

Category

Runner Up

DROMISKIN



General Cleanliness

Dromiskin was spotless on adjudication day and, having failed to spot even one piece of litter, we must pay tribute to your litter patrol team who are clearly doing an excellent job. Kerbside weed control was also faultless and the entire area exuded an air of tidiness with an air of order and neatness throughout. No point in labouring the point, as you know as well as we do, that Ginnety's site is a bit of an eyesore and produces one of the very few visual blemishes in the area. Luckily your many other positive interventions, in its immediate surroundings, have balanced things out somewhat and well done on branding the site as a "Wild and Free" area because it has, by default, turned into a wildlife habitat. That said, we would recommend some form of screening to reduce the negative visual impact. The Bring Bank site was spotless and one of, if not, the best such facilities we've seen with its sparkling clean units, beautifully illustrated and informative signage, battery recycling unit, well stocked and beautifully crafted Outdoor Library as well as landscaping which produced lively spots of colour. The completed, and ongoing, development works on former derelict sites on the Commons Road have already made positive impact but, when fully

complete, will have a hugely transformative effect by eliminating a number of previous derelict sites.

Landscaping Works and Floral Displays

An almost dizzying array of high quality, well maintained landscaping projects were on view in the village with the variety of plant species mainly favouring pollinator friendly permanent planting arrangements interspersed with hot spots of seasonal colour. The planning, design and maintenance of green spaces is exemplary and none more so than the wonderful Heritage Park which is a quiet and reflective space that honours the varied heritage of your community. With its impressive natural stone boundary walls and piers, wonderful



banners, newly surfaced pathways, new paving set at the arbour where the wisteria and climbing roses are developing well and will be stunning as they further mature, maturing tree planting, delightful stone enclosed beds of rose and lavender as well as a series of interpretations and sculptural pieces you really have created an environment that honours the heritage and natural environment of your community. You should treasure your many superb stone walls in the village as they were constructed, over a period of time, by a master craftsman who understands how to work stone in an attractive and yet functional manner. What a legacy for future generations! All of your public spaces and pocket gardens were exemplary in presentation and presented in a manner to stimulate the senses. The Bee Positive Gardens



have developed well in the last 12 months with lavender, catmint, shasta daisies, lupins and achillea proving to be the perfect combination to provide visual impact as well as attracting our beleaguered pollinators. The gigantic metal flowers and the cream panels as the backdrop to this planting complete the pretty picture with a series of bird, butterfly and bee boxes discretely located in the surrounding mature foliage. We loved the quirky signs for these gardens and, of course, two new Butterfly Gardens have been



developed since last year incorporating the planting of buddleia and the provision of very high quality signage. The animal sculptures across the road really are exquisite and we note your plans to provide some landscaping at this location. The Biblical Garden is a distinctive piece of landscaping with a stunning yucca highlighting the biblical Tree of Good and while some sections of the box hedging, in the wonderfully designed planting arrangement, were struggling a little the overall impact was one of care and attention. We very much admired the meticulously neat edging of the various landscaping and grassed areas in the Credit Union Garden and applaud the time and effort of those who took on this onerous task. Natural planting in this green space comprises of the fuzzy, glossy, silky, waxy and prickly blooms that combine to produce glorious colour and textures attractive to both the human and the insect populations. The spiky blue flowers of the globe thistle were attention grabbers with the lavatera, rudbeckia, fennel, roses and too many more to mention also demanding attention and providing colour and texture. The wildflower swathe, while not exhibiting the sensational blend of colours of last year, was nevertheless most attractive with the yellow and white daisies growing in glorious abandon interspersed with glimpses of blue and red from cornflowers and poppies. The public space leading to the graveyard combined multiple features that work together and while the magnificent Viking Boat is obviously the standout feature not to be outdone are the wonderful Birds Eye View Bog Oak Sculpture, willow enclosed planting arrangements and the glossily painted pump, in its new red colour scheme, highlighted with its new trough of cyclamen – a really wonderful central space with the background stories to the various features beautifully displayed on Information Signs. The meditative ambience of Lawlor's Peace Garden, with its strategically placed



