

# Tidy Towns Competition 2019

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Millstreet - Sráid an Mhuilleann</b>	Ref: <b>480</b>
County: <b>Cork(North)</b>	Mark: <b>327</b>
Category: <b>C</b>	Date(s): <b>03/07/2019</b>

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	46	46
Streetscape & Public Places	60	43	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	45	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	34	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	17	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	67	68
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	35
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>327</b>

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Millstreet – Sráid an Mhuilinn páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. Many thanks for your application form, map, Tidy Town plan, biodiversity action plan and additional material. To be honest the size of your submission was way too big. Please just submit the form, map, relevant photos and summaries of any plans or surveys such as your three-year tidy town plan or biodiversity plan. If all entrants to the competition (nearly 900!) submitted this amount of paper and plastic it would make it very environmentally unfriendly! The photos were good, especially before and after shots, but I don't think they need to be in a bound folder or laminated or full-page photos. Please follow the advice of last year's adjudicator and indicate on the application form and the map legend if projects are new (N), maintenance (M) or future projects (FP). The project numbers in the form should be the same as the ones on the map. I was confused by the order in the form e.g. Streetscape starts with number 10 and doesn't follow a sequence. A legend on the map would be most helpful (i.e. list of numbers and associated projects). It was also hard to determine what time period projects were started or completed in. You are lucky to have a committee of 18 and 25 volunteers to help out. You liaise with a range of organisations including Cork County Council, Coillte, IRD Duhallow etc. which is so important to support your work. You use a range of methods to community with your community including personal visits to premises which I think is a great idea. It's hard to beat the personal touch. It's great to read that you feel your efforts are helping the town to grow and prosper, through co-operation of members the community, and that you are hoping to make your town more sustainable.

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

I was delighted to have the opportunity to explore Millstreet, a town I've often driven through. There are many fine, well-presented premises on the main street including the Cinnamon Coffee Shop, the Wallis Arms, the Clara Inn and Duggans. St. Patrick's R.C. Church is an imposing building and I enjoyed reading the attractive interpretive panel at the church entrance. It would be nice if the one at St. Anna's Church of Ireland could be updated. I'm pleased to hear that you are working on a heritage map of the town. The landscaped entrance to Duggans Hardware looks well. The pedestrian crossing outside St. Patrick's church is well done. There is a lot of street furniture in this area with the interpretive panel, chair, planters and fencing. Ideally no more should be added here. The mural on Mill Lane is lovely. The Old Creamery is a beautiful building and it was complemented by the planting with geraniums and roses out front. The landscaped entrance to the Green Glens and Drishane Estate looks very well.

### Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Millstreet was awash with colourful planting on adjudication day. I really like the new contemporary timber and steel planters. You could move towards more contemporary planting too in these planters by using more perennials and aiming for a more naturalistic style. You have already made a start by including more pollinator-friendly perennials in your planting schemes. It's great to have year-round colour and I'm sure daffodils make an impact as do the roses etc. The planters on either side of the door of the R.C. church too looked lovely too- the colour scheme complemented the stone of the building. The build outs with trees on the main street look very well with the Hornbeam. I'm not a fan of planting under trees because it can damage the trees roots, the flowers can compete with the tree for water and I think it can distract from the beauty of the tree. The flowers were a lovely mix but I didn't think the planting was very sustainable on mounded up peat compost at the base of the trees and in some cases with the peat spilling out onto the road. Having said that it was good to see a local resident taking care to water the flowers on a hot summers' day. The build outs on the Mallow Road also work well and the shrubberies at the base were in good condition. The Town Park is a fantastic amenity and very well maintained. It was good to read and to see that you are taking a more biodiversity-friendly approach to your landscaping by including pollinator-friendly plants in your landscaping schemes.

