

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Douglas** Ref: **116**
County: **Cork(South)** Mark: **273**
Category: **H** Date(s): **28/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	43
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	37
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	41
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	29
TOTAL MARK	450	273

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Douglas is most welcome to the 2014 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks your application form and digitally presented map. There was a fantastic sense of energy that leaps out of the pages of your application form along with a can-do spirit. Douglas is a bustling and thriving town that retains a character distinct from that of the surrounding city and Tidy Towns can be of help in maintaining this. You have a very active group and the number of volunteers as well as their energetic work programmes is impressive. You are engaging with a wide range of regional support agencies, businesses and conservation groups which is excellent. In an area of high population such as this it is important that you are constantly working on your communication program and you need to make sure that all local people are given the opportunity to help out and do their best. Your musical evening and coffee mornings are wonderful events for reinforcing this message. Overall this is a very strong presentation from Douglas and you are commended for your continued commitment. Your enthusiastic engagement with local schools is especially admired and this will ensure that this generation will be fostered with a strong sense of citizenship. Douglas is an exciting and diverse town with much for the residents and visitors alike. Sadly the litter situation clouded this with the adjudicator. On the plus side the farmers market in the Douglas Court was full of life and tantalising smells on adjudication day!

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

We very much look forward to developments on your heritage trail. Maintaining the story of Douglas in the popular imagination is an important element of the contest. There is also an opportunity here to promote the use of Irish and this would be warmly welcomed. The numerous small, but cumulatively substantial works in the town centre are noted and commended. Your systematic approach to derelict buildings and your liaison with Cork county council on same is the only way to deal with these problem areas. The McDonald's drive-through is an attractive design, well finished and with spotless surrounds. The East Villag(e) is missing its E but is otherwise well presented. Businesses on Main Street were very well presented with a large number of attractive facades. Tesco is also tidy and well landscaped. It's windows need to be cleaned while paving flags need to be weeded. St Luke's church is a fine heritage feature for the town and, along with its graveyard, was very well presented. St. Colomba's school was admired for its well mown lawns and Green Flag, but fly-posting on its railings detracted some what. O'Sullivan's bar and restaurant looks great with its timber finish. South County is alluring with its green livery and World Cup flags. The plaza at the village shopping centre creates a fine civic space and your planting here was admired. The landscaped area across the road here is also attractive. Topaz is tidy but it could weed the gravel area at its boundary. Your old photos of Douglas are a nice touch but unfortunately this area was badly littered on adjudication day (including the problem Lane between Topaz and Permanent TSB).

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Well done on planting ever more trees and it is hoped they were all native species for extra wildlife value. Your collaboration with local businesses and the upkeep of roundabouts is excellent and will also result in good community relations between both parties. An abundance of trees at the East Village is very effective although at least one dead one needs to be replaced. Main Street was looking very well with lots of colourful flower displays, especially around Barry's. Is there scope here for more permanent planting of trees etc. Birch seems to work best but all other native species may also be suitable. The Town Park is a great amenity and the clever use of murals disguises the electricity substation. The playground is very clean and of good quality. Signage at the entrance is poor however. The screening of the bypass wall with an array of greenery is truly exceptional and provides enormous visual relief against this large road.

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

It is excellent that you were able to provide such meaningful input into the plans at Ballybrack Woods. The IWT is a wonderful local voluntary organisation and your proposed heritage talk can be expected to be an entertaining and illuminating event. It is this type of collaboration that is essential in raising awareness of the valuable local habitats that are on your doorstep, more valuable for the fact that you are in such a built up area. Do include a copy of your biodiversity management plan upon completion and you are wished every success with this. The excellent new pathway through Ballybrack Woods was admired and this is a great amenity for the people of Douglas. There is an infestation of Japanese knotweed here that needs to be addressed. Do consult Cork county council before taking any action. The woods themselves are beautiful and lend themselves perfectly for outdoor classroom nature studies. Perhaps it would be nice to paint the metal barrier running along the new path. Sadly there were some litter here, and graffiti on the new wall. Cherry laurel is another unwanted alien invasive species that is in these woods. Its eradication should be included in any long-term management plan for this area. The river which passes through, and partly under, Douglas seems like a forgotten feature. Does this feature in your wildlife plans? Do consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland to see if it's unique, but clearly highly altered, biodiversity could be enhanced in any way.

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

The strong emphasis on the green flag program is most welcome under this category. These are wonderful achievements and each one is heartily congratulated. Your input into the local transportation strategy is commended and it is hoped that there is a focus here on sustainable transport means. It's great that you use your website to promote waste minimisation tips and you need to be continually drawing attention to this in order to affect this shift in culture that we are aiming for here. Best of luck with your composting workshop and rainwater harvesting presentation, two most worthy areas of endeavour. 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:

You have a very energetic body of volunteers who are commended for giving up their own time for the betterment of the town. It is hoped that the wider community appreciates the value of this service. It is hoped that you wear high-vis vests with the Tidy Towns logo across the back to highlight this. Well done on participating in the national spring clean and attracting a large turnout. Your vigilance in terms of signage and illegal advertising is noted. Some litter had gathered in the car park of the East Douglas Village commercial area although generally this busy area was tidy. A bollard at the pedestrian crossing needs to be straightened. Do watch out for cigarette ends and perhaps pub and bookie owners especially could try to highlight this with their smoking clientele as well as sweeping their own areas. Litter was mostly of a takeaway food origin as adjudication took place on a Saturday morning. Some litter had gathered in the park near the car park. Watch for tatty cable ties on poles though and remove them if they serve no purpose. The cinema surrounds were in a very bad way on adjudication day and regardless of whatever ownership issues there are current management should not shirk their responsibility for this large and important area in the heart of the town. The appearance was so bad that the adjudicator thought at first the cinema was derelict.

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

The outer boundaries of your area are rather indistinct, and maybe that is a deliberate choice on your behalf, which is fair enough as it may be seen as being exclusive. Your collaboration with local residential areas is fantastic, well done. Douglas has a large stock of houses and estates and all that were visited on adjudication day were presented to a very high standard. Church Court was admired for its fresh appearance and neat courtyard. A loose coil of wire on its street facing facade should be removed. Shamrock Lawn indeed had an attractive lawn but two metal poles obscure its stone name sign.

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

It is great that your transport infrastructure is becoming more accommodating to walkers and cyclists. Douglas is a busy transport intersection and thoroughway but roads are well marked out and there is a good pedestrian crossing across the very wide road. Landscaping features and traffic islands are very eye-catching. The signs for Douglas (albeit once you are well into the town) are very effective in strengthening the area's identity.