

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Douglas** Ref: **116**
County: **Cork(South)** Mark: **286**
Category: **G** Date(s): **14/06/2016**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	43	44
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	41	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	33	35
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45	46
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	29	30
TOTAL MARK	450	279	286

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Certainly it is difficult to define the extent of what is really a town within a city, but a simple way to show the adjudicators limits of the area you wish to have judged would be to draw a line on the map across each approach road at the chosen boundary. It is probable that this adjudicator visited more neighbourhoods than was necessary but it was all interesting especially to one who had not been in Douglas for some years and was impressed by the progress there has been in the interim. Your map is first rate and having the salient points indicated was particularly helpful. The three-year Plan finishes this year – clearly it has been the most successful year to date. Douglas appears to have been ruthlessly slashed in twain by the urban motorway in a way from which one should imagine it would be difficult to recover, but this obviously has not been the case as there is every evidence of careful development and thrift on both sides of the divide. It is good to read that new businesses are appearing. You have an impressive list of supporters and sponsors; well done on your fundraising for charities which is unusual for a Tidy Towns group. It is good to learn that you have a dedicated Tús worker and also that that you have students working with you in pursuit of Gaisce awards and others who help with the clean-ups. Have you considered entering for the Youth Awards? These caused much interest when initiated last year. Among the many projects and events described, appealing to a wide range of interests, this adjudicator was especially pleased to see a Lennox Robinson Festival advertised. Thank you for your responses to last year's adjudication.

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

The exteriors and interiors of the Shopping Malls, of which Douglas has a remarkably high share, were tidy and clean. They are definitely inviting and it was good to see the crowds drawn in. Toilets were also clean. The traditional business streets are well kept though one would prefer to see less mass-produced projecting signage. The limestone exterior of St Patrick's Woolen Mills with its brick facings is nicely preserved. The large châteaux building that contains the Ulster Bank makes an important contribution to the streetscape. Johnston & Perrott's motor showrooms are exceptionally smart. St Luke's Church in its attractive churchyard was admired, as was a modest chapel in a quiet street nearby. Not all the schools were seen but of those that were Scoil Antoine Naofa appeared to be particularly well looked after. It will be interesting to learn the result of the survey of the old town walls.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Several well nurtured plantings enhance the business quarter, such as at St Patrick's Woolen Mills, and well placed containers were seen throughout. Geraniums seem to be the favoured flower this year. The Nemo Players Hurling and Football Club is a splendid facility, expertly maintained. The Douglas Lawn Tennis Club is most attractively laid out. Mowing of grassed spaces, including sports fields, was favourably noted. The linear park, with sycamore, limes,

chestnuts and beeches, so close to the commercial centre, is a real recreational gem – so pleasant to hear the nearby church clock chiming the hours when so many have given up! The well designed barriers and discreet lighting standards in the park were admired. Perhaps signposts to the destinations of the side tracks could be provided in time. You are fortunate in having such an attractive Garden Centre so close to a busy shopping mall. It is good to read that you restrict the use of herbicides. Thank you for information on what is invisible to the judges, such as that you plant a quantity of bulbs for spring flowering.

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

The estuarine landscape comes as something of a surprise to the visitor, especially with its palms. The Ballybrack Woods trail is a major amenity, stemming from the linear park. Clearly an immense amount of planning and effort has gone into it. Congratulations to the County Council and SECAD for backing the development of this project. It is interesting to read of the bug hunts. Bat boxes were not seen but it is unlikely that they would be and this is another example of how you are successfully feeding the judges with appropriate information. It is very encouraging to read that the trail has been approved by the Irish Sports Council. Well done on your Muintir na Tíre Award for reopening old paths. The River Walk is yet another imaginative development. You are brave in your mission to remove knotweed and cherry laurel. The emphasis on wildflowers at certain points in the town is applauded.

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

It is very good news that all the primary schools in Douglas take part in the Green Flags programme. Well done to St Columba's Girls Primary School for 5 flags, and to the other schools for almost equally enviable results. Perhaps next year you would let us know what subjects the flags have been awarded for. Congratulations are also in order for the teachers and parents. The Community School Robot competition sounds interesting, constructive and fun. The cooperative scheme between Bus Eireann and the people of Douglas is very much in line with the aims of this section. The Farmers' Markets, in the way you describe, are very much to be encouraged. You are ahead of the posse in your attitude to election posters.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Disposable litter was hardly at all in evidence on the streets on the date of the visit. It is very interesting to learn that as a result of the County Council installing CCTV cameras there has been a reduction of littering and anti-social behaviour in Ballybrack Wood. Well done to the 28 volunteers who took part in the Spring Clean. It would appear that your Facebook page is having a beneficial effect too. Roll on the day when volunteers will not be needed to undertake litter picks and can turn their talents to more creative public work: When will that be? - It is a positive move to invite children to create their own graffiti 'murals'. A R609 directional sign on the Carrigaline road was in need of cleaning.

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

Terraces of traditional cottages were admired in the centre of the town. It is a pity that they are dwarfed by the poles and overhead wires that would not have been part of the scene at the time they were built. A more visually appealing system of street lighting would be appropriate. Residential roads in the Ashwood-Ashdene-Trabeg Lawn neighbourhood are well kept – well done to the residents of this extensive area. The neighbourhood of Endsleigh-Eglantine-Browningstown is also maintained with pride – but it would be difficult to find an area in Douglas that is not. Creepers would soften the appearance of the apartments overlooking the Ballybrack trail. A house that is an architectural gem was noted on the Carrigaline road where indeed there are many well presented homes. It would be interesting to know what estates enter the Best Estate competition and how they fare. Be sure that you obtain correct translations into Irish for the new street name signs.

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

The sliproads and roundabouts in Douglas are unusually well kept; planting on roundabout is first rate. The wooden posts mentioned in your submission that are to define the boundaries of the town were not seen – probably some had not yet been positioned but it may also be that the visitor might not be aware of what they are intended for. The car parks at the shopping malls are well surfaced. A number of fine old stone walls were seen and admired in suburban areas, and also some new ones, for which felicitations are due to their builders.

It was most interesting and enriching to visit Douglas again and to admire the extensive improvements inspired by the Tidy Towns group, and the pride with which householders and business people look after their properties. Best wishes for your many future endeavours.

Concluding Remarks:

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