

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dungarvan** Ref: **230**
County: **Waterford** Mark: **300**
Category: **F** Date(s): **02/07/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	44
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	42
TOTAL MARK	450	300

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Your entry form seemed somewhat perfunctory, indeed disappointing, but this feeling was dispelled on arrival in Dungarvan and viewing the town as it is. You have been allocated a considerable rise in marks: committees are asked not to be taken aback by their new total in comparison with last year – there is now no ‘General Impression’ category for instance, and also a number of other changes which you will have noted. Please do not include in your application substantial material on projects which have not yet happened, such as the (very impressive) Skate Park and the (ditto) Cinema site. We can only comment on what we see ‘on the ground’. Also your map was quite inadequate because many of the housing areas are not named (among them the very important Fr Twomey’s Road); much time was wasted asking residents ‘Where is?’ It would also have been useful to know how you are keeping up with the proposals in the 3-Year Plan and if new issues have been incorporated.

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

Dungarvan was looking particularly attractive on a sunny July day with all manner of craft moored or anchored in the Colligan estuary and the towers of St Augustine’s and St Mary’s conversing respectfully at one another across the water. The visitor can identify the layout of the old town and its development over several hundred years using the excellent illustrated information boards conveniently sited. The mix of old and new in the central streets is a positive; the discovery of ancient lanes and where they lead to is quite exciting. It is good to read that much-needed rehabilitation of Grattan Square is on the way; is it the case that the ‘smart’ area has moved from here to the waterside? There is ample scope for another piece of urban regeneration when funds permit where the town ‘turns its back’ on the waterfront between the bridge and the fine warehouse that now houses the supermarket; this area looks distinctly tousled when approaching via the bridge and no amount of pleasant planting can disguise it. On the other hand the tidy expanse of High Street could do with some bright containers. To the visitor the town does appear to have an undue amount of vacant sites, mostly quite tidy but giving a feeling of visual unaccomplishment, such as the dreary car park opposite the handsome Civic Offices. Much repainting of facades appears to have taken place. The painting grants scheme is a particularly welcome innovation. If one were to pick a shop-front for special commendation it would surely be Merry’s. The Parish Church was free of the scaffolding mentioned by last year’s adjudicator. The hospital was noted as remarkably handsome (originally a workhouse?) – should the medical facility be moved elsewhere this superb building would have to be preserved for some other purpose. Most of the commercial buildings on the outskirts are of imaginative design and very well presented in spacious grounds. The new war memorial is of first class design, simple and captivating. This adjudicator had not visited Dungarvan since the opening of the Castle and was enormously impressed by the restoration, by the internal historical recreations and exhibits, by the views from the upper floor, and by the knowledge of the very friendly staff: one of the most memorable places seen this year.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

As will be noted again below, the planted approaches, and particularly the roundabouts, give a positive first impression to the visitor. Walton Park is the formally planted set-piece – with its distant background of the Comeraghs, its now maturing trees, its relationship to the water, its fountains playing, its trim sward, its yellow and orange floral theme, its trim sports pitches, all combine to create a feeling of space and relaxation. Some trees, planted too closely together, need trimming or, in at least one case, removal of one that has become stifled. Prettily planted troughs on the convenient footbridge (not shown on the map) and of similar design on railings elsewhere, exemplify the very large outlay of resources on containers, hanging baskets and window-boxes throughout the town. At the 'lookout' point, the banked shrubbery and lawns, with the hard landscaping of steps, bandstand, seating and elegant lamps, are just what this location requires. The Park Hotel, as the name implies, has pleasant gardens front and back. The three palms near the bridge are not doing well simply because their container is too small! The Pitch & Putt grounds are very well kept.

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

With estuarine, riverine, marsh, beach, meadow and woodland topography Dungarvan must surely be ideal for appreciation of, and all manner of involvements in, activities under this heading. The spinney at Fr Twomey's Road was visited and the information board admired.

The enthusiastic writings in the Observer by John A. Power on local bird life must create widespread interest and it is assumed that that as a result the www.westwaterfordbirds.com website receives many calls. The Pond is said to be at L on the map, but there is no L and so this site was not visited. More information on positive actions would be gladly received and would undoubtedly increase your marking. You mention your participation in National Tree Week but do not say how many trees have been planted over the past year, and where. It is good to read that guided walks take place regularly at Clonea beach.

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

Thank you for your detailed information – activities under this heading are naturally invisible to the adjudicators so your notes on, e.g., participation of the ten registered Green Flag schools, are greatly appreciated. It is splendid that Green Schools seminars were organised at the Civic Offices and that the Green Gang promotes environmental awareness under the Education & Awareness Officer. Good news all this. The Council's three-tier waste collection service was favourably noted and participation in European Waste Reduction Week. The Recycling Unit at Shandon was visited and appeared to be user-friendly. Congratulations to the West Waterford Chamber of Commerce for sponsoring the Smarter Travel campaign. The use of old slates on the Coach House restoration is absolutely in the right direction and this project will be looked forward to. (Also, anything to get rid of corrugated iron, the visual scourge of many an Irish town! How will you recycle the corrugated iron once this roof is dismantled?)

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

As mentioned above, there are several unused or abandoned sites throughout the town, some of them quite extensive, some used for parking: none that were seen could be considered as 'untidy' but they do combine to give an air of poor urban planning, of urban decay in the past. Sensitive infill building is badly needed. There is much intrusive advertising signage – one example, on the back of the hotel as seen from the street beside the Cineplex. 'Outside My Front Door' is a worthy theme and one which has been successfully replicated elsewhere. It is hoped that Residents' Associations will take heed just as much as owners of business premises. As to litter control, this was seen to be effective, though some surely avoidable and undoubtedly temporary littering was seen at, e.g., The Beeches and the Park Hotel car park. The local Councils are to be congratulated on their leadership – the talking litter bin was not seen but sounds like a tremendous idea – and the participation of volunteers, young and old, in practical litter picking is beyond the highest measure of applause. Are the main sources of littering and dumping known? Ideally such activities should be stifled at source.

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

The mix of old and new housing stock is one of the attractive attributes of Dungarvan. Many streets of well-kept cottages and small dwellings were observed. The area of Strandside/Sexton Street/Abbeyside was particularly admired for its notably apparent sense of admirably old-fashioned neighbourliness. Of housing developments or estates seen, the grey-green homes at The Beeches impressed tremendously. Further out, Springfield and roads adjacent is an unpretentious, well-presented friendly-looking area with attractive planting and a nice safe green for children to play. Sean Dún is well-kept in a beautiful situation. Cluain Garbháin/Cuan Alainn/Cluain na Gréine are generally well presented developments that rely very much on car-culture as they are removed from basic urban facilities – as indeed is the more spacious but more conventionally laid out Toonore Court. Landsend, in its seaside location backed by mature pines, is probably the most imaginatively designed, and prosperous looking, development seen on this visit.

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

Past adjudicators have praised the well groomed approaches to Dungarvan, and also the imaginatively designed, and highly individual, roundabouts, sponsored by a number of organisations who are to be most highly congratulated. The boating theme on the approach Cork is admirable. Tree planting on the by-pass, probably a quarter-century ago, is now showing its worth in spades. The railed winding path through the Church of Ireland churchyard to the lookout point is a delight. The Pontoon in the estuary is most impressive. The drainage marked K on the map could not be found and local people did not know of it. Electric car points were noted, and

traffic-calming measures were favourably noted throughout. The improved seaside promenade beyond St Augustine's Church, and the cycle-track that curves its way through the woodland at Fr Twomey's Road (Fr Twoomey's Road has everything!) are developments of which the local Councils may be very proud.