

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: Castlegregory - Caisléan Ghriaire	Ref: 438
County: Kerry	Mark: 247
Category: B	Date(s): 16/06/2019

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	37
Streetscape & Public Places	60	34
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	30
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	31
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	9
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	41
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33
TOTAL MARK	470	247

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Castlegregory Caisléan Ghriaire páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

Well done on reforming your committee as a sub-group within the Castlegregory Community Council, after 7 years. We are pleased to welcome you back and what a pleasure it was to read your application form; the handwriting was so well done. Your committee of 13 members assisted by another 7 volunteers and litter pickers is a healthy number for the size of your community. Kerry County Council have assisted you with a Community Support Grant, which is a great start. No doubt you will also receive support from local businesses and other public bodies as you become more organised. The use of Facebook, notice board newspaper etc., are your means of communication. We wish you well in your involvement with local schools; they will be the future committee.

Many thanks for attaching a map of the area with project locations marked for our attention and some photographs. If you use the satellite view it will be much easier to identify the village layout, especially the street names. The numbers on the map were incomplete and don't follow any sequence which makes it difficult to read. It is also better to have the legend on the same page and eliminate the need to go over and back to two documents. You have also attached hand-written notes which are a combination of current and future projects. May we suggest that these notes would best be rearranged under the various criteria and to add a column indicating when it is proposed to carry out the work because it is not possible to achieve everything in one year and it is good to aim for targets over a period of years. For your convenience, it would be best to have these typed because they will change from year to year and such changes are much easier done using a computer. You would also find it easier to incorporate photographs alongside the project text and save you from having to enclose them with the application. You can go a step further and download the application form from the DRCD website and that will allow you to add more space if needed under each criterion.

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

It was surprising to find that Main Street was quite a narrow road and many of the houses located there are perhaps the oldest in the village. The village has several vacant/derelict buildings and you have undertaken to improve some of them by removing weeds such as briars and painting the buildings. You are also working with Kerry County Council to have the sites improved through the Derelict Sites Act. All of that work is very challenging for you, so well done on the efforts. Well done on the improvement works to the little cottage on Tailor's Row. The church on Main Street is well painted and the grounds were clean and tidy. Twomeys was looking well as was the Craft Centre and Fitzgerald's Shop. The Beach Box is a shop with many different items for sale and the OPTP Restaurant and Take Away was well presented with brown windows, doors and window shutters. The Milesian

cottage was in a traditional white colour and Gregory's Restaurant had a lean-to porch on the front of the building with extra space for dining. The Spar shop and car park is a change from the small shops elsewhere in the village. It was looking very well. The playground looked very well and is in a good location.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Projects mentioned under this heading include establishing a biodiverse meadow at Coolroe and sanding and varnishing the benches as well as improving an old cottage near Coolroe. Guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible; they should not in themselves attract any notice. Near the welcome sign at Coolroe, on the approach road from Tralee, two rubber pipes are used as plant containers and they do not fit the guideline. We suggest they be removed and if a flower bed is desired at that location, the plants can go directly into the ground. This comment also applies to the half barrel containers planted beside a stone wall in the village. There is no need for them at this location and painting them red only draws more attention to the container. The more important matter at this point is weeds growing at the wall base beside the containers. If considering more seasonal flowers the use of permanent planting including herbaceous perennials for floral displays is encouraged rather than relying on annuals which are more time consuming. For more information on pollinators, check with www.pollinators.ie

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

This year you have worked at Coolroe with tree planting and plan to establish wildflower meadows. Please note that a simple way of doing this is to establish a less frequent mowing regime whereas if you buy wildflower seed, it may entail removing the grass and topsoil to prevent competition with the wildflowers. Called Natural Regeneration, the following information was obtained from <https://www.pitchcare.ie/news-media/wildflower-meadows-55d9874a96e0c.html>

- This method can be used on an area of existing grassland or lawn and is often known as naturalising. In its simplest form, it means leaving the area to grow and allowing nature to run its course. The area will naturally develop with just a small amount of management required.
- Whatever is already in this area or naturally migrates to the site, will be allowed to grow with just one annual cut. By changing management regime and techniques, seeds that have remained dormant in the soil for years may decide the time is right to make an appearance. By leaving it to nature, you relinquish control over what may grow and it is likely that, whilst biodiversity will be increased dramatically over the years, the overall visual representation of wildflowers may be less satisfying and the number of species limited in the short to medium term.
- Whilst there is a minimal amount of work and effort involved with this methodology, the timescale is certainly years and not months and the overall look, without intervention, is more likely to resemble an unkempt hay meadow rather than a colourful wildflower meadow with a lower yield of wildflowers and biodiversity.

You have a rich natural area surrounding your community and it is important to promote an awareness of its many traits and to map these habitats. 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. Habitats of value include specimen trees, hedgerows, treelines, streams, woodlands and wetlands. Try to list the plants and animals to be found there and recognise their significance (native, protected, or alien invasive?). This information can be fun to gather and can involve the schools or other interested parties. Raise awareness through holding events such as hedgerow walks or bat walks. Contact the Irish Wildlife Trust for more information.

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

This category is about tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. It is a global and a local problem. To save the Earth we need to move quickly to a zero-waste society.

The emphasis here really needs to be on reducing the volume of waste produced rather than recycling (which is taken for granted). At this level of the contest the adjudicator wants to see innovation in tackling bigger issues of food waste, plastic disposal and energy use. What are homes and businesses doing to tackle these?

Relevant activities mentioned in your application include the non-use of chemicals for weed control, the recycling station at the Spar car park, the use of public transport (Kerry Link bus service) and the notices about fines for dog fouling. The other items mentioned are relevant to the nature and biodiversity criterion.

Other measures to consider are...

- 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.
- The use of self-watering hanging baskets to help in reducing the amount of water used and also the task of watering.
- Working with retailers to cut down on packaging and reminding people to re-use shopping bags.

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.

For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done to the team of volunteers who are tackling removal of weeds from kerbs, footpaths and road verges since

last March. The fruits of their work are to be seen everywhere and we are pleased to learn that you are not using chemical weed killers. Your litter picking operation produced 60 bags and you maintain the dog poo bag stations (which we noted).

Everywhere you look in Castlegregory, overhead wires dominate the view. We suggest you approach Kerry County Council with a view to having them placed underground when an opportunity arises. At Strand Road junction with Strand Street, there is a grassed site that appears to be used for car parking. Since car parking is needed at this point, we suggest that this activity be regularised by developing it as a hard-surfaced car park with appropriate landscaping which could be used to reduce the visual impact of the cars. There are too many signs (of varying sizes, shapes and colours) at this junction for establishments and activities and we suggest a major project is needed to rationalise the signage and reduce the untidiness.

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

The Station Houses are for holiday rental. They are looking very well, and we were pleased to see established trees on the open space. Most homes in the village are in good condition and well-painted and some have planted hedges in their gardens. Others have added enhancements of window box displays.

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

The welcome stone on the approach is well done and is located in a very good position. The absence of flowers around the stone is correct for this rural part of Ireland. The street name Martramane is unusual for this adjudicator and not like Main Street and Forge Road. The signs in many cases are difficult to read and we suggest the letters be repainted.

Concluding Remarks:

Having often heard of Castlegregory, we were delighted to visit it for our first time. Well done to the committee and volunteers for taking such pride in your community.