

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Milltown - Baile an Mhuilinn** Ref: **202**
County: **Galway** Mark: **339**
Category: **B** Date(s): **19/06/2019**
09/08/2019

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	47	49
Streetscape & Public Places	60	41	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	47	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	42	44
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	20	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	65
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36	36
TOTAL MARK	470	327	339

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Milltown -Baile an Mhuilinn páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019

Tidy Towns obviously plays a central role in the life of your community. Many towns of a much larger size would find it difficult to attract 16 plus committee members. The idea of a street captain for each road is certainly very novel. It is interesting to note that each captain volunteers for a three-year period. This is probably a very good idea long-term as some feel that if they volunteer for a Tidy Towns role it is for life! It is very healthy for roles within the Tidy Towns committee to be rotated and that people know that they can opt in and out. Dividing up the work into Tidy Towns categories headed up by two members is reflected in the amount of work that has been carried out by your entire group. Your short film production helped put some faces to those behind the work. The website <http://milltowngalway.com> that you contribute to is very informative and up to date.

Your Heritage Garden and Walkway are a wonderful example of how the aims of the Tidy Towns competition and your own community group combine, by providing expressions of commitment under many of our categories. The list of agencies and bodies that you co-ordinate with is extremely wide ranging and varied. The list of voluntary groups in your area is impressive. Congratulations to the Milltown Heritage Group (who you work closely with) who were recognised by inviting one of their group to speak at the heritage week training day in the National Museum Collins barracks in March. Their project on local woman Dr. Nora McGarry is a worthy entrant to the exhibition. Well done to all here.

Your map was bright, colourful with the main points and some of your many new projects well highlighted on it. While we commend your submission for the vast amount of amazing work that obviously went into it, we just want to ensure that all of your projects (those that can be physically seen) get the full attention that they deserve. It would make it easier for the adjudicator if all of the relevant projects were denoted, as you have an extremely impressive list. You can reuse the same map each year and simply affix stickers on it to denote the projects. Don't forget in Tidy Towns you get recognition not just for the new projects (N) but also those projects that you maintain (M). You can also denote the future projects if applicable (FP).

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

You mentioned that a significant amount of time and energy has been spent this year on completing two major projects; the rethatching of Herd's cottage and the building of a new playground. To all involved in both of these projects well done. These changes to your built environment should provide wonderful amenities for many years to come. The work involved was illustrated extremely well by showing before, during, and after photos. The state of these areas is even more impressive when one views the photos provided of the storm damage in the winter

flooding.

For an area of your size to have the playground you now own is very impressive. It shows the sense of community that must have gotten together to enable such a wonderful facility to happen. The tennis courts beside it and the basketball courts are facilities not always available in towns of a much bigger size. Having two benches on the sides must help provide much needed "hang out" spaces for older youths.

There appeared to be renovation work in full swing in the building opposite the playground. It is always a great positive endorsement of a place so see this happening.

Mullarkey's Pub is very well kept and provides a very good first impression on arriving to Milltown from the Galway side. The Roman Catholic church opposite here is also well presented. The car park has a good surface and plenty of space. The Garda Station stands out well; unfortunately the HSE building is not given the same attention. The flower bed in front of this was one of the few not maintained.

You are dealing as best you can with some uninhabited buildings by adding some interesting art work. Maybe consider adding some screens for the old petrol pumps if possible.

Your attention to detail around the village adds to its charm. Your well-kept water pump stands proud in its blue, white, and grey stand. The old bicycle serving as a flower stand with the old Celtic font of Ó Mainín is wonderful. The whitewash stone wall brightens the area in a traditional way.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Milltown has a great sense of place. You can't visit without noting the obviously well cared-for Heritage Park and River Walk in addition to your Walking Heritage Trail. It is a credit to those involved in their upkeep and expansion. There were plenty of high quality seating areas, useful for visitors and residents alike.

This Heritage Park is amongst the most impressive this adjudicator has come across. What a wonderful legacy Frank (Francie) Mullarkey has provided for an area he certainly must have loved. It is not just exhibiting items from a bygone era but also linking these to the families for the region. For example for the stone mill wheel with such a short description you are telling the reader; where your village got its name, the family it came from, where it was transferred from, how many of those types of corn mills used to be in the area, and what it was historically used for. You then utilised this further by turning it into a table covering for a picnic bench. Similar stories can be found from a window sill and fountain amongst others.

As a community amenity your River Walk provides a great recreational space (its contribution to nature will be dealt with below). On the showery day of adjudication it was still utilised. The added extra kerbing at the river walk was of the same high quality. The Lifebuoys were all in place which unfortunately can be an issue in other areas for those who do not respect these.

Milltown GAA grounds were kept to a high standard one comes to expect from a village of your standards. Your photos highlighted the work carried out here this year. In a village that pays such respect to the past, the upkeep of the graveyards feature here.

Your upkeep and landscaping can be viewed throughout your village. It is great to see you are going to move more and more towards pollinator friendly varieties of flora.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

Your awareness of the natural beauty that surrounds you is influencing your current planning. Your riverside nature trail embraces this. Being aware of what you have and then supplementing it with extra native and indigenous shrubs and wildflowers is more important than buying new stock. Your Tidy Towns group certainly advertises its interest in "Assisting Biodiversity" and follows this up with areas that do just that. While bug hotels when small are a great way to attract insects and get kids involved in looking out for them your "Dead Hedge Hotel", is probably a more 5 star option. It is obvious the central role that the pollinator plan now has in your village. Your systematic approach here listing the actions you will use to ensure great pollinator makes this task much clearer. One project that was noted is to double the number of wildflowers in your school. Research has shown when you double the wildflower area you increase the pollinators by 16 times. From your submission we noted that you planted 75 new native trees this year at Cloondroon Lake. This is an amazing number in one year.

