

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dundalk - Dún Dealgan** Ref: **494**
County: **Louth** Mark: **327**
Category: **H** Date(s): **27/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	54	55
Streetscape & Public Places	60	45	46
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	43	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	34	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	21	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	38
TOTAL MARK	470	320	327

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Dundalk – Dun Dealgain páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. Thank you for your map, your application form and accompanying material. Well done to all 10 committee members and your 30 to 40 volunteers for all their hard work in the last year. You have a wide range of agencies, bodies and businesses that support your work which is heartening to see. You have a wide range of communication methods and you keep your Facebook page up to date. Your schools are actively involved in the Green Schools programme which is important for the future. The Greener Christmas Poetry competition The House and Trashion Fashion are marvellous creative ways to engage students in environmental issues. Well done to all in the Tidy Town quiz night. Great to see collaboration between groups. Thank you for the inclusion of a draft three year plan. It is a little light on specific details but the overall goals are encouraging. You need to show what specific projects you intend to complete over the coming years to reach the goals you have set for yourselves. For example you have a goal of “create more wild flower meadows”. Change this goal to “create wild flower meadows at X,Y and Z to link existing habitats Z,Y,X together”. For the Nature and Biodiversity category the first project should be to map existing habitat and find out correct management. Your map could be update with additional estate names, outline/hatch showing green areas/parks, the route of the railway line and arrows from the numbers to indicate the precise location would be of a great benefit also. Number projects in sequence in the application form, they don't need to be 1 to 11 on the map, numbers can be missing. This makes it easier for your adjudicator to find the projects in the application form. As is indicated in your entry form, please start each category with your new projects (N), then the maintained projects (M) and finally the future projects (FP). You still have progress to make in this category as you have a high score to maintain. I have returned the mark lost last year but please make the above recommendations a priority for next year, as your adjudicator next year may not be happy with the standard.

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

Dundalk has a fabulous range of buildings and architectural styles that makes a pleasant walk around the core. The work on Clanbrassil Street is progressing well and will be worth the current interruptions. The painting of the electrical sub station really brightens up this otherwise dull location and really grabs your attention. The other older false window and doors on the old building really helps to disguise the old buildings. I especially liked the perspective gates and the new old street. The Seek 2019 project sound very interesting and will surely inject much needed visual life into areas around your town. The Local Heroes and Industrial Heritage Banners also draw attention to a much overlooked history of many towns. The Walking Tours sound interesting also. The 'Living Wall' project is very innovative and is the first of its kind seen in Ireland by this adjudicator. What a wonderful, unique and successful way to brighten up dull gable ends of buildings with added visual and environmental benefits. The Burmah Fuel sign brought a smile to my face in the grounds of the undertakers. The old photograph on the pole

added another layer to the story. The thatched cottage (263) on the way to the navy bank (Lower Point Road) looked wonderful. Other signs and buildings that caught the eye were, Paddy Whyte Scales shop, Peter Bennetts, Milano's Takeaway, P.Treanor, Adelphi, M.Courtney, all for different reasons.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

It is wonderful to see your parks retain their Green Flag Award status. This is a good indicator of a sustainable approach in your current and future park management and maintenance. The Green Flag handbook will also give you ideas for inclusion in your three year plan for other green areas in town. Your work on the Thomas Clarke 1916 memorial is positive and the park looked well on adjudication day. Your work on the Market Square and Long walk also improves the look of the areas. The inner relief road has many opportunities to plant additional trees of the same species as the existing ones. By doing this you can create an impressive avenue of trees along the road. The Dundalk Retail Park has ample opportunity to plant a double row of trees. A good example of what is possible is just after the Crowne Plaza and along the boundary of the IDA Park. Such an avenue would in years to come visually soften this very industrial area. Dundalk waste water treatment plant has large areas of mown grass to its front boundaries. Maybe some of this could be allowed to grow long for the benefit of wildlife and to add visual interest. The junction of Avenue Road and Hill Street Bridge does not look well with long grass. It is important to vary your maintenance dependant on location. The 10m wide grass strip in front of the ESB building is screaming out for some appropriate tree planting and tree replacement to complement the fine terrace of red brick houses opposite. The trees around the river walk were impressive.

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

It is recommended that Tidy Town groups do a habitat map of what they have and look at best practice management for the different habitats. The Heritage Council has a Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Villages guide which outlines 10 habitats generally found and management of the same. You could do a simple map marking in the different habitats listed in the guide and then use this for your own use and for inclusion in this competition. You could update your current map with this information or have a more detailed separate map. By doing this it helps to see where strategic green links can be made. The management along the Navy Bank is very appropriate with the short tightly mown edge to the path and the longer grass in the background. The "let grow for wildlife" in front of The Authentic Food Co. on the relief road is encouraging to see. As your adjudicator will not see all these interventions on the ground it would be great to have a map indicating the current management of areas. This map could highlight the Green Infrastructure of Dundalk. Your swift boxes and biodiversity training workshop attendance all indicate that you are progressing in the right direction in this area. In your wildflower planting ensure to use Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) certified wildflower seeds as others may introduce species that have slightly different flowering times that DAFM certified seeds which can have undesirable knock on effects on insects and also may include species not readily found in Ireland that may out compete native varieties.

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

This category is about changing people's behaviour and attitudes, which can take a long time e.g. Recycling levels were very low in the 1990s' but now we have the second highest rate of packaging recycling in Europe. As you haven't noted many projects in this area, a great source of inspiration is <https://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>. What some groups also find beneficial is to break down this category into waste, water, energy and transport categories and to cover all 4 sub categories each year with new and continuing projects. Consider putting Greener Cleaning/ Gardening (<http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/wpp/>) and Luscious Leftovers (www.stopfoodwaste.ie) links and ideas up on your Facebook page at regular intervals.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done on carrying out a sign audit. It is small things like consistently poorly managed signs that tend to have a far greater impression on the tidiness of a location than you think. Keep on top of this and further progress can be made. Your participation in the National Spring clean and litter pick is to be applauded. Other groups have organised an "Adopt a Spot" campaign where individuals pledge to clean up a short section, say their property boundary to the center of the road and a bit more. Similar initiatives and have found that this motivate others to contribute as they feel that they are not the only ones and that each bit will add up to a big area that is maintained. Maybe run a campaign to see if you can get others to make a pledge to Adopt a Spot.

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

Your Dundalk Looking Good competition is a positive and excellent way of keeping people motivated and to reward them for all their hard work. Maybe include a biodiversity category. The proposed newsletter will also act as a source of information but also give further reassurance that there is help and assistance. Some estates that were visited were poor. It is important that all estates have at least a nameplate in place so a project for next year is to a list of all estates and check if they have an estate name in place. Please also give details of all estate that do and don't take part in the Dundalk Looking Good competition. Seacrest Manor had very simple but effective planting and a simple rail to define the boundary. A similar fence would be a great boundary on the other side of the road also.

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

As previously mentioned some of the approach roads into Dundalk would benefit from additional suitable tree planting. This planting does not need to be large and costly and smaller stock can be used if good weed control

measures are put in place. Some of the welcome signage was obscured by planting. The pollinator bed on the M1 J16 approach was poorly positioned for the relative high speed that vehicles will travel at along this route. Suitable trees are probably the best long term solution. There was a wonderful plant display coming in the Carrickmacross Road outside a red brick dormer bungalow. There is also an old brown tourist sign on this approach that needs to be removed.

Concluding Remarks:

Dundalk is very lucky with its rich mix of built and green heritage. It is a surprise how quickly you can be in a built up area and then escape into the relative wilds. Well done on all your hard work in the past year and keep it up.