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

You included the biodiversity plan with your application (a summary will do for next year). Was this completed recently or just updated? It states it covers 2019- 2021 but it's not listed as one of this year's projects. It would be helpful if the document could be edited slightly so that the recommendations are summarised in a plan form i.e. a list of projects/actions/ events that are going to be implemented or run over the three-year period (as your Tidy Towns three year work plan is presented). FYI some of the projects listed under this category (e.g. using rainwater for watering) should probably be under the 'Sustainability' category and some of the 'Green Spaces' projects (e.g. pollinators) should be here. It can be so helpful to have a plan to guide your work. It's good to read that Millstreet Boys National School have adopted the pollinator plan as part of their curriculum. I'm sure they'll enjoy the projects and activities involved. You mention pollution control and habitat improvement projects in relation to water quality of local rivers. This sounds very interesting and it would be good to have some more details. I note that you have a wildflower area in the Town Park. The wildflower area in the Pollinator Park looked stunning on adjudication day with abundant oxeye daises. The Pollinator Park contains some nice flowers and shrubs but there is a lot of gravel for a 'biodiversity' area. I'd say it's quite hard to maintain with the current design i.e. watering and weeding requirements. Some of the plants looked very dry and even the bug hotel looked parched. It would be better located somewhere with vegetation and a bit of cover. A couple of trees are dead and should be replaced. The Park was a good solution for a previously derelict site but maybe it could be more manageable. I did notice that there are some pollinator-friendly plants within some of the town flowerbeds. This could be extended each year to make your planting more sustainable and wildlife-friendly. How about running events to highlight and celebrate your local natural heritage such as a nature walk during heritage week or a dawn chorus event in May?

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

The GIY schemes are noted. They require a lot of work and dedication. Growing our own food helps us and our communities become more sustainable. The Smart Store initiative sounds like a great idea and the survey results were noted. How did you communicate the results with your community? It might be an idea to run the survey again in the future to see if it has made an impact on people's behaviour (but please if you do, just include a summary in your application form!). A Conscious Cup campaign is an excellent idea. What has the uptake been like? I note you have held awareness days in relation to waste reduction. It would be helpful if you could indicate dates for these and other projects in the application form. For more ideas see <https://voiceireland.org/perch/resources/admin/zero-waste-community-toolkit-final1.pdf>.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Millstreet was spotless on adjudication day. No dog fouling was noted, your campaign appears to be working well. Many commercial premises and residential areas are well-presented and it's good to read that you reward efforts with your Best Frontage Award. Your weekly clean-ups that involve the wider community including newer community members are making an impact as very little litter was spotted. I note that weeds and debris from Keale Bridge were removed. Herbaceous plants don't cause a problem to built structures but woody plants can be disruptive. I note that you segregate waste in your little pick-ups and record weight of each category of waste, which is a great way to monitor waste produced and discarded. It would be interesting to see the results. St. Mary's Cemetery is looking well after a thorough refurbishment. There is little clutter on the main street in Millstreet but there is some signage on the footpaths which should be monitored to be sure it doesn't become an obstruction.

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

There are many attractive residences along the main street in Millstreet and approach roads. A strong sense of pride of place is evident as many houses are well-presented with nice gardens and floral displays. You are tackling the difficult issue of dereliction with the Dulux Paint Scheme. There are several nice residential areas including Ard Aonigh, which has nice birch trees and Hypericum at the entrance and neat green spaces, Murphy's Terrace and Tanyard Wood.

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

The approach roads to Millstreet are well-maintained with good name signs, stone planters and colourful planting that produce a good impression on the visitor. Trees are a feature on the approach roads, including the mature beech on Station Rd and the trees in the build outs on the Mallow Rd. Hedgerows have been well-trimmed at the

right time of year. The network of backstreet laneways are part of the rich heritage of the town and are maintained free of litter and weeds. The upgrade of the approach road to the Walkers Bridge was noted.

**Concluding Remarks:**

I really enjoyed my visit to Millstreet and look forward to returning again soon. You are strong contenders in the Tidy Towns competition and I hope you find my comments constructive.