

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Delvin** Ref: **1113**
County: **Westmeath** Mark: **224**
Category: **B** Date(s): **21/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	31	32
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	32	32
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	29	29
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	23	23
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	8	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45	45
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	24	25
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	27	28
TOTAL MARK	450	219	224

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Delvin is welcome back to the Supervalu Tidy Towns competition 2015 – you say this is your fourth year in the competition. It must be difficult when you struggle to get people involved. Hopefully when residents see some tangible improvements in Delvin, they will be motivated to lend a hand. Have you tried approaching people for specific tasks as opposed to joining a committee or carrying out litter picks? Many tidy towns groups have a list of contacts for volunteers who will come on board when needed for tasks but wouldn't be part of the TT committee per se. The TT competition is quite broad now and there are many local skills that would be useful.

You receive a small grant from Westmeath Co Co and you are keeping local clubs and groups informed of your activities. Again, the aim should be to get them involved in a specific project. For instance Youth groups often like to take on a wildlife or environmental project. You could link this into the WHNA or SWRM categories respectively. (Encourage them to enter the new Supervalu Youth Award in this competition!). We are delighted to read the local businesses are now supporting your efforts. You communicate via parish newsletter, website and local newspapers. Texting is a great way of contacting a wider group of volunteers for specific projects. Have you considered social media as a way of communicating your messages to a wider audience and raising the Tidy Towns profile in Delvin?

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

We admired the beautifully maintained church and grounds. We note that new gates have recently been installed. Delvin has an attractive natural streetscape. In your longer term plans, we would recommend you try and exert any influence you can to preserve your traditional shopfronts and signage – these were mixed in terms of appearance and suitability.

We are delighted to hear that businesses are coming on board by freshly painting their premises – you might mention those that were painted since you last entered. It is helpful to the adjudicator if you submit 'before' and 'after' photos of painting or landscaping project so that we can really see the impact you have made. We liked the mural at the 'Candy Store'. Detangled is an attractive stone building. Gaffney's was well presented and we admired Tierney's. Lenihan's has a lovely shopfront – the sign here could be cleaned. Please read the blue text under each of the category headings as some of the information submitted here is more relevant to other categories (Landscaping, Litter). The building and boundary wall of 'TE Potterton' looked freshly painted. Is the barbed wire across the road necessary? There is a lot of hard landscaping at the school but all was neat here. The Graveyard entrance was neatly presented as was the handball alley.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

We admired the beautiful copper beech trees at the church. Hanging baskets give a welcoming impression such as

those on display at the cheerful Caman Inn. The beds at the entrance to Castle View estate need tending to. This adjudicator feels that the planters at your village entrances are a little small in relation to the surroundings (wide approach roads, large road signs). We admired several beds of begonias as we walked around – this brings colour and impact to the village. We would recommend that you also consider some permanent planting for seasonal colour and interest. Three pots on the Ballivor Road were empty on the day of our visit.

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

You mentioned a small wildlife and nature reserve area on the Athboy Rd. We would ask you to mark any such areas on your map. The area surrounding the playground looked overgrown and littered when we visited. You could designate this as your 'wildlife area' - a clean-up would need to be done first, then you should make this look like a deliberate project by erecting a simple sign and trimming a narrow verge around the edges. It was full of wildflowers on the day.

Do you have any local wildlife enthusiast or third level student to help you? It is also recommended to link up with the school when they are working on their 'biodiversity' green flag for your mutual benefit. Do tell us if the students are taking any actions to encourage biodiversity. Have they carried out any local surveys as part of their nature studies? You have lots of areas where you can encourage biodiversity and wildlife, e.g. by leaving certain roadside banks natural; you will have lots of wildflowers, which in turn will encourage bees and butterflies. Do you have any local walks in natural amenity areas? Can you promote these more? There is plenty of free advice available and experts from various groups who will be happy to visit your village, e.g. Birdwatch Ireland, Bat Conservation Ireland. We look forward to hearing of some progress next time.

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

Using the local second hand shop is a good example of Reuse in the community as is your significant annual book fair. Your recycling initiatives are noted.

The focus of this category has moved on in recent years towards waste prevention and more efficient use of resources such as water, energy and transport. There has been large jump in marks available so focus is required if you wish to progress in this category. Recycling initiatives are still an important component of a good waste management system but please tell us how residents in are saving on local resources. E.g. do you try to use rainwater to water summer bedding? Your Westmeath Co Co Environment Awareness Office may be able to guide you, e.g. their office runs campaigns you could piggy-back on. Also they may be looking for groups to host an awareness workshop. We noticed three green flags flying at the school so well done to all involved! Do tell us each year the status of the school in terms of the Green Flag programme. This is important in term of your own work and you should be linking in with their actions. We know that all the children are bringing the messages home on how we should be reducing waste, water and energy for a better environment. Any examples of how they have been doing this?

Please refer to the 2015 guidelines and pick a few ideas that would work best for Delvin. Alternatively, visit www.localprevention.ie/tidytowns to see what other initiatives are happening around the country. We look forward to hearing of further progress next year.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done to all involved in your regular litter picks. This area needs continued focus as there was moderate littering throughout the village, e.g. outside Youth reach, outside Shaughnessy's, Lacora estate and behind the wall at Castle View. Do the school children or residents get involved in these or in National Spring Clean? Do you segregate materials collected for recycling?

You don't mention any awareness-raising in terms of litter. There are marks going for this element also so please do tell us about any messages you put in your newsletter etc.

There were a few tidiness issues observed during our visit. We would prefer not to see Christmas decorations in June, so as those observed at the Blue Hackle, Greyhound bar and the former bank (?). The footpath from the school back towards the village was quite weedy. The surgery grounds looked a little neglected. The highly visible back area of the Greyhound bar looked quite untidy.

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

Generally residences throughout the town were nicely presented. Do continue to encourage residents along approach roads to keep their boundary walls and roadside verges presented to a high standard. We positively note that you are in good contact with the Residents Associations at your three housing estates. Lacora Glen was relatively neat with some nice tree planting – there was just a little litter here. Stoney Croft is a nicely finished estate with a fine stone wall that enhances this approach road. We admired the stone house at the crossroads. We were delighted to see that one house on the main street was undergoing a major renovation.

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

Approach roads were reasonably well presented with some lovely stone walls. The Kells Road is particularly attractive, with its landscaping and picnic area. We admired Clonyn castle in the distance. The Athboy Road has a lovely long approach with neat verges, footpath and a fine hedgerow.

Concluding Remarks:

Thank you Delvin for your 2015 entry and we wish you well in future Tidy Towns projects.

