

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Charleville - Rath Luirc** Ref: **734**
County: **Cork(North)** Mark: **287**
Category: **D** Date(s): **18/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	40	41
Streetscape & Public Places	60	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	34	35
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	27	29
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	38
TOTAL MARK	470	279	287

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Charleville – Rath Luirc páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. Many thanks for your application form, maps, photos and other documents. The town walks map was helpful because it shows landmarks to help with navigation such as the cemetery and schools, as well as the projects. It's great to have a three-year Tidy Towns plan. It might be an idea to add a timeframe to the actions in the plan to help guide implementation of the plan each year. You have around 20 people on your committee and a wider pool of volunteers who help out. You are supported by a wide range of local groups, businesses and the local authority in your work, which is so important. You use a variety of methods to communicate with your community and work with local schools. You have put particular effort into enhancing biodiversity and pollinator habitats this year. It's good to read that you feel that the community as a whole has benefited from the work of the Charleville Tidy Towns group over the years. I'm sorry to hear that your volunteers sometimes feel disheartened by your ranking in the competition. I hope my comments will provide some ideas and suggestions to work with. How about entering one for one of the Special Awards? This might give you a focus in one of the categories and potential a 'win' to help boost morale. To be honest, the real win in the Tidy Towns competition is increasing community spirit, making your place better for residents and visitors, and protecting the local environment and biodiversity for future generations. After visiting Charleville, I think you are making great progress in this regard.

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

The new mural in the Plaza is very impressive. I really like the process you went through of involving students in St. Mary's Secondary School and a local artist to come up with a collective design. What brief did you give the students? I would have been interested to hear where they got their inspiration from. The mural is beautifully executed. Who is the artist? The Plaza is an important space in the town. The overall impression is a little cluttered with a mix of street furniture, planters (3 types) and hanging baskets. The seating is attractive but I think you could reduce the number of planters and think about their location so that they enhance the area rather than adding clutter or distract from the lovely library building and murals. The information board at the fountain is well-placed and informative. Is the signage linked to the town walks? The Town Walks map is attractive and is a great resource for the town. You have worked with the local authority, CETB, schools etc. to paint buildings in the town. There are many well-presented premises on the main street including Gents of Charleville Barber, Love Cherish, Centra, The Four Winds, The Oriel, Bridgets and the Credit Union. There is a problem with dereliction and disused buildings in the town but this is an issue in many of our towns and villages. You are liaising with Cork County Council in this regard which is commendable. I'm glad to hear that you are aiming for a common theme in street furniture and I noted some of the new planters and seating Perhaps do an audit of street furniture to relocate or recycle any old or redundant items. I would also encourage shops and businesses to avoid blocking windows with signage and this

makes them look less inviting. Many shops in the town have lovely window displays. The new playgrounds look like it will be a great amenity for the town.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have put a big effort into increasing the wildlife and pollinator-value of your landscaping, which is to be highly commended. I'll discuss more in the next category. The garden opposite the Holy Cross Church looks well. The planting is new and will take a while to get established but the design is good. I would remove all tags from the Hydrangea plants and keep an eye on the tree stakes to the rear. Remove when appropriate. The Town Park is a great amenity for the town. It could be better sign-posted and it would be nice if there was a welcome sign at the main entrance. You could consult with the Vincent Wildlife Trust or National Parks and Wildlife in relation to lighting and bats. There might be a solution that would protect local wildlife and satisfy walkers. I'm pleased to hear that you are tackling Japanese Knotweed in the park. There was some evidence of heavy herbicide use in the parking area, around a nice flowered bed near the exercise area and under trees, which is a shame. I note that you are well-aware of this issue. You could discuss again with Cork County Council. There are some nice planters and baskets around the town. Several businesses have very nice floral displays (e.g. Four Winds Bar) and the baskets along the boundary wall of the GAA grounds look great. You maintain several areas including the Garden of Remembrance and the planting at the fountain etc. There is potential to revive the flowerbeds/shrubbery within the grounds of Holy Cross Church. There is also some potential to introduce some landscaping to the Christian Brothers Secondary School the grounds of which, to be very honest, look quite bleak. Trees would be great but might be difficult with all the hard landscaping. Perhaps a few large planters could be installed with permanent planting to soften the appearance of this area.

