

# Tidy Towns Competition 2019

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Thurles - Durlas** Ref: **627**  
County: **Tipperary(North)** Mark: **306**  
Category: **E** Date(s): **26/06/2019**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2018</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2019</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	40	41
Streetscape & Public Places	60	43	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	40	41
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	34	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	17	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	37	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	33
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>306</b>

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Thurles (Durlas) páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta Supervalu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

Thank you for your entry form, map and report on the mural in Thurles Town Park. Your population is 7,940 which puts you in category Large Town E. Your committee number 10 and you have 9 volunteers. Well done for visiting Birdhill to learn how to be a National winner. Your support agencies include Tipperary County Council, Thurles Men's Shed, Restorative Justice, scouts, schools, Supervalu Thurles, etc.

Your channels of communication include Facebook, Twitter, Tipperary Star, parish newsletter. You engage with 6 primary and 4 secondary schools. You have appointed a school liaison person. In response to a question about a project needing special efforts you identified the mural in the town par. Secondly, you mentioned Ballycurrane. Although we asked for "a project" you gave us four. Last two – approach road signage and a biodiversity issue. This is your 6th competition. You summarised well how your community responds to Tidy Towns and how your group's work will contribute to the community.

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

Refresh Thurles 2018 sponsored a seat (1) in an attractive stone path and alcove. The other seat is positioned closer to the graveyard gate. The house (2) remains very unsightly on Mitchell Street. An Post are planning on leaving Liberty Square. Barry's Castle stands out. You tell us no immediate works are planned. Liberty Pharmacy (4) won the 2018 Best Old Window prize. It was passed several times by this adjudicator.

The gate at Reileg Brid (5) looks better. Car was parked beside it while this adjudicator looked for the "railway" bridge that you painted. Number 6 is in the future tense and so are 7 and 8. Friar Street (9) has more than 1 red stop. It could be the one with no name beside a mauve roller shutter. Scaffolding had gone up around the Fire Station (11) which is next door to the Premier Hall. Stradavoher Housing Estate (13) is dealt with further on in this report. Footpaths were upgraded and noted and finger post signs (12) also noted en route to the town park.

St Mary's Church and Memorial Garden (14) and the Cathedral and lots more were visited in this area. What's going to happen to The Munster Hotel? You didn't give it a number and it must be the biggest decision to the made in Thurles. The Kickham and Mitchell Street name signs had not been put up by adjudication day (14). There is a seat at the entrance to Gortataggart or Gort an tSaggairt and beds at each end of the street. They were waiting for planting on adjudication day (16).

Daniel O'Connell stone seen (17). As mentioned elsewhere in this report (18,19) and not "railway" bridges. The freshly painted blue and gold railings at the start of the bridge were noted. Don't wait there for a train to come. Your report on the mural was read and the mural was seen in the town park. With all due respect there are parts of the mural that look as if they were done by a graffiti artist so passers by may be reluctant to walk across the grass to examine them.

The mural would benefit from some notices inviting passers by to come closer and have a good look. They are great murals. I have the photos to prove it. Liberty Square has attractive street furniture including tall, elegant street lights, bollards, metal seats and clean litter bins. Also, a red display board with a poster in it "SOS Save our Square. Keep our Post office in Liberty Square". There were so many other things that this adjudicator saw but did not get time to write about.

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

The Semple Residents Association (15) have 2 large unusual flower beds and this adjudicator is writing this while seated on the wall of one of the beds beside a blooming white rose bush. Not alone are the beds big, they are very old. Let us leave it to next year's adjudicator to see what emerges. Not all beds that you planted and maintained could be visited due to time constraints.

River Walk at Swinging Gates (21) and on Kickham Street were convenient and so were visited. You distributed over 2,436 sapling trees and apple trees. That is an astonishing number. Well done to all involved. You use the future tense with some projects. On adjudication day the planters for Premier Hall (22), near Stakelums at Lower Liberty Square and the car park entrance were not in place. There were 2 fine beds in the car park.

You have asked both the council and their contractor to use the Pollinator Plan. Do they know how many species of bees we have in Ireland? Over 70. There are more than just honeybees. Do they know how many flowers a bee has to visit in a day? Thousands. We need more than just a few pollinators here and there. We need vast numbers. We read with interest proposals for looped walks and perhaps you would include the feasibility study with an entry form in the future.

