

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Adare** Ref: **440**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **318**
Category: **C** Date(s): **13/06/2016**
03/08/2016

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	49	49
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	40
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	47	47
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	40	40
TOTAL MARK	450	316	318

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the 2016 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your submission and your five year plan 2016-2020. Your accompanying map is thorough but very detailed and, as such, it is a little too small to be read comfortably during adjudication. Your structured committees and involvement with a multitude of agencies, bodies and businesses certainly pay dividends as Adare is always beautifully presented. Your social media presence is up-to-date and very active. You seem to be covering all bases in an effort to engage with all aspects of your community, well done to those involved in this effort. Targeting transition year students and encouraging youth engagement through the logo competition are very worthwhile endeavours. We are delighted to have had the opportunity of judging Adare in the Tidy Towns Competition for 52 years and look forward to many more years of visiting your lovely town.

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

As always, the Dunraven Arms Hotel is presented to the highest standard. Shop fronts to premises along the main thoroughfare are nicely presented. The streetscape looks well with so little overhead service cables and attractive street furniture. The school and its grounds enjoy good maintenance. The curtilage area of the Campus garage is tidy. The committee appear to be fully aware of the challenges presented by appropriate conservation and many of your upcoming projects will need to be watched closely to ensure they fulfill their heritage remit.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Trees at different stages of maturity are beautifully complemented by shrubberies, flower beds and container flower displays. The Adare Town Park experience is very pleasurable. The high level of maintenance is evident under this heading with the focus mainly appearing to be building on previous years' efforts. Coordinating your landscaping and bio-diversity programs is invaluable. Some further thought might be given to demonstrating how the landscaping and open spaces of the town are universally enjoyed and what further developments are possible; Consult the website universaldesign.ie for more ideas on creating environments for universal accessibility. We look forward to learning what your discussions with the Parks and Wildlife ranger bring about.

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

Adare Pitch and Putt looks well from the roadside. It is a very interesting idea to use Facebook to help identify plants and birds in your town. Engaging with other bodies such as Beeactiv, heritage officers and local wildlife experts is certainly providing food for thought for the committee under this heading. The riverbank Bird Watching Walk is an excellent idea and your various surveys and monitoring activities will ensure your focus will remain

informed in the years to come. Congratulations to the pupils of St Nicolas's School on achieving their Green Flag 5 for Biodiversity. Commendations also on work achieved to date on invasive non native flora and fauna. We look forward to hearing more of the otter project for the future.

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

The recycling point located within the car park of the Heritage Centre is being nicely managed. Engaging school children to be cognizant of their carbon footprint and taking appropriate measures is an important step in ensuring that your ambitions under this heading will see results for many years to come. Reminding both the local community and tourists to reduce, reuse and recycle is essential in Adare which gets such heavy footfall and traffic. Your promotion of the Dublin Coach and Limerick Smarter Travel Programme is commendable. It is good to note the active involvement of Adare's business community under this heading and the engagement of the National Schools. Consideration might now be given to finding ways to measure the success of your various initiatives.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Litter control is excellent in the town. A few corrugated roofs within the old Creamery complex could be improved as they suggest neglect. The dead/sprayed weeds at the base of the old Creamery wall should be removed. A service pole located outside the Lady Penelope premises looks especially bad. Your campaigns regarding dog fouling and junk mail are important initiatives, keep us updated on results. Well done on your participation in Team Limerick Cleanup and consistent litter-picking efforts.

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

Attractive green roadside areas to the boundary walls of dwellings are a nice introduction to the town and restoration work in progress at the burnt-out thatched cottages is noted. Embury Close residential looks attractive from the roadside at its entrance, the same can be said for the Deer Park estate, Black Abbey Gate and Abbeyville. Gardens on the Kildimo Road were particularly admired however some boundary walls were in need of attention. Your entry form lists many activities carried out under this heading by residents and they are to be applauded for their dedication in this regard.

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

Approach roads and entrances to Adare are very well presented and are an excellent introduction to the village. The southern approach into Adare is graced by the beautiful canopy of mature trees which are complemented by neatly trimmed grass verges; this approach also features a nice name plate and twinning sign and the visual impact is completed with surrounding grass verges and flower displays. A few signs could be refurbished throughout the town, the sign for the 'Manor Fields' being one example. Some litter bins and seating might receive attention too. Road and footpath surfaces are generally good and clearly lined. Natural stone wall boundary treatment is a handsome feature of the village. The neat verges and high hedgerow on the Kildimo Road are impressive, perhaps field gates could be painted a themed colour. On each visit to Adare the main thoroughfare appeared to be choked with parked cars particularly along Desmond Drive.

Concluding Remarks:

A visit to Adare is always a charming and stimulating experience and this year is no exception however the memory taken away has been one of a traffic choked village due in part to excessive on-street parking.

