

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Wicklow** Ref: **244**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **290**
Category: **E** Date(s): **28/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	43
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	43
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	30
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32
TOTAL MARK	450	290

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Thank you kindly for your comprehensive entry form and welcome to the Tidy Towns Competition of 2014. The supplementary material included was to say the least substantial! but the most important elements for any adjudicator are the entry form, any additional work schedule, pictorial records and map which is extremely important if one is a first timer to a town or village.

It is nigh impossible to include a comment on everything submitted with your entry form in a 3 page report suffice to say that the adjudicator was fair, impartial and honest in his assessment under the guidelines of the competition. This was the adjudicators first time to visit Wicklow Town and the experience was such that he will be back as soon as time allows for a more leisurely visit.

Your town is a credit to all its residents.

The Committee of eleven members is one the most proactive that this adjudicator has encountered in this work over a good number of years.

You have built up relationships with all sectors of relevant public bodies, local organisations and the general public and it is very obvious that this type of engagement has been beneficial and the pictorial record submitted with the entry form substantiates this

Good to note that you ensured that all sections of your wider community have been invited to become involved with your volunteer pool.

One notices that you engage with the senior population as well though the local Active Retirement Branch and the adjudicator noted in his travels around the town that it has as a progressive Mens Shed group with men who would have a complement of skills that could be of benefit to you in your work.

Communication methods embrace the traditional with the new but the adjudicator had not the time to examine 20 odd pages of Facebook Analytics!

Hopefully the good relationship you had with WTC will now continue with what section of WCC you become linked. Commendations also to the TUS workers where would tidy towns groups all over the country be without them.

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

The adjudicator acknowledges the inclusion of the public realm plan and it was a very useful document as it allowed him to be aware of the areas in the town that have been considered for improvement during the adjudication walkabout.

For instance one was able to envisage what the sea front enhancement element would achieve as one walked along it in its present form.

On the day in question the town was buzzing as it was Sea Fest weekend and there was a large flow through of traffic that moved at a steady pace without much congestion.

In general the condition of road surfaces and footpaths in the town was very good without any major obstacles or

unsafe parts to be seen.

A goodly number of the new 106 bilingual signs were observed and full marks to the Town Council for coming on board with you on this project.

The adjudicator was taken with the design of the street signs bilingual with crest in middle and the right size and pronounced sufficiently to see even for somebody with any sight problems.

Other improvements mentioned in your entry form such as street furniture and input on public spaces were noted. Dereliction like in any other town of similar size can be problematic and the adjudicator didn't think that it was such an issue in Wicklow Town.

You have audited these properties and there is no point in re highlighting them here.

Unless you resort to applying the relevant act in the case of extreme offenders the best way to get solutions is by constant encouragement dialogue with owners be they absent or in situ.

The following is a cross section of observational comments on foot of a long and sometimes physically taxing; Wicklow is a hilly town to trek.

The staff in the corner shop (green and gold frontage) at the bottom of Cnoc An tSamraigh were so engaging and helpful that one has to give them a mention.

People sell a place and these young ladies certainly subscribed to that adage.

The Bus Shelter across the way near the back of Gaol was of nice design and serves the purpose it was there not that it was needed as the sun split was at its best.

Walking down Quarantine Hill down on to Castle Street one encountered the aptly named Healthy Habits restaurant and shop.

One was taken with a medium for advertising not encountered before street seats with a combination of businesses advertised on the back, these were of very nice design with mesh like panel for advertising. Very sharp indeed.

The Town Hall such an imposing building but needs painting, there are some social issue problems in that particular area.

Wicklow Gaol a major visitor attraction and a very well managed and accessible building.

The following are some of the shop fronts that just appealed to this adjudicator

Ernies Bar, Michaelas Delicatessan, The Wicklow Wine Company, John P Tompkins, Phillip Healys, The Bridge Cafe, S Delahunty's Hardware. Frankie Sport and the long present Gran Hotel

The run down building beside Phillip Healys has become the home for some rather offensive graffiti and possible racist stuff if I can recall correctly.

The public building visited included Wicklow County Council premises on Station Road and Wicklow Fire Station off Church Hill both were very well prThe following Churches and Educational establishments were noted during the walkabout St Patricks RC Church on such impressive elevated grounds, a number of schools including The Dominican Convent, Colaiste Cill Mhantain what a fine and spacious establishment, and a good advert for the amalgamation process, The Glebe Primary and Wicklow Methodist Church.

Wicklow Tennis Club have a fine facility with ample parking and easy access

Tesco on the perimeter of the town was reasonably well managed but parts a little untidy, Lidl looked liked it was closed for upgrading which will happen pretty quickly.

The Murrough new playground and fitness area was noted during a late evening stroll along that stretch that offers more in terms of potential contribution to the town.

Wildlife aspects of this wonderful natural area will be addressed under the relevant heading.

I'm afraid that the adjudicator had not the energy to complete either the Captain Halpin Trail or the Sli Na Slainte but they were part investigated.

esented.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The standard of both public and private landscaping was very good and the majority of areas earmarked in your entry form were visited.

You have addressed the need for balance in landscaping and planting very comprehensively explaining the reasons for selecting the particular parts of the town that you did.

