

Tidy Towns Competition 2016

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Donnybrook** Ref: **1346**
County: **Dublin** Mark: **263**
Category: **B** Date(s): **13/07/2016**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015	Mark Awarded 2016
Community Involvement & Planning	60	33	36
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38	38
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	36	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	24	24
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	46	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	32
TOTAL MARK	450	253	263

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Céad faillte roimh Donnybrook TidyTowns chuig Chomórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu don bhliain 2016. Thank you for your completed entry form with little pieces of information, especially on the built environment that increased one's enjoyment of the trip no end. The adjudicator would have been lost without your map and has to admit he was lost on occasions even with the map. You are so familiar with all of the highlights of the area that you must consider how a stranger would go about finding the Heritage garden or even the Iron Bridge. Had it been raining I suspect many gems of the visit would have been missed as I might have adjudicated from the car. So a working map is vital if the adjudicator is to get full value from the visit and you are to get full value for your work. Thank you for the inclusion of your 3 Year Plan which embraces all aspects of this competition. One feels that your group is valued by the County Council and by local groups as you seem to get financial support and assistance from a wide range of local bodies. The adjudicator notes your very active engagement with the school and particularly lauds the fun approach to involving the younger pupils. The adjudicator is also delighted that one of the results of your involvement in the competition is a heightened awareness of the historical background of this village. Your aim 'to promote and empower' is admirable.

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

The traveler passing through Donnybrook is not likely to be overwhelmed by the streetscape. There is little of exceptional note at present apart from the splendid Church. The Garda station sulks at the heart of the village and badly needs to shed its present brooding appearance. The giant screening across the road will unfurl one day and reveal some wonderful delights, one hopes. And this reaction is so unfair to the rest of the built environment of Donnybrook, and it is your reaction too as you await the improvement to the Garda station. On further delving one discovers wonderful built delights as at the Donnybrook Youth Club or the Donnybrook Scout Hall. Mount Eden Road and Marlborough Road gave an insight into the days when Catholic complexes were hives of educational and ecclesiastical activity. Muckross Park College is a wonderful experience from a built environment viewpoint and from a landscaped garden viewpoint. Similarly the Carmelite Centre fills the eyes with wonder as one searches about for the heritage garden. Eventually the heritage garden is found in the midst of a wealth of heritage buildings. I wandered through the Mary Aikenhead Services complex, agog at the buildings and the landscaping and delighted that this vast complex is being put to fitting present day use to serve the needs of present day Donnybrook. Is that a pole for the gas lamps of long ago? One supposes that the graveyard must be one of the oldest sites in the village. One could only peer through the locked gate but the design of the entrance created a sense of the revered nature of the site. The information at the entrance most informative. A walk along the boundary wall took one back through the centuries. As yet I did not realise the significance of the accompanying wall across the road with its blocked up windows, sadly some blocked with inappropriate concrete blocks. Across the N11 the modern boundary of the Bective Rangers ground seems at peace with its more heritage companions from a visual viewpoint. There

are some attractive shop fronts on the street such as KIELYS and Bens Barber Shop and Maynes and The Greenery . But the favourite is at Ciss Maddens. One felt like taking the day off and meeting the person who created this delightful front appearance. The sign at the Fruit and Veg and that at Molloy's should be treated with respect. When one read the information plate on the 1888 All Ireland one wondered why such information is not dispensed at so many other heritage sites throughout the village. Beautifully landscaped.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

While it is easy to take what is prominent and seemingly permanent for granted one must not forget the rich heritage of trees that this village has inherited from previous generations and their wonderful stamp on the appearance of the area nowadays. In autumn one imagines that this blessing could be seen as a curse but the compost is a valuable by-product. So your prune evenings are a must. One must also be realistic about the threats that trees can pose. All other landscaping is the present generation planning and planting in the short term. Your efforts bring colour to the plaza area, to the retail outlets and your arrival/departures planters signal to the adjudicator that here we are in Donnybrook. The adopt an island is a lovely idea and 'well done Fred'. The adjudicator loved the many facets to your plaza area. The entrance to Donnybrook Manor is a treat, with beautiful elegance created by the signage, the planting. The roses and the cordyline feature strongly with the various box hedging. Is the water feature in the private realm or in the public realm but whatever the case may be it was worth seeing. The hebe is another delight which the bee pollinators would love. One loved the distinctive hanging baskets on the beautiful lanterns on Morehampton Terrace. The terrace garden was worth all of the frustration in attempting to locate it. The heritage community garden was somewhat underwhelming. Herbert park is a vast recreational area with magnificent trees and so many facilities. It is delightful to see so many people enjoy these surroundings and engaged in a multiplicity of activities. The gravel beds at the Topaz garage deserve a mention. The landscaping at Beech Hill is a credit to the designers and those who keep it so beautifully. Wonderful that the central park at the Broc cottages has survived and is still so beautifully presented.

