

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballincollig** Ref: **661**
County: **Cork(South)** Mark: **311**
Category: **G** Date(s): **03/07/2014**
25/07/2014

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	48
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	43
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	46
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	29
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34
TOTAL MARK	450	311

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ballincollig is most welcome to the 2014 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your detailed application form, clearly laid out map and additional information. It is many years since this adjudicator visited Ballincollig and it is most impressive to read about the tremendous level of effort that is going into the maintenance of the town. You are commended for your analysis of previous years adjudication reports and your actions arising thereof. The level of voluntary and community involvement is truly exemplary and the long list of clubs and agencies with which you are collaborating seems exhaustive. Unfortunately the adjudicator did not have access to a DVD player on adjudication day with which to view your Entente Florale presentation. Your six-year plan was reviewed with interest, it would be good to have a brief indication of how you are progressing with your objectives as you approach its final year. It is felt that your next plan should be divided under the headings of the contest to ensure you are taking a balanced approach. It may also be helpful to you to identify the support agencies that will be needed to implement the various objectives. Overall however it is ambitious and well thought through. It allows you to take a look back at the distance you have travelled and do try to mark its completion with a celebration of sorts. Your map was very well laid out and you manage to include all the requisite information in a small space. Well done on the appointment of the school liaison officer earlier this year. It is excellent how you integrate the schools into the broader civic effort.

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

While the recession has been long the signs of recovery and renewal are at least evident in some corners and it is great to read how buildings in the centre of town are updated and occupied with new enterprises. The town is looking exceptionally well, bustling but not congested while a selection of street traders where enlivening the scene. Buildings throughout were admired for their cleanly painted facades and subtle colour scheme. Attractive lamp standards and wire free skyline complements the broad footpaths, overall creating a relaxed ambience which encourages the pedestrian to linger. The civic plaza at the shopping centre was spotless on adjudication day and admired for its appealing layout. The heritage board is clean and trails signage is excellent. The village shopping centre on the station road is tidy but the sign at its entrance needs to be cleaned. It is great to see work underway on the Tesco site. The medical centre is a nice reuse of what looks like an old building. Commercial premises, VCE etc, were very well presented. Barrack Square was being well used by lunchtime office workers on adjudication day. The presentation is generally good but the water feature is somewhat disappointing. The adjudicator found it hard to find your park and could not locate any signage from the main road. Businesses throughout were looking smart but Tudor Rose deserves a special mention for its colourful facade.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Your regional park developments are judged under this category. Well done to the Cork county council for these

material enhancements that add so much to the quality of life. The inclusion of allotments, and evident popularity thereof, is another wonderful development for Ballincollig. Your continued maintenance of landscaped areas is acknowledged and you seem to be continually looking out for new areas to be enhanced. Do make sure that the locations of all new projects are included on your map. Your plans for 'wildflower' areas are noted. Do be conscious of the fact that they can be high maintenance and while they can be great for pollinating insects do confine their creation to areas of amenity grassland. Planting in colour is clearly your forte and the people of the town are fortunate to benefit from this passion which is evident throughout. Summer colour catches the eye all along Main Street while an abundance of street trees ensures year-round effect. Well done on your Silver Award in the Entente Florale and the plaque was admired. Do audit your trees every now and again and remove any rubber ties that are no longer needed. They have the potential to damage trees if unattended. The lovely grove of trees to the rear of Tesco was noted but in this adjudicator's opinion the intervention has been heavy-handed with too much removal of the undergrowth that is so valuable to wildlife. A lot of herbicide has also been used. This will recover in time and your new tree saplings were noted. The cherry laurel hedge on the outside of the fence seems ill-advised as it is an alien invasive species and will obscure the native vegetation if allowed to grow. Mature shrubbery at the rear entrance of the shopping centre is very effective. Well done on the presentation of the cinema plaza, this could have been so dull. A nice statue or art installation would work well here.

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

The cloisters wetland area was not marked on your map. Does this coincide with the Lee Valley proposed natural heritage area? It was also noted that there is a Ballincollig Cave pNHA just to the south of the town. The available information on Ballincollig Cave suggests it is of value for its woodland and grassland habitats but official surveys are probably very dated and anything you could do to reassess this area would be welcome. NHAs are areas designated as of national importance for biodiversity. You are urged to familiarise yourselves with the significance of these designations and ensure that any plans you may have are screened by NPWS. It is wonderful that you recognise the importance of the fen and your species list was admired. The unmanaged buffer zone sounds like a good idea and it's great that you are raising awareness of this habitat through talks and information panels.