Second Round Adjudication:

The approach road from Limerick immediately signals the uniqueness of the upcoming village. The gate and the lodge, followed by the fine walls and the majestic trees, the beds of roses, the meticulous attention to appearance, prepare one for a visit to this landlord appointed village with its architectural landmarks which various Christian beliefs have bequeathed to Adare. The winding, sweeping road, the bridge, the river, the ruins in the golf course, the Church of Ireland, the entrance to the Manor add to the anticipation until eventually the village unfolds itself. It is the throngs of people one notices first on this summer's day. There are people everywhere, savouring the atmosphere that has taken centuries to create. The present inhabitants have created a picture postcard street with the diverse colours on buildings, on planters, on hanging baskets combining to chorus a welcome to visitor and home dweller alike. Pedestrian crossings are provided and vital. The new heritage centre reflects the building style of the ecclesiastical buildings all about. The thatch is a reminder of what was commonplace, not so long ago, but now a wonder to all but the very oldest among us. The people are like buzzing bees about the honey pot as they busy themselves with the gardens, the information panels, the buildings and most of all with the magical insides of the various retail outlets. Thatch does not mean the seanbhean bhocht Éire of bygone decades but restaurants with their reputations and achievements mounted by the doorway to invite one inside or chique boutiques that afford him an opportunity to wander round the town park and admire the gazebo while she dives into the rails for presents for those left at home. The nineteenth century street is an invigorating experience with shop fronts that beckon one inside with their colourful facades that, bedecked with floral displays, express the traditional streetscape. Auntie Lena's, the Arches or the Pharmacy are examples. There are vestiges of the Gaeilge all about as at Lóistín, Áibhéil, Draíocht, Ó Coileán. How I wish for a legible map that would tell me if 18 had been a railway station. It is in such a prominent position at the junction, dominating the upper street though much more humble in design than its more august comrades down the street. An information plate would also enhance the experience of seeing the Courthouse. Such an information panel does exist for the Trinitarian monastery, the Dovecot, the water fountain and the washing pool and the information enriches the experience so much. The traveller from Newcastlewest will

not be disappointed either as he is ushered into the centre by the fine walls also, the houses of the residents, the open space along the front of the school, those beautiful houses with the fine green space. Two sets of gates, though, will jar on this road into the village.

This is a 'lived in' heritage village as opposed to a folk village tourist destination, with a population who express their pride in Adare in the presentation and maintenance of their dwellings along the approach roads and in the fine estates. Not only are there fine houses in these estates but the landscaping, the tree planting, the maintenance of the open space is a credit to all as in The Village, for instance. Ascall na Páirce presents itself with generous floral displays and colour developed over many generations. Another estate on an approach road with the Careplus pharmacy opposite does not seem to have a name plate and merits one, seems a haven with shrubs and generous open space. One is struck by the provision of open space throughout the estates. Apart from on the approach roads there are also landscaped areas that have been made visually attractive and forage havens for wildlife throughout as at the traffic lights at the Manor Road junction or in the main car park. Though one feels that some of the shrubberies in that car park need renewal. It would be so easy not to notice the narrow lane that leads down to a Manor gate but one would have missed one of the gems of the village. Ruttles, Lavender, Rose, Fuchsia cottage, for example, are names that resonate of decades of care and lively habitation. Another gem that is out of the way is the playground and amenity area at the Manor Fields. Wonderful. The traffic calming and the fine footpaths contribute to a safe passage to this playground and to the Pitch and Putt. There is a general sense of tidiness which is created through the presentation of premises and buildings, the spacious footpaths, the care of open spaces, the appearance of the finger signposting. The dog fouling signs undoubtedly also help in the general tidiness. But one had sympathy for the residents of Desmond Drive as cars were parked on the footpaths at the entrance to the estate, on yellow lines as if they had been abandoned. One was surprised to come across dumped tree branches at two locations. The Rathkeale milestone deserves to stand out as a relic of old times. So keep it clean. It is disappointing that the car park off main street at the cemetery is not well tended to. While the centre of the village is largely free of litter there was quite a bit of litter in places as on the Ballingarry road. Your submission informs us of your work on wildlife activities. The River Bank Walk, spotted as one left town, is a concrete example of your achievement in the wildlife section. The delightful artwork is a mine of information and is an invitation to 'come and see for yourself', the seats an invite to 'sit and listen'. I note from an earlier adjudication report that you have been involved in an invasive species survey along the Maigue. So it is disappointing to find such an amount of gunnera on this Walk. The submission also lets us know what is being done in the sustainable living section. The highlight experience for the adjudicator was the discovery of the raised beds of vegetables and the bee boxes at Scoil na gCailíní. One also noticed the raised beds at the school along the Walk but these did not have the same impact. A water butt was spotted while on the River Bank Walk and the owners deserve a mention. Your map has been mentioned by another adjudicator in the recent past. It is frustrating to read of projects which one fails to find due to the inadequacy of the map. But, map notwithstanding, Adare is a wonderful experience.