

# Tidy Towns Competition 2015

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Knockatallow** Ref: **2194**  
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **189**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **17/07/2015**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2015</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	26
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	26
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	26
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	9
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	5
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	26
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	26
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>189</b>

### **Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:**

We are delighted to welcome Knocktallow to the 2015 tidy towns competition for the first time and we hope that this proves to be a successful and rewarding experience for your committee and your village. It appears that there is a strong appetite to improve Knocktallow among locals as your committee has a healthy membership of 15! It is great to see that you have already formed good links with another community group in your village (Knocktallow community development) and that you have received support from Monaghan County Council and the Municipal District of Bally Bay – Clones. While it is early days, your communication strategy seems impressive with social media and texting being used. We are pleased to hear that is your intention to develop a junior tidy towns group and you have made a positive start by involving the Foroige Youth Club. Once your committee gets established and identifies suitable projects, it is strongly recommended that some of these projects are delegated to the junior tidy towns group. We will also encourage you to prepare a tidy towns action plan over the next few years. This is a very effective way of identifying appropriate projects for your village under each of the tidy towns categories. It will also help you to manage and schedule your workload and it will demonstrate to the adjudicator's that you are taking a planned approach to the improvement of your village. The environmental awareness officer in the county council or the tidy towns network at county level should be able to help you with this task.

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

The small village of Knocktallow is dominated by the impressive church which is a large natural stone structure on an elevated site in the centre of the village. It is accessed by a central driveway with parking areas on either side. The parking areas and driveway appeared have been resurfaced recently with loose stone chippings. The modern Sliabh Beagh hotel building is adjacent to the Church and it is also presented to a good standard with well maintained grounds and neatly trimmed grass and landscaping. Opposite, an impressive 5 a side sports pitch can be seen complete with the enclosed fencing and floodlights. A Stone Memorial can be found close to the Scotstown approach road. The boundary treatment in the village is dominated by timber fencing, which for the most part, is maintained to a good standard and looked well. A seating area was also observed directly across from the entrance to the church. No projects have been presented under this category for 2015 and we would encourage you to think about what improvements you'd like to see to your village. For example, what should the dominant boundary treatment be – timber fencing or natural boundaries? Can the rather untidy area opposite the church and adjacent to the five side pitches be improved by landscaping or redevelopment? Please let us know in 2016.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

We were pleased to read that the tidy towns committee has undertaken a major treeplanting programme with 120 trees planted in 2015. Unfortunately, we were unable to locate these as no map was supplied with your entry form.

Please ensure that a map is submitted with your entry form in 2016 and that this project is clearly marked on it. The landscaping in the grounds of the church which was comprised of trees and hedgerows looked well and we particularly like the colourful landscaping that was provided beneath the sign of the hotel and along the neatly maintained front boundary verge. The crescent shaped green area to the front of Corr Leacht also contained some attractive and mature landscaping. However, there are plenty of opportunities for planters and landscaping schemes that could be used to enhance the appearance of your village. Why not provide some landscaping at the base of the welcome stone on the Scotstown approach road? Planting could also be considered for the Tydavnet approach road. The stone Memorial, the grotto and the seating area are all appropriate locations for colourful planters that could be used to enhance the centre of your village. The road verges can be used for more permanent planting beds with perennial species that provide year-round colour.

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

We were delighted to find that your village is the starting point for Knocktallon walks which are a series of heritage trails (that have been devised by the Blackwater Regional Partnership and the Knocktallon rambling club) that traverse some high quality and diverse habitats. It was observed during adjudication that the map indicating all of the trails is located in the grounds of the hotel and that the walk cards and details are freely available. The information panel on the hen Harrier (which is located beside the map) was also read with interest and it demonstrates that Knocktallon and the surrounding countryside is teeming with wildlife, birdlife and interesting plant species. We have no doubt that the Knocktallon walks can be a source of many interesting and high quality projects for your committee and we strongly recommend that you contact the Blackwater regional partnership and Knocktallon rambling club and discuss how you can collaborate on projects that will raise awareness of the natural amenities in your village and surrounding area. Other ideas for projects can be found in the tidy towns handbook.

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

This category has increased in importance in recent years in the tidy towns competition and it has been allocated the same number of marks as built environment, landscaping and wildlife and amenities. Therefore, it is recommended that attempts are made to try and identify suitable projects for this category each year. Your committee should aim to try and identify innovative ways of minimising and eliminating waste generation and achieving the sustainable use of resources when carrying out its day-to-day activities. This can be achieved by undertaking actions that are simple but effective. For example, groups are encouraged to make their own compost for their landscaping schemes from grass cuttings, plant trimmings and other compostable waste. Rainwater harvesting is also encouraged as a means of achieving sustainable resource use and it is recommended that waste materials should be used if possible in your projects. For example, waste timber can be used to make planters and old paint (i.e. that would otherwise be disposed of) could be used for your built environment projects. Tidy towns groups are also encouraged to try and raise awareness of the need to engage in waste minimisation and elimination in their communities. Other ideas for actions under this category can be found in the tidy towns handbook which is available online or from the tidy towns unit of the Department of the Environment, community and government.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

We are delighted to hear that you organised a Spring Clean and litter pick for your area. We would encourage you to try and involve school children and young people in your litter control effort as it not only lightens your workload will also help to raise awareness of the need to dispose of litter responsibly. The standard of litter control was generally good with only a small amount of litter to be found during adjudication – close to Corr Leacht and on the Tydavnet approach road. This is an excellent first performance and the Committee should be proud of its efforts. Well done also on replacing and fixing broken fencing where it was necessary and for filling in the gaps in hedgerows with native shrubs. The standard of tidiness was generally good with weed at a minimum. The signage in the village was reasonable but a number of signs and signpoles were spotted that were in need of attention. Why not do a survey of all signs in the village and record which signs need to be cleaned, painted, repaired or replaced in time for 2016?

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

The standard of presentation of the residential estates in the village was reasonable but it could be further improved. We were delighted to read that residential associations have been set up in all of the estates and we would encourage the committee to delegate the responsibility for maintenance to these the residential associations.

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

The standard of the approach roads was reasonable during adjudication. However, further improvements are possible by ensuring that all signage (speed limit, road signage and name signage) is in place and in good condition and road verges are clean, tidy and litter free. Landscaping or planting schemes on approach roads would also help to enhance the appearance of your village.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Well done Knocktallon on your first years entry into the competition and we are looking forward to watching your village making progress in the years ahead.

