

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Celbridge** Ref: **338**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **289**
Category: **G** Date(s): **11/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	44
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	36
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	37
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36
TOTAL MARK	450	289

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome to the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2014 and congratulations on 19 years of participation. Your 12 member committee hold monthly meetings each year and have strong links with residents, voluntary groups and schools. Celbridge also has a number of very interesting festivals throughout the year. You receive support from local businesses and public bodies. The use of Facebook, notice board newspaper etc., are your means of communication as well as the local radio station KFM. The dedicated school liaison officer is commendable and it is great that one of your committee members is 21 years old and engages with youth groups. Many thanks for attaching a very good map of the area and also for the second sketch with numbers placed at various locations. However, it would be helpful to provide or attach a legend for the numbers to assist the adjudicator. It would be easier than going over and back through the reports. Thank you for your five year plan. It would be helpful if the various projects could be set out in table form with information on their state of completion.

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

Many thanks for attaching the Visitor's Information Leaflet that was launched in May this year. The leaflet provides very useful information but we were surprised that it does not include a town map to show visitors where the facilities (including shops) are located. The heritage sign and information board at the bridge is very interesting. Well maintained buildings in the town centre which caught our attention were McGrath & Company, The Abbey Lounge, The Old Mill and Cunningham's Funeral Home which is an interesting use for a former church. The Holy Faith Convent and Abbey Lodge pub are in good condition. Castletown Inn and Michelangelo's restaurant greatly enhance the town. The church looked well. There were flowers in the circular bed and a welcome seat at the church. The poles and hanging basket displays at the church entrance, Castletown Inn and adjacent to Arthur Guinness statue are of a high standard. The impressive entrance to Castletown House is enhanced with floral displays and the view beyond to Christchurch and the Sequoia tree caught our eye. Veolia premises looked well. The cemetery is well hidden from the road with the stone wall boundary. We admired the boundary trees and some graves were well maintained. A few need attention. GAA looked well. We were delighted to see some houses being painted. Lidl and Aldi were well planted and maintained. Celbridge House had a large car park and an adjacent open space with a row of Whitebeam trees inside the boundary wall. A small amount of litter noted here. St. Raphael's Unit is a peaceful place which is well landscaped. We admired the Cedar tree and the Community Garden. The Grotto is a nice feature in a prominent location and is highlighted at the present time because of the extensive blue flowers. Celbridge Manor Hotel is an impressive building. The statue of Arthur Guinness is impressive and the Arthur's Way is a great way of combining history with environmental schemes. We admired the finger post signage.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The avenue of trees at Castletown House is a major landmark for Celbridge. You have more avenues in residential estates that reflect that landscape approach. Elsewhere, there are fine specimens of trees to be seen such as the Sequoiadendron in the Christchurch grounds at the entrance to Castletown House. We hope that plans for street tree planting are materialised in the coming years. It is recommended that a single species be used for such planting for uniformity and that exotics such as flowering cherries are not chosen. It is important to ensure that the base of new trees is maintained free of weeds and grass and also flower beds to ensure early establishment. In that regard, we noted the remains of flower beds at the base of trees in Castletown residential estate. They look untidy and we suggest they be removed. When trees are established it is important to remove the stakes as the stems can get damaged from the ties or stake. This is an issue in some residential estates mentioned below. Guidelines for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible as you have done with the excellent plant containers in Main Street. Plant containers at the bridge looked well but some weeds in the pavement takes from the impact. However, empty or poorly planted containers are less effective than no plant container at all and in that regard, baskets at the pedestrian bridge should be maintained or removed. The use of permanent planting is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming and for that reason we admired the delightful pink and purple flower bed at the entrance from Clane Road. It is a good example of the use of perennial plants instead of using annuals. The campanulas look great at the Heritage sign, at the grotto and on Newtown Road. In a small yard adjacent to the NCBI we admired the attractive floral display and we had a glimpse of the well maintained garden to the rear.

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

Celbridge is surrounded with a wealth of natural and man-made areas. These are a haven for wildlife and we note that you are actively promoting their value and working to enhance them. We hope the bat boxes erected near Castletown House get some occupants. The walking trails are a great way of highlighting their importance and getting people out into the open. We are pleased that you are conscious of the need to have low intensity management of hedge boundaries and to encourage flora such as ivy-leaved toad flax (*Cymbalaria muralis*) on stone walls. We admired the red valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) plants growing in several locations. The suggestion of carrying out a flora survey of walls in Celbridge and the planned self-guided nature trail booklet on the grounds of Castletown House are good ideas. We also note your interest in having Kilwoghan Bog conserved. Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to achieve under this category. In this regard researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages. Biodiversity is under threat globally and sadly Ireland is a part of this trend. Habitats of value include specimen trees, hedgerows, treelines, streams, woodlands and wetlands. List the plants and animals to be found in your natural environment and recognise their significance (native, protected, or alien invasive?). This would be a very useful project for schools.