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

To the visitor the red brick and the mature trees make an immediate impact when travelling the off shoots from the N11. One imagines the nesting time in Donnybrook as an exciting time of large bird activity. One also imagines the challenges to park cleaning staff in Herbert Park. There are beautiful parks attached to many of the old church grounds, tightly mown as has been the tradition and looking delightful. More recent thinking promotes setting aside areas that might not be in the public eye to provide fodder, forage and shelter for God's little creatures. You mention the presence of the fox, the badger and the grey squirrel. Spotted one of the latter. Think in terms of promoting areas for these. The same might be done for small birds and bees at a lower height than the tall trees. Examine the Bee Pollinator plan when deciding on flowers arrangements for your planters next year. That said, the adjudicator feels that the content of many of your planters helps wildlife. Raising awareness of the presence of wildlife in the area is another aspect of this section and is mentioned by you. Overall the adjudicator did not come across any awareness initiatives. So that is a plan for the future, maybe down at the Iron Bridge, for example. The adjudicator feels that there may be an outbreak of Japanese Knotweed on the bank of the river to the rear of the Church. It was some distance away so I could not be certain. Check it out.

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

Firstly well done to the schools for their involvement in the Green Flag programme. Great credit due to the pupils, the teachers and the parents for this investment in the future of our environment. In your engagement with those schools are you made aware of the flag that each school is striving to attain and if so how does this impact on your sustainable living programme? The adjudicator is pleased that autumn leaves help supply colour to your floral displays in the years following. One appreciates that the Donnybrook Heritage Garden does not need cartloads of compost but compost is worth creating. The adjudicator did not come across your water harvesting initiative but lauds the practice. In what ways do you use the harvested water? Your efforts to promote cycling can also be included in this section as cycling reduces our carbon footprint. The adjudicator encourages you to investigate other means in which you might reduce your carbon footprint because as a community we are still scratching at the surface of this section.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On a busy route towards the city, such as Donnybrook, tidiness and litter awareness are major issues. The constant stream of traffic is not just a noise pollutant but leaves problems related to shabby appearance in its wake. One reads the practical and creative measures you are taking with interest. Yes litter and graffiti are threats to your ideal vision for Donnybrook but you are fighting back. Well done on your anti-clutter initiatives. Not one example of dog fouling was experienced during a three to four hour walk-about. 'What sort of dog owner are you' seems to stir guilt strings. You are aware of situations and locations that challenge the appearance of Donnybrook as in dereliction which often causes the surrounding area to be impacted on also as in the case of the building just off the street opposite the signs for Broc and Pembroke cottages. The ongoing situation with the garda building and the building across the street are challenges which one hopes will be resolved.

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

As in the case of neighbouring areas Donnybrook is highly residential, most of the residential areas being settled for many decades with delightful mature landscaping and revered treatment of railings. Morehampton Terrace was discovered on the way to terrace garden. The window boxes plus the hanging baskets added to the house design created a magical few minutes. Thank you for pointing out that there is an area of Donnybrook that is an AVA and

so therefore a 'must visit' for the adjudicator. Many of the residential streets were walked and their atmosphere imbibed. But modern residential apartment blocks are a wonderful feature of the present day Donnybrook. Bloomfields Square is a case in point, the formal landscaping adding to the formality of the complex. The modern Dunbur also fills its site suitably. The scent of the privet hedge attracted me past Kildonan House which one hopes will be returned to its former glory. The other houses along that row are beautiful. Harmony Avenue was another area that stole the heart. Rows of cottages have survived, with dignity intact, in spite of the recent building spree as at St Brocs, Pembroke, Beaver and Simmons Court, adding their particular character to the residential stock of the village.

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

The main approach roads to Donnybrook are part of the busy N11, the village being only a speck on this roadway. Therefore your flowers planters were an important aid in identifying the start/end locations of Donnybrook. The adjudicator welcomes your plans to introduce welcome signs in the future. Of course there are other approach roads to Donnybrook too but all are highly residential tree lined roads connecting to Ranelagh and Ballsbridge, for example. One fully endorses your efforts to promote cycling through this busy urban village by providing for the needs of cyclists. The most enchanting back area has to be where the cottages at Broc and Pembroke are located. But keep a weather eye on other back areas as in a car park in from Ciss Maddens.

Concluding Remarks:

Having passed through Donnybrook on many occasions one was totally unaware of the hidden heritage of this village. Now one will have a deeper appreciation of the gems that are stowed away, hidden from the heedless passing motorist. And this passer by will spread the word.