

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Strokestown** Ref: **715**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **243**
Category: **B** Date(s): **24/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	34	34
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	33	34
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	31	32
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	23	23
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	41	43
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	29	31
TOTAL MARK	450	235	243

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Strokestown is most welcome to the 2015 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your application form and additional information. Considerable consolidation is required to improve your application form. The application form should contain all the information needed for adjudication and in particular should identify all the projects for this year which are underway or completed. Planned projects should not appear (keep these for your plan) while projects should not be only mentioned in additional sheets. We would not want something to be overlooked due to confusion on the part of the adjudicator. Your use of photos is very good but there is no need for so many while a lot of photos were not captioned so it was hard for the adjudicator to know what message was being conveyed. These are cosmetic points and should not overshadow some of the tremendous work you are doing to enhance this charming town. 6 - 8 seems a little small for your committee so do look for ways in which new people can be brought on board. Use your various communications to ensure the message is delivered that your doors are always open. Your map was good in highlighting those areas where works have been carried out. It is great to read that there is a growing business confidence in the town. Businesses and the broader community can work together to provide a sustainable future for all. The plan 2015 seem to contain descriptions of actions already undertaken. A three-year plan should really set a strategic course for your actions over that time period. Refer to the tidy towns handbook for more information on how to prepare this.

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

Your striking new tourist information sign was admired near the roundabout. This is a very nice addition to the town. Where derelict buildings have been enhanced do state clearly which ones and provide before and after photos if possible. The broad expanse of Main Street is a significant feature of Strokestown but perhaps a challenge knowing how best to fill all that space. The use of lime trees and handsome light standards creates an avenue affect which works well. The remainder of the space seems to be used for parking but spaces are ill-defined so the cars end up scattered somewhat. There are quite a few disused derelict buildings. Although many present no issue it would be of use to inventory these and monitor so as serious presentation issues do not arise. The Percy French hotel is a highlight of Bridge Street and was admired for its colourful baskets and well finished facade. J. Beirne is also to be commended for its attractive traditional presentation. The 'bicycle made for two' is a lovely mural, suitable to this location. The plaques commemorating traditional shopfronts etc are nice points of interest. The fine redbrick Bank of Ireland looks well but perhaps they could be persuaded to remove the faded and worn bureau de change sign. The heritage/genealogy Centre looks well and benefits greatly from some mature trees. The neatly painted community centre was admired. Nearby St Mary's school was proudly flying a green flag!

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The treatment of the bases of lime trees has been very successful in creating a clean uniform look. The small park on the Dublin Road is well maintained. The statues seem a little out of place although picnic seating is well presented. The grotto seems a little under manicured as the planting looks tired and weedy. The displays of alchemilla in raised stone beds however are very suitable and create a good impact. Remediation works at the slipway to the river are underway and we look forward to returning next year to inspect the finished job. Planting at the health centre had gathered litter while the plants themselves are largely unsuitable and should be replaced. Hanging baskets were admired throughout and well done on the effort in putting these out.

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

Do be mindful that wildlife habitats are all around us. Even buildings can be home to nesting birds or roosting bats. This category is encouraging you to think about these habitats and how you can raise awareness of their value. A simple survey, perhaps with the local school or interested local, would record the types of birds in various parts of the town. Strokestown House provides a wonderful resource in this regard so do focus your energies on research and education in the first instance. This is not to dismiss your planned biodiversity area and this could certainly act as a useful focus to any efforts in this regard.

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

Do give full specifics of projects rather than affirmations. Composting and water harvesting are two excellent ways of reducing resource consumption but do not stop there. Do any of the schools take part in the green flag program? It would be most valuable to list any relevant details here. (These details were later discovered under a separate heading). Well done to the primary school on their first green flag this is a wonderful achievement for them both! Think also about projects to reduce food waste (perhaps working with local supermarkets) and promoting sustainable forms of transport. For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Keeping gutters clear of weeds and vegetation is an important way to enhance the appearance of the streetscape, well done. It is also good to know that you are being vigilant with regard to inappropriate advertising. The town is generally very tidy with only minor issues of note. Christmas decorations on Strokestown hardware should be removed as they only look well during the festive season. Clumps of moss that have fallen from roofs need to be swept from footpaths while any stray traffic cones should be stored out of view. Overall you are keeping tidiness issues under control while litter control on adjudication day was to a high standard well done.

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

Town houses along the Main Street add greatly to the charming character of Strokestown. Their variety, some ivy-covered, with attractive doorframes are certainly features which merit conservation. The small but attractive estate on Bridge Street was admired but seems to have no name attached to it. Leafy French Court was admired for its trees and well-kept green areas. Caslin Way is very tidy with extensive greenery.

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

The recent upgrade of the N5 has made great improvements to these areas. Landscaping on approach from Westport is very weedy and should be maintained for a better impression on this road. The roundabout, with the pole and ribbons is very appealing (I'm afraid this adjudicator didn't fully appreciate the significance - a mid-summer's event perhaps?). In any case it looks great and is certainly different. Flower baskets on the bridge are a nice feature which brighten up the approach from Dublin.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit Strokestown and see first-hand the wonderful work you are doing. Best of luck and do keep up the good work!