

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Corofin** Ref: **64**
County: **Clare** Mark: **277**
Category: **B** Date(s): **19/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	37	37
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	34	36
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	38	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	27	28
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33	34
TOTAL MARK	450	269	277

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Your adjudicator would like to welcome back Corofin to the 2015 Tidy Towns Competition and we would to congratulate you for your continued participation in the competition for 41 years. It was your adjudicator's first time at this 'Angler's Paradise' and it was a lovely experience. You work with a broad range of local bodies and get support and direction from Corofin Tourism Group, Burren Eco Tourism Network and many others. Thanks also to the financial support you received this year from a walk by Cumann Siuladoiri. Your FaceBook page was visited and it was great to see so many activities in the town and promotion of your natural heritage through bug hunts and the Cuckoo Club.

Your adjudicator was intrigued to read that you will be undertaking a 'major project' with the Youth Club this Summer – good luck and do not forget to provide details of it in next year's adjudication report.

You included newspaper cuttings and cross-labelled photographs of activities throughout the year which are very helpful for your adjudicator. A big thank you to the person/s that completed the entry form and provided the 'easy to follow', relevant information on your achievements this year. It was great to read the submission from the Green Schools Committee from Corofin National School.

Your 3-year plan 2015 was examined but it was felt that more details could be added to this to assist you in your work. For example, what year in your 3 year plan are you currently in? What have you achieved so far and who is responsible for each action? It is noted that last year's adjudicator spent some time outlining what would be useful here and raising similar points. This must be addressed for 2016 and consultation on this would be beneficial to allow your community to give some direction in your work.

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

Clare Heritage Centre is a wonderful building that was very well presented. St Patricks Hall was freshly painted and new railings and ramp access have been installed, perhaps the walls of the ramps could be painted also? It was good to note that you are in close contact with Clare County Council's Building's Conservation Officer. Leaking drainpipes at The Market House could soon lead to water damage on this property. It is a shame here that some of the metal downpipes have been replaced with plastic in places.

The information point for the Burren has excellent displays and interpretation inside and the prospect of a bus tour through the Burren was very tempting. But it was felt that though the exterior appearance was clean and bright, it didn't draw or inspire the passer-by into the premises as perhaps it should. A more creative and attractive signage may work better here and some planting of climbing plants could disguise the non-descript design of this building.

Directly opposite the information point, great use of colour has been applied to a gallery painted terracotta red. Indeed many homes and buildings and end gable walls throughout Corofin have used colour to great effect that should be pleasing to locals and tourists alike.

It was great to see three Green Flags proudly displayed at Corofin National School where trees were nicely planted. The dark blue colour choice of the boundary walls at the school worked well. The hanging baskets were positioned very high at the school – presumably to avoid impacts with children! Your adjudicator wondered how are they watered or maybe window boxes would be an option in the future to give children an opportunity to be involved also in caring for the plants in their school.

You have provided details of much work that has been carried out in 2014/15 and well done to all. The premises for Solas health food were bright and attractive. Also the half-door at n Cupán Tae Café was a quaint attraction to a lovely shop front. 'Day break' was being painted on adjudication day and this will look well. It is asked that all business owners examine their external signs and consider if it blends in and adds to the tone and image of Corofin. For example, signage at Malak's takeaway is functional and clean but if upgraded it could make a big contribution to the appearance of the streetscape here.

The entrance gates to Corofin GAA was admired and there is a white board here that cleverly updates locals on forthcoming events - what a clever idea! There is a great clean, playground facility here and all looks very neat and tidy. There are a lot of concrete walls here and perhaps their appearance could be softened by the addition of some planters with climbing plants such as ivy or honeysuckle here?

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The newly erected stone flower beds on the Kilnaboy and Ennis Roads looked well. There was a lovely old stone trough planted up at the entrance to the Heritage Centre. The new seating area and surrounding landscaping was admired as you arrive into Corofin. The grotto presented very nicely – you have done great work here and the kerbs looked well. The directional road sign had been removed and you are leaving this as a place to erect temporary signs on local events. The removal of signs here is a good thing as it is imagined that a sign would obstruct the views. The adjudicator particularly loved the working pump and that both a cup and a bowl for animals, were provided to refresh passers-by. How clever to have positioned the information sign here beside the pump so the reader has time to be refreshed at the same time. Well done on removing the hanging baskets from the bridge, as per last year's adjudicator's recommendations.