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

I was delighted to see the large area of meadow grassland in the Town Park that is being managed as a wildflower meadow under a reduced mowing regime. It should be mown at the end of the summer and the clippings removed to be composted elsewhere. This is a great location to highlight the value of managing areas of grassland for wildflowers. The meadow signage is good too. You have also created a few flower-rich meadow areas through planting by seed. The patch in front of O'Sheas looked fantastic on adjudication day and I also noted the photos from last year. This is also a great location as many people can see the lovely display and highlighted by the presence of the beehives. The wildlife area in the Town Park is attractive and also has great educational potential. There are a couple of newly planted trees that appear to be dead and the signage on trees and birds could be updated in the future. I really liked the pollinator-friendly planting near the Amber garage with catmint and the flower zone at Mannix College Sports Field. Do you have a biodiversity plan for the town to guide your work in this category? How about organising nature walks or talks during Heritage Week or a tree planting event in Tree Week in order to highlight local nature and wildlife?

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

It's great to get young people involved in planting vegetables as well as raising awareness of organic farming and the value of the 'no-dig' approach. It's good to hear that local businesses such as Supervalu and BCD Engineering are changing towards LED lighting. Hopefully other businesses and organisations will follow their good example. It's great to have facilities for reusing and recycling materials. We need to promote reducing the amount of waste we produce as reusing and recycling are not the full solution. See <https://voiceireland.org/perch/resources/admin/zero-waste-community-toolkit-final1.pdf> for some ideas. Do you know how much water you are harvesting for watering planters etc.? Is there potential to increase your water harvesting capacity?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You participated in the Annual Spring Clean as did local residents' groups too. It's good to read that you involve school children in litter-picking and are participating in the anti-litter challenge run by Cork County Council. You also run weekly clean-ups. Unfortunately there was some litter in the town on adjudication day, on the main street and in the town park. This is hard to avoid in a busy town on a hot summer's day. Your photos of tidying up edging in green areas, weeding beds and painting bollards/ railings etc. were very helpful. Keeping areas weed free and maintaining kerb, green spaces, street furniture etc. represents a lot of work. There is a bit of clutter on the main street with signage (e.g. sandwich boards) in front of shops.

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

I was pleased to read that you conducted a survey of Mannixville prior to working with residents on enhancing their green area, which now looks very well. There are several nice residential areas in and around the town including Glen Haven which has nice hedging, trees and some lovely gardens, De Valera Place, Meadow Vale, Holy Cross Place plus others. Working with residents groups is a great way to make an impact for the benefit of the town and the residential areas.

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

The approach roads to Charleville are very good with well-managed grassy verges, hedgerows and some trees. As I said above, I really like the catmint and roses on the south side of town on the N20. I also like the bands of Ox-eye daisies. You are better off planting plants that planting by seed in these locations because it is very difficult for young plants to compete with vigorous grasses. The flowers are the town twinning sign make an impact. It was a good idea to screen the fence on the Limerick side of the main street. The sweet peas were very colourful as were

the nasturtiums (although the colours clashed a bit!). Perhaps consider permanent planting here in the future if possible e.g. native hedging or cotoneaster. I mentioned above the baskets on the GAA grounds, which also enhance the entrance to the town and brighten up an otherwise plain wall. I wouldn't be in favour of using too many hanging baskets but they make a positive impact here. There are annuals that can be used that are good for pollinators e.g. Bacopa.

Concluding Remarks:

I have driven through Charleville many times over the years and it was a real pleasure to have the opportunity to stop and explore. I would suggest working with someone experienced in town planning and community development on your three-year plan to develop a more strategic plan that could help focus your efforts.