public seat to provide splendid views of the monastic site while providing the opportunity to sit and enjoy the daily life of the community and admire the well tended shrub beds. Sometimes simple is brilliant and this public space is quite brilliant in its simplicity – another masterpiece in design and maintenance. The AOH Garden is another delightful green space that incorporates the manicured and natural in a seamless manner with its Ring a Rosy sculpture set in the manicured section to the backdrop of the spectacular blue cedar tree with the herb garden, in colourful tyres, closer to the Wild and Free areas to the rear. The hedge that forms the boundary on the village side has matured really well and container planting of begonia and lobelia provides great vibrancy but could we suggest the planting at the base of the Ring a Rosy sculpture be limited to cranesbill only as the dahlia is an unnecessary distraction. The bed at the crossroads delivers instant appeal with agapanthus, day lilies, lavender, heuchera and bistort jostling for attention in their well maintained decorative stone bed. The Co-Op Field looked a little different this year following your decision to create a “No Mow Zone” in the centre of this green space – we loved your signs highlighting this and we understand that this is Stage 1 of producing a natural, village centre wildflower meadow so we eagerly await the result of the second stage next year. The tiered planters at this location are nice features but their visual impact could be improved if the colours and foliage textures were stronger, the centrepiece made more dominant and trailing plants included to soften the appearance of the planters. The Herb Garden at Centra looked amazing with its hexagonal tiered planters boasting a healthy selection of herbs including marjoram, thyme, mint, parsley, rosemary, rocket, chives, oregano, fennel and bay with all exceptionally well maintained. The refurbishment of the lengthy linear bed in the Church Car Park has worked really well – beautifully designed

with a delightful selection of plants to provide strong visual impact and carefully planted to provide enough space for long term growth. The plants have been carefully chosen with grasses providing movement, richly coloured lilies producing vibrancy and the catmint for sustenance for pollinators. What a transformation from the former over populated and overgrown planting arrangement! It is inspiring to see what your excellent relationship with the local school has delivered with a dizzying array of projects on view within the school grounds as well as in the wider community. The Dreamtime Garden was simply stunning this year with rudbeckia, dahlias, salvia, fuchsia, lupins, potentilla, cranesbill, pheasant berry and ladies mantle vying for attention in the weed free and beautifully edged beds that combine to form the shape of a Celtic Cross. Nearby the three small sculptures catch the eye and your Outdoor Classroom was very neatly presented but might benefit from having its paintwork refreshed. The Incredible Edible Garden lived up to its name with fruit laden trees and bushes as well as a composting area and hub-cap fence art – we noted that a large population of bees were very much at home in the raised vegetable and herb beds. A trio of gigantic metal flowers was most eye catching near the entrance to this sustainable garden. The Peace Bed looks really well with nicely pruned lettering in box hedging and the nearby 1916 Sculpture looks its very best this year. Ginnety’s Pond was a truly wonderful discovery – we have caught glimpses of it in recent years through the telescope on your viewing platform but this year we were able to visit and witness at first hand the superb work that has been undertaken in recent months. We didn’t just like it - we absolutely loved it! The meandering gravelled path has been beautifully installed to follow the contours of the pond, wildflowers were in splendid full bloom, grassed areas were appropriately maintained, vegetation was providing shelter for wildlife and there



is no doubt that this site will be of inestimable value for the protection of wildlife as well as being a wonderful amenity to add to the recreational value of the community. All involved with this project are owed a debt of gratitude. Planting on top of the beautifully constructed stone wall on Chapel Road has matured to the extent that it requires minimal maintenance – how lovely to see the Irish Flag, Green Flag and your own Village Flag flying high at this location! We did miss your hanging basket displays this year but despite their absence you managed to deliver hot spots of colour at strategic locations and none more so than the lavish flower towers framing the entrance to the Church where jewel coloured begonia were simply resplendent. Colourful impact was also achieved by the painting of your many pumps in glossy red and seasonal planting in your newly crafted trough, bucket and the ingeniously designed anvil shaped container. The considerable work done to record the history of the village is a great accomplishment for your committee and it is interesting and educational to see it highlighted, so attractively, on the beautifully designed signs on your Heritage Trail which are a lovely reminder of the community's historic past and help to uphold the strong sense of place that is so evident. Your village Ecology Trail is a visually appealing and educational resource for young and old alike highlighting different facets of biodiversity and nature in the community. You have added to your sculpture trail with the provision of a lovely child friendly “Children on a Slide” piece of public art which is appropriately located at the entrance to the school building to the backdrop of well considered planting. We suggest that the planting on the left hand side requires some sensitive pruning. Your many, many, beautifully crafted sculptures enliven the streetscape with associated attractive signage informing locals and visitors of the background to each uniquely crafted piece. The planting arrangements at the Linencare site soften the block wall while the delicate murals at this location, and also at the entrance to Innis Linn, are most eye catching with a remarkable attention to detail which is also evident in the beautifully illustrated

pictorial mural of your heritage features on the wall at the pedestrian entrance to Church View. This mural highlights, in quite a striking way, the wonderful heritage of your community. Finally, we have to congratulate you on your new large capacity water butts, shaped in the form of a tree stump, which are not only aesthetically pleasing features but puts you ahead of the curve in terms of sustainability as they are strategically placed to facilitate efficient watering of your many landscaping features.

