

Category

Runner Up**DROMISKIN****General Cleanliness**

Your attention to detail in litter management is exemplary and despite our best efforts all we could find was one very recently discarded cigarette butt. Not alone are you vigilant in your litter control activity but you are maintaining a strong litter awareness programme via your regular Facebook posts – it is our hope that this online campaign is having the desired effect in reducing the amount of casual littering you have to deal with. You certainly have a plentiful supply of well maintained litter bins, boasting heritage themed decals, to facilitate proper disposal of litter – they are attractive as well as functional. All signs and dog fouling bins in the village were spic and span in appearance and clearly receive ongoing maintenance. You obviously have a well planned and successful strategy to manage weed growth with kerbsides presenting in a weed free manner throughout the village. Your Bring Bank site was spotless with the units sparkling clean behind freshly painted railings and wonderful signage providing tips and advice on how to reduce waste as well as conserving water and energy usage. You go a step further than most with the provision of a well positioned battery recycling facility

and we are delighted to note that the success of your Outdoor Library is such that you have had to make and install a second Library. Ginnety's Site, which is still vacant, didn't have as much of a negative impact as it could have because of its designation as a Wild and Free site and the meticulous presentation and maintenance of its immediate surroundings.

Landscaping Works and Floral Displays

Your landscaping programme certainly strikes the right balance between perennial and seasonal planting for maximum impact and we could only marvel at the quantity and quality of new projects in





in addition to the painstaking attention to detail in the maintenance of your many, many existing landscaping features. A host of attractive, original and tasteful landscaping schemes are on view throughout the village and the standard seems to increase with each successive one. Your big ticket project this year is, undoubtedly, the Sustainable Urban Drainage System which saw four statement columnar oak trees planted on Chapel Road, with associated paving works and it is wonderful to see your enterprising and skilled committee having the imagination and, indeed, the bravery to undertake such an expensive and climate friendly project – a first we believe for a voluntary committee in a village setting. Great credit too to the LEADER Programme for taking the leap of faith with you and helping to finance the project. It was also lovely to see your Louth Looking Good photoboards displayed alongside your heritage style paintings on the background fence. The wonderful Round Tower, Celtic Cross and Church ruins in the Monastic Site in the village centre provide a lovely distinctive element to your streetscape and indeed have been the catalyst for your wonderful heritage projects elsewhere in the village. The public space at the entrance to the graveyard is a relatively small patch

that packs a big punch in terms of visual impact. It is home to the wonderful Bird's Eye View bog oak sculpture which looks fantastic set in its bed of waving grasses and angels fishing rod with three other beds of mature planting exuding warm colour. The glossy red pump was beautifully highlighted by lobelia which is the ideal combination to showcase the pump which is a historical feature in its own right and deserves its prominence in your landscaping of the area. The wonderfully crafted stone Viking Boat has, at this stage, become synonymous with your village and is an outstanding public art feature that takes prominence in your beautifully marked Sculpture