In order to enable you to monitor how successful your pollinator planting works have been, you might consider a new pollination monitoring scheme that has been launched by the AIPP called Flower-Insect Timed Counts (FIT Counts), whose aim is to measure insect visitation rates to flowers. It involves individuals/groups watching a 50x50cm patch of flowers for 10 minutes (April – Sept) and counting how many insects visit.

<https://pollinators.ie/record-pollinators/fit-count/> has further information. A lot of focus nationally seems to be on getting the school children involved. It is always great to see this message being spread out to the wider community. Your article to get Ireland's farmland buzzing again showing the actions that farmers and gardeners can take to help protect bees should hopefully be taken up by more throughout the community. Perhaps for next year's submission highlight some gardens that residents have left wild.

The Dalgan river project seems to have been very successful. Once again your attention to detail and showing the benefits highlight its success. On behalf of Tidy Towns we wish to acknowledge and applaud the work on this project of a former winner of the community heroes 2017, your late committee member Sean Nestor RIP. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

Congratulations to Milltown national school and Belmont national school for their lovely leftovers booklet which was compiled by the children and won the Super Valu school award for the North West and West. Win-Win projects are always so heartening to see, as they make it easier to encourage people to join in the fight for our environment. This booklet obviously helps reduce food waste by reusing left over food; 10,300KG over a 4 year period is an

impressive result.

It must also help reduce time wasting. Maybe this time is used by your members to help with other Tidy Towns activities! Your work with your national schools is evident. The fact they provide a report to you for Tidy Towns is something we wish more would do. In order to gain extra marks in this category please give the results to any projects, for example the result of the litter and waste audits carried out by Belmont National School.

Your results on other projects highlighting the real effects of your work really showcase what communities can achieve. For example, saving 600 disposable cups in Ryan's and extending your book swap due to the high demand. Your bottle bank report highlights the impressive detail provided by your committee. The Bring Bank units in the car park are very accessible. They are also well utilised and yet still maintain a clean area. This is often a problem in other areas.

Your innovative watering tank was actually spotted on the day of adjudication. While the splash of colour is always welcome try to ensure you plant directly into the ground where possible to best utilise time and resources. Small things can make a big difference. Well done on re using old pots to growing bedding plants from seeds by volunteers. Your aim to do the best possible job in your projects was again demonstrated by the rebuilding of Russeltown Bridge on Slí na Sláinte walk. Not only was the workmanship excellent, but utilising recycled stone is to be commended.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Milltown is obviously steeped in the Tidy Town tradition of organised clean ups. For a village that has so much traffic passing through the problem of fly-tipping could easily be a scourge, but if so it is not noticed here. Thank you for highlighting your work in acting on last year's adjudicator's suggestion of removing the rusty kebab sign.

The brightly coloured bins in the park stand out, and we were intrigued as to how these were emptied. This obviously does happen. The farm machinery in the park is very well maintained. There was some dog fouling on the river walk, but also whilst walking a more considerate owner was viewed picking up after her dog.

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

For a town of your size the amenities that available would be the envy of myriad towns many times your size. Unfortunately (especially during the Celtic tiger era), houses were built first and eventually amenities followed. Your village already has so much in place. Is there planning permission for many more houses?

Not many houses had names, so it is difficult to highlight which ones we were greatly impressed with. Your representations to locals to maintain their properties/gardens is having a great effect.

The Housing Estate Millbrook has a lovely entrance sign with nice planting. Your village centre plan should enhance this even more.

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

The multi coloured walls on both approaches to the village are certainly very eye catching and different. The main entrance signs on both ends of the village looked well. The older stone signs on the side road have lovely Gaelic script. The vegetation was well cut back. The footpaths are kept in very good condition and the weeding programme is very evident.

You mentioned that the traffic in your village has increased by 2000 cars a day as a result of the new Tuam to Gort motorway. You are trying to focus on the positives of this. Hopefully this will bring an advantage to your village that more will stop off to take advantage of utilising your playground and walkway and hopefully in turn increase the economic vibrancy of your village.

Concluding Remarks:

We wish you well for your ambitious plans for your village centre. You are certainly putting your words into actions. On the short film, your secretary Liz Gardiner indicates how through Tidy Towns "You actually get a say in the development of your village and community". You are all certainly making a great positive difference to the positive direction your village is going.

The motto you adopted in 2017, making Milltown a better place to live in, being achieved. Well done to all involved.

Second Round Adjudication:

This was our first visit to Milltown and what a surprise it was! We parked outside the Church and were amazed with the planting of Plane trees that one associates with cities predominantly - but which in this location are outstanding. The organisation of the car parking, the innovative flower displays, the Heritage Park and the River walk, the emphasis on Nature and Biodiversity do your village proud. You have also catered for the Healthy Ireland emphasis by making a Slí na Sláinte route. As your first round adjudicator mentioned and that you are obviously also cognisant of, it is the volume of traffic running through your village that is the one negative but this is not your fault. In time and in consultation with the Council we are sure that you will be working to ensure that this traffic is calmed in a way that will make your village more liveable. We concur with your First Round Adjudicator's report and in which much praise was lavished on your village – and deservedly so.