committee have worked very hard on weed control and verge maintenance with the result that your village looked spick and span on adjudication day. A small number of improvements are possible. One of the attractive black lamp stands outside Cabra Park is in need of paint while the landscaping bed beneath the name sign on the Newbliss approach road is a little untidy looking. The front boundary wall of the school would also benefit from a fresh coat of paint in time for 2016 and one hopes that this will be included in the refurbishment works that are ongoing.

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

The standard of presentation of individual houses and gardens in Threemilehouse was generally high and the vast majority looked well during adjudication. We were particularly impressed with Cabra estate with its neatly trimmed green areas, semimature trees, pleasant seating areas and colourful landscaping. Cois Abhainn on the Corcaghan road also looked well and it is recommended that some permanent landscaping beds (with a range of perennials and summer bedding plants) are considered for this location.

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

The approach roads into Threemilehouse were generally impressive with neatly maintained verges, clean and visible speed limit signage and name signs to be seen on each one. The Monaghan approach road was particularly impressive with its attractive landscaping and neatly maintained verges. The Newbliss approach road was less impressive due to a lack of quality landscaping and some untidy boundary treatment in this location. We were concerned to note that hedge cutting seemed to be taking place on the approach road to the village that leads to the church and we would urge the committee to remind all landowners that hedge cutting is illegal during the nesting season to protect birds.

Concluding Remarks:

We enjoyed our visit to Threemilehouse and seeing the work of the committee at first hand. Well done again on a

very good performance (particularly in the litter control and tidiness section) and you are encouraged to try to identify some additional projects in the wildlife and waste minimisation categories. Keep up the good work and we look forward to returning in 2016