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

This category is becoming more and more important and the available marks are now increased to 50 to highlight the need for communities to address the issues involved in tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. We note your range of activities under this heading and in particular, we commend the following schools on achieving green flag status – Scoil Mochua (Aghards) (4th flag), Scoil na Mainstreach (5th flag), Scoil Naomh Brid (3rd flag), St. Wolstan's Community School (4th flag), Educate Together School (NKETS) (3rd flag), St. Patrick's Primary School (1st flag) and the Primrose Hill National School which have a 5th flag and are now working on their 6th flag. This is an exceptional record for any community and we warmly congratulate the pupils and teachers involved in all of these schools for their hard work and dedication. We are interested in the success of the WEEE project and wonder if you have any information on the volume of material collected. Similarly, it would help if you could quantify the number of bags from the spring clean brought to Ballymount for recycling. Many thanks for the information on the household survey. It would be interesting to repeat that survey in a year or two to see if the community has changed its level of conservation/recycling activity. We look forward to further information on the success of the Derrybeg farm initiative. There are a number of other measures that your town can take in regard to sustainability. Contact your waste contractors and try to find out what is being thrown away and armed with this information you can start to think about how waste can be reduced. Examine the waste pyramid and note the recycling is only the fourth most preferred option after avoidance, reducing and re-using. One third of our waste is organic in nature, such as grass clippings. You can avoid collecting mown grass by more frequent cutting and using mulching mowers which shred the clippings and facilitate faster decomposition. In regard to water usage, self-watering hanging baskets are a help in reducing the amount of water used and also the task of watering. Other waste minimisation projects might include working with retailers to cut down on packaging, reminding people to re-use shopping bags, discouraging junk mail, encouraging the re-use of water bottles and coffee mugs at school and at work. In response to an over use of chemicals for weed control, many useful products of the past are no longer available and therefore communities are encouraged to use other means such as hoeing to maintain weeds. In some cases, allowing wildflowers to develop is an acceptable alternative. These activities will highlight the fact that you are focussing on this category and when you develop more projects in the future your marks will increase.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We note your system of managing litter control by having designated leaders for each road/area. It is great that you have such support from the community and we are pleased to learn that with your guidance, transition year students help to pick litter on Main Street. The 'crow-proof' designed litter bins in Main Street are successful in preventing birds from causing litter. Well done on your efforts in keeping Celbridge clean and tidy. Minor litter was noted outside the wall of the cemetery. The gate to the Riding School needs attention. At the permanent planting opposite the Grove there were some weeds

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

Celbridge has many residential estates and we note your annual best estates competition. We visited a number of the estates and comment as follows: Beatty Grove had a lovely flower bed on the corner. There is scope for additional tree planting here. Houses and gardens are to a high standard, the parking sign is dirty. Crodaun Forest Park estate has good planting with plenty of trees and shrubs with great specimens of oak at the entrance. A small residential estate (part of St. Wolstans) on the left side of the Hazelhatch Road has an untidy entrance and some weeds. St. Wolstan's estate looked well as did the finished section of Willow Banks and Simmonstown Park. The same comment applies to Temple Manor and Chelmsford which had a fine bedding display at the entrance. We noted the Laurel Hedge feature in Hazelhatch Park. Litter here was minor. The fittingly named Grove estate has plenty of trees; houses and gardens all looked well with no evidence of litter. The tree stakes in Simmonstown Manor need to be checked to prevent damage to tree stems. Castletown estate has some established trees at the entrance from Christchurch. The floral displays in boxes at the base of the trees make little impact and we suggest they be removed. There are no garden boundaries, some dead trees should be removed; we admired the Oxalis at the base of a fence. Vanessa Lawns looks well as does Killadoon Park estate and Oldtown Mill. Wolstan Haven has an impressive entrance. The gardens are well planted and grass verges maintained. We admired the hornbeam tree specimens and suggest that the Laurel hedge be cut (after August) to prevent it from getting too big. St. Raphael's Manor has well established lime trees. The boundary wall here needs screening and we suggest that climbing plants such as ivy might suit. At Grattan Court, we admired the established trees at the entrance. The flower boxes make little impact here and we suggest their removal. If such schemes are desired, then we advise planting into the ground for ease of maintenance. Oakleigh estate had a fine Cedar tree at the entrance, unfortunately grass mowings are being dumped at its base and also nearby. It would be better to develop a composting scheme. Opposite, there was a nice wall and railings.

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

The approaches to Celbridge were pleasing. On Donaghcomper Road we admired the stone wall. The poles supporting the town name sign needs painting. Bilingual signage throughout the town caught our attention. The stone wall on Newton Road needs repair - we admired the Valerian and wild roses growing there. Pavement and road surfaces in the centre of town are in good condition and the granite bollards look well.