The adjudicator visited most of them and was most impressed with what was done.

It takes a lot of hard work co operation and ongoing monitoring and maintenance to keep these planting places looking as good as they did on what was a very sunny and conducive day for full blooming.

One appreciates the hard work that has gone into this endeavour and your pictorial record is sufficient evidence of this

An increase in marks is awarded.

The following are just a few personal choices of the adjudicator;

The planting arrangement at base of railing along the Mall two ,effective arrangements at the Dominican Convent complemented by street furniture in the middle and an impressive street light

The timber planters at the entrance to Wicklow Gaol were admired as were the impressive grounds of the Old Franciscan Abbey now open to the public plus the many hanging baskets and window boxes that one encountered in the town centre and side streets.

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

Well done to you on acting on comments in last year's report by getting hold of the Wicklow Urban Habitat Mapping Survey and hopefully this will give you a platform to develop your own awareness programme for local residents and future projects that you may undertake in conjunction with the local schools both primary and secondary.

The Franciscan Abbey and the surrounding extensive grounds are now open to the public and it was a wonderful experience to see what as well as being an attraction of historical interest for visitors but also a haven for wildlife.

I'm led to believe that it had a resident fox for awhile and that the Leitrim Stream is being stocked with ducklings.

The Murrrough is a haven for wildlife with so many habitats but some of the walks are over grown and seating has been taking over by this over growth.

The public realm document contains a vision for this area but as that vision will be only a vision for the foreseeable future maybe some short term measures could be taken to address issues such as mentioned.

The Blackcastle on the perimeter of the very appealing harbour area was visited and as you say in your form it is indeed one of the most prominent natural and indeed historical places in the town.

A castle of Norman influence and once the seat of residence of Muiris McGerailt it is one of the many Norman associations that Wicklow Town has.

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

This is category that has been revamped to put greater emphasis on the need to promote the message of waste prevention as distinct from managing a growing volume of waste that is being produced liberally across the country.

The pamphlet that accompanied the entry form has a myriad of ideas that can be applied in a practical manner.

It also has a list of links to many relevant websites and one of these, local prevention, now has a dedicated page for tidy town groups to upload waste prevention related projects that can be shared by others.

Do consult and do upload some of the excellent practical measures like reusing of salvageable granite for the flower beds on Bachelors Walk and on Convent Road.

Home composting is becoming more popular as is the re use recycle initiative.

Similar data collection that has been undertaken at the Murrrough Recycling Centre is being done by many communities – so the message seems to be getting through.

The Green Schools Programme covers both secondary and national schools, not all one notices, in the town.

The adjudicator is at odds to know where the CHP unit was installed as the note in the entry form is rather vague on where and for how long.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The standard in this combined category was very acceptable given the size of the town and the outlying areas and also the adjudication was done on very busy festival weekend.

There were a number of side lanes that were overgrown or weedy on e in particular in a prominent enough part of town Glebe Yard Lane.

The problem re offensive graffiti at the run down property near Philip Healys has already been flagged.

Areas of concern in the Murrrough have also been flagged and there are a number of run down properties here as well.

One or two of what one would describe as Industrial Estates or Business Parks have properties with messy areas and again it's a question of creating dialogue with the owners.

The measure that you have recorded in your submission on general litter, dog fouling, gum litter etc have been noted its whether people want to heed and adhere is the key question some do some don't.

In the main street of your town which was in fairness very clean overall I encountered two gents come out of a bookies shop proceed to throw the beaten docket and cigarette butt on the ground when it was easier put it into the bin beside the door.

This type thing and worse happens all over the place some people will never conform.

Keep up the good work 99% of your fellow towns people are good citizens but like the The Tayto ad "there's always one" or maybe two.

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

Wicklow is big town with huge catchment area and many housing areas of old and established vintage and newer ones some of whom are not fully complete.

On the latter subject of incomplete or abandoned estates Wicklow is not that badly affected maybe its the fact that properties are sought after here or that most developers.

The adjudicator agrees with your assumption that responsibility for upkeep and pride in place is very evident in the housing areas of Wicklow Town.

The following areas were visited and bar a few exceptions that one will find in any other town of similar size the basics of good residential management were very much adhered to.

Crinion Park a deceptive hilly part of town where the adjudicator parked his car for most of the adjudication, St Brides, St Dominics And St Kevins Terrace a cluster of older council houses that were well kept and tidy, De La Salle Court good but some boundary walls need painting, Kilmantin Road (why misuse the original Irish name) some very nice front gardens to be seen, St Patricks Road a very nice road with fine footpaths on both sides, Glebmount a newer housing area than those mentioned heretofore but very hilly, Church Gate area comparatively new and well maintained.

Overall the standard level is worthy of an increase in marks.

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

There a series of roundabouts of the M11 and connecting on the N751 and 752 from nearby Rathnew and N750 and all were maintained pretty

As one approached the town nearer in from these junctions it was noticeable that the road surfaces, signage and grass verges where relevant were all maintained to good standard.

The entrances have an inviting look about them as there were no obvious eyesores.

The majority of large companies, outside of the Harbour, are on the outskirts and these were kept well.

Overall a good standard of presentation.