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

Well done to Ciaran O'Sullivan for his project on invasive species. Not far from Thurles this adjudicator saw colourful signs warning of an invasive species of crawfish in a river. We must not confine ourselves to the well-known flora invasive species. Evasive action can be taken now to protect the bats in the former Erin Foods site. Tipperary County Council is commended for the assistance it gave to the Swift Survey. You have listed an exhaustive list of nature events from willow weaving to a duck race and angling to a coracle launch.

Nature comes right into the centre of your town. On the bridge near Barry's Castle caged wild birds are on display thanks to Thurles Game Preservation and Gun Dog Association. A notice invites us to give "Donations to feed ducks and pheasants. Thank you". While taking a river walk, I was accosted at the Swinging Gates by a lot of ducks. There were swans on the river and fish were seen in it.

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

The Poster Free Campaign came and went. Numerous small to medium villages have had agreements with local politicians for a poster free election as far as their village was concerned. The bigger they get the more likely someone is to break the agreement. This adjudicator is disappointed at the apparent lack of progress in Thurles. The Tidy Towns Unit was among the team that drafted the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020. Did you know that an updated version has been published "Pollinator Friendly Planting Code"? It can be downloaded from [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie). It has great advice, not only lists of plants, etc but also location types e.g. dry, shady, damp, etc and seasonality. To know now that only 7 councils have signed up to it.

The old mantra reuse, reduce, recycle has been taken over in schools, particularly senior schools who now say, "this is a plastic free school". The top priority on the EU pyramid is prevention. No waste should be allowed into villages, etc. The reduce, reuse, etc are 4th in the priority list. Still very important but not the top priority. Read last year's adjudicator's report. The same message was given.

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

Asking that headless poles be removed is routine in Tidy Towns. Your reference to "Railway Station Bridge" can be misunderstood. Your report says that Railway Bridge at 18 and 19 were approved by "Railway Manager and Council". This adjudicator called to the railway station to see the painting. None of the railway bridges had been painted. Your reference in this category is about match barriers at "Lidl, Greyhound Station and Railway Station Bridge". The bridge in question is not a railway bridge. It is a bridge that is part of Abbey Road and it runs over the railway line. It is not a bridge in the railway station.

The bridge at 19 on the map has nothing to do with the railway or the station. It is a road bridge. If it went over a river would you ask Waterways Ireland for permission to paint it? The Stradovoher Housing Complex was visited. This adjudicator would never have expected to come across such a complex anywhere in Ireland, particularly rural Ireland. You arranged 3 Spring Clean Litter Picks, all in April. You registered with An Taisce so it is presumed it was under the National Spring Clean. Good choice. There is no reference to regular litter patrols. Do you have them? If not, who tackles litter on a regular basis as Tidy Towns groups do? The Kobii restaurant was visited. It is in a key location in the town. There was a long, narrow wooden flower box on the ground with predominantly yellow flowers in it.

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

The Community Estates/Residential Streets competition is your effort to develop community pride. You offer prizes and a report from the judge. A copy of the judge's report was included with your entry form. There were 3 estate winners and 1 street winner. The 3 estates were visited, as was Friar Street. The Semple Residents Association area was also visited. This adjudicator had to adjudicate other villages and towns and overnights in Thurles. That

provided opportunities to see more of Thurles than a routine adjudication would allow. Many residential areas were visited on all of the access roads. Almost any one of them could win an award. The “almost” would be Stradavoher (13). However, it would be invidious of this adjudicator to single out 1 for special mention or to disagree in anyway with the choice of this year’s judge. That is not why I am here.

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

As you know, approach roads are important because they help to create the first impression of a village. You have been lobbying the Council to update approach signage. Separately you were promoting the relaunch of a web site – [www.thurles.ie](http://www.thurles.ie). This has been promised. Three colour options were put to the Council. They made a selection which you deem to be very disappointing. You had a request from Ballycurrane to address the roadside. This adjudicator is not familiar with Thurles. It is a first visit and we do not know where Ballycurrane is. It has not been given a number and is not on your map. The outcome is good. Overgrowth has been cut back. Ground has been levelled. Grass seeds have been added. The seat has been repaired and painted.

**Concluding Remarks:**

It was a pleasure adjudicating Thurles. We look forward to receiving your entry form next year.