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

It is great that you are so aware of the importance of wetlands and the local designated 'Special Protection Area (SPA)'. This SPA is one of a network of special habitats across across Europe set up for the protection of birds as they migrate. It is hoped that the Water & Wildlife workshop went well.

You have also promoted maintaining longer verges for wildlife benefits and well done. Unfortunately as you turn down the road to Lake Inchiquin a lot of weedkiller had been sprayed at this junction and along the edge of the road. What a pity one person here has applied such wide-spread use of chemicals in such an indiscriminate and inappropriate way that causes such devastation to the local environment. If there is a need to manage hedges and verges this should be cut back outside of the bird breeding season as necessary, except where health & safety takes precedent.

The amenity centre at the lakeshore was very nicely presented with the colourful picnic tables. You are so lucky to have such a wonderful amenity here near to Corofin. On adjudication day some household litter had been left under a picnic table by the water's edge. You should know however you have not been deducted for this as everywhere else was perfect here and no doubt it would be picked up by your litter patrols here.

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

The submission from the Corofin National School Green School Committee helps you gain marks in this category. It was good to read of the many initiatives that the school, and indeed the family homes of school children, carry out to help manage and reduce the resources they use. This includes the fact that only paper goes into the recycling at school when both sides have been used and that all homes have a small box for battery recycling. The greening of the Finn Festival is to be commended also.

Of particular note is that your Christmas lights are now 100% LED and should dramatically reduce your energy usage at this time of year. You should monitor the bills and units used and provide more details next year.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have identified tidiness issues and dealt with these in turn. Do you have a litter plan? Where and when is most of your litter deposited? This will help you put actions into your long-term plan on specific litter problems. Well done to all the school children and the committee for taking part in the National Spring Clean. One of the main litter issues was that of discarded cigarette butts outside public houses such as Crowley's – but what an attractive public house. The recycling bins at the hostel and camping site were in use and their clean presentation would encourage their continued use by visitors.

Parking along the Main Street could be an issue but most of the residents of Corofin should be congratulated for

parking neatly and using the rear car parks where they can.

There are a number of vent pipes around Corofin for the sewage system, such on the Main Street. Some of tops of these have broken off and many are rusty – these should be an action to address in your long-term plan. As mentioned below, watch out for commercial signage on approach roads.

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

Inchiquin residential area was very nicely presented but it is a pity there is no name sign at the entrance here. Creagg Briann estate was also very well presented. Laghtagoona estate has a nice entrance and lovely mature and maturing trees. There are very large areas being mown here – how would the residents feel for some of this to be left to grow longer? This would benefit not only wildlife including pollinators but would save time and money. The new beds and planting near the crèche were noted here and will look well. The use of shrubs cleverly hides the septic tank area here.

There were a few weeds in the Newtown estate by the school – perhaps these could be hand pulled when litter patrols are being carried out also? At the junction to Milltown Malbay there is a lovely white cottage with red window frames, window boxes and gates that looks great and makes a great first impression when you arrive into Corofin.

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

The bi-lingual street names were admired – this is a great achievement for Corofin. Approaching from Ennis, at Killeen Cross, there was a very attractive, naturally planted area with stone walls and a planted boat named 'The Corofin'. This planting reflects the local environment and works very well to remind you that you are in a special rural area of Ireland. Lakefield service station gives a nice impression as you arrive into Ennis but temporary advertising signs on the road here could quickly build-up and take-away that good first impression. As you approach Corofin from the Gort Road, there was a very nice raised bed but there was an old rusty post obscuring the Corofin Sign. The pavement as you approach the bridge on the main street is quite cracked.

On the Ennis road, between the 60 and 50KM signs there are a few rusty poles with no signs on them. Near the new seating area there is a very large National Development Plan sign demoting the funding made available for the upgrading of the new sewage scheme. These are very intrusive and can be taken down after a certain amount of time so you should consult with your engineer to determine if you can take this down yet.

Concluding Remarks:

It was wonderful to see so many tourists in Corofin in the mid-week and that business owners and the community had worked hard to ensure their experience in Corofin was of a high quality. There is an obvious pride in the work of Corofin TidyTowns and your adjudicator loved the pictures of your float (ride-on mower!) in the Finn Parade in May. Well done to all the hard working volunteers in Corofin. You have carried out many projects this year, not all of which have been individually mentioned, but have been inspected. Finally your adjudicator would like to congratulate Corofin for 41 years in the national TidyTowns competition. What an achievement and well done on your sustained efforts. It was a pleasure to explore the delights of Corofin.