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

Well done on the enormous effort that you are putting into awareness raising and practical projects in this area. The impressive figures that you have included really bring home the advantages from relatively simple efficiency initiatives. It is great that businesses are on board as well of course as the energetic involvement of Scoil Mhuire, Scoil Eoin and Scoil Barra. The efforts of the Ballincollig Tidy Towns group in composting and rainwater harvesting are commended. Do ensure that awareness raising measures span the whole community and you can use your various communication tools for this purpose. Savings by schools and businesses can be applied equally in homes and this is pressing with the arrival of water charges and ever-increasing charges for waste and energy. For 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:

Well done on the installation of gum/cigarette receptacles and dog fouling bins. We must hope now that they will be well used. What is the nature of the can recycling project? The four companies: EMC2, Marriot group, VMware and VCE are applauded for their staff volunteering days. The scale and breath of litter collections are most impressive. You are showing great vigilance with regard to graffiti and signage clutter. Do seek understanding and dialogue with businesses concerned as advertising is essential in these difficult economic circumstances. At the same time a free for all is in nobody's interest. The town is generally very neat and tidy and there are few issues of note. Sadly the adjudicator is paid to spot things for enhancement but rest assured the following items were not considered too obtrusive. A Celtic Tiger era hoarding for an office campus is faded and broken and should be removed. A small amount of litter had gathered to the side of Bank of Ireland although litter control on adjudication day is generally to a very high standard, well done. It would be nice to see weeds removed from guttering at the 'cafe opportunity' building. An enclosed alley beside four-star pizza is in a bad way with litter and other discarded debris. The 'temporary' parking notice near Body Raze dates from 2011 and should be removed at this stage. Cigarette butts were in evidence around Danie Dan's while some of its lettering was missing. A-board signage on the street generally can work well but watch out for excessive and ugly signage that risks obstructing footpaths.

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

You have really mobilised your large residential population and this is excellent. The estate competition, combined with offers of assistance shows admirable balance. It is heartening to read how ghost estates may be revived with the improving economy. The Muskerry estate was admired for its abundance of trees and nicely planted name stone. The lovely grove of trees was admired at Cleburne Mews but go easy on the herbicide which seems to have been applied liberally here. The old oak trees around Waltham Abbey are wonderful while throughout there are spotlessly mown lawns.

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

The situation with the NRA is understandable and one which is out of your control in any case. It's great that you have cycle lanes through the town and any actions to promote more sustainable forms of transport are welcome. Well done to your volunteers for the work on Flynn's road and enhancing boundary walls. You are commended also for reclaiming the roadside along Powdermills Road and other projects that fall under this category.

Well done Ballincollig what an entrance! Your roundabout on approach from Cork is truly exceptional while the eye

is greeted all through the town with wonderful displays. The welcome sign here is large enough to have an impact and certainly distinguishes you as a centre that stands alone.

Second Round Adjudication:

I stopped off at the Oriel Hotel to get my bearings from your very good map, and you are fortunate to have this splendid facility which I discovered was founded around a period house and has a contemporary extension; the well laid out and landscaped car park was full and I found that they have an underground car park and a leisure centre. I travelled down past an outstanding traditional stone wall to the Regional Park, and although it was raining quite a bit the park was busy with the parking area almost full, with people out walking, running and playing games in the spacious parks. On a walk there I found good information on the notice board, and learned that one could walk around by the river and come out in the centre of the town. I loved the little footbridges and the Watch Tower with huge amounts of young and mature trees there. This undoubtedly is a great facility for all ages of people.

I travelled back to the town centre past the schools, where the large community school looked an excellent facility, contemporary church, well kept housing estates, attractive landscaping and back to the town centre where I found the large multi-storey free car park. This car park takes a lot of cars and frees up ground space for commercial use in this area, plus controlling car parking at the roadsides. It is great to see The Officer's Mess retains its original identity though now used as a modern medical centre.

I visited the Barrack Square which is now the VEC headquarters where I found a mix of contemporary and traditionally restored buildings and I did notice that the water feature was not working in the beautiful limestone paved area.

Out on the main street it is delightful to find that the old Ballincollig village is now connected to the new structures with the traffic calming measures that gives easy access to the pedestrians. The trees on the footpaths are excellent and reduce the visual impact of buildings all around.

The large Plaza is of contemporary design and I noticed that an internal street there was covered with canvas to cater for changing weather conditions. Splendid shopping facilities are admired around the Plaza.

There are lovely well maintained shops and public houses along the main street where the occupants present their places in spectacular condition showing a distinct pride of place attitude.

The first round adjudicator has given you a good report with a big increase in marks and it is my pleasant duty to confirm these findings. Well done for a splendid effort.