Appearance of Approach Roads

Your Welcome signs, custom made to reflect your community's heritage, have been significantly upgraded – pared back to the original wood which was suitably varnished and the original etchings redefined. A curved addition to the top changes the overall shape of the signs and incorporates an etching of the wonderful Viking Boat to great effect. Colourful planting added a cheerful welcome but we would urge you to try to develop a uniform approach to planting at welcome beds so as to produce a coordinated sense of arrival on all approaches. We have never seen the entrance at Jack's Hill looking so well – the spectacular golden glow emanating from rudbeckia and marigold was sublime and a perfect planting arrangement that delivers a strong visual statement and great impact at this key entry to the village. Footpath provision has involved significant investment and has returned real value for money with the new section that extends to, and beyond, the GAA grounds being a huge addition to the infrastructure of the village.

Individual Contributions – Residential/ Business

Your trojan efforts in the community, together with the success of your House and Garden Awards, appear to be inspiring others to join the cause and take up the brooms and blooms with a noticeable improvement in residential presentation this year. Innis Linn was the real surprise package – litter free, no kerbside weeds, extensive grass areas well cut, an increasing number of superb individual presentations, the dilapidated fence at the end of the

estate removed and replaced with new hedging plants which have also been planted to line the pathway through the green. The Hamlet also looked great with maturing trees on the well maintained estate green and two fabulous new, well maintained, beds planted with grasses, hydrangea, heuchera and heathers which already look great but will be even more striking as they mature. The estate road has been newly surfaced in Rath na Gloine and this together with maturing trees, individual presentations and tasteful planting at the entrance ensures the estate makes a very positive presentation. Church View, as always, looked very well and while St. Ronan's Villas was neat and tidy it would benefit from an injection of colour in terms of landscaping. Many residences in the core village area boast beautiful gardens and decorative floral enhancements which really contributes well to the environmental presentation of the village. Particularly eye-catching was the residence on Main Street where flamboyant sunflowers called attention to themselves and drew the eye to the beautiful mature garden behind the stone boundary wall. Further up the street, on the Dromeenagh Road, exquisite cottage garden planting was thriving at the residence at the junction with the AOH Hall. On Docking Street tall and magnificent red hot pokers were striking in appearance and drew the eye to the myriad of colourful container planting in the garden. All residences along Chapel Road looked splendid and, of course, the duo of residences at Chapel Cross looked their sublime best. In terms of commercial presentation the Centra Complex was neat and tidy with two wonderful tubs of delphiniums, star of the veldt and geraniums radiating warmth and cheer. Advertising signage, while obviously necessary for commercial reasons, needs to be coordinated better to prevent a cluttered appearance. The planned

refurbishment works at Mulligan's shop hadn't commenced on adjudication day but the planting in the Car Park looked great with deeply coloured roses, in particular, making huge impact. Herity's Public House was, understandably, closed and didn't have the usual dazzling display of hanging baskets. Fagan's Take-Away is beautifully painted, boasting a new colour scheme, and presented in a spic and span manner albeit with no floral enhancements this year. The Church is obviously a dominant building in the village with its grounds enhanced beautifully by well maintained landscaping featuring roses and dahlias – a simple and delicate planting arrangement that is the perfect choice at this location. The "Old School" now functioning as a Pre School looked great with its traditional façade accented in red and colourful, child friendly features in the grounds to enthral the younger members of the community.

Overall Impact

It is so evident that you plan and implement your tidy towns work programme in a focused and structured manner and have tapped into the talent that is available in the community to help you deliver your objectives. You have a dynamic and very active committee and volunteer base that sees you undertake a superb work programme which delivers new and exciting projects annually while never losing your faultless attention to detail in maintenance. The local community is very lucky to have you! You are the well deserved Runner Up in Louth Looking Good 2020 and are slowly closing the gap to ultimate victory. There is no doubt that your star is on the rise which is evidenced by your continuing high ranking in Louth Looking Good and ever improving performance in the National Tidy Towns Competition. We applaud you and we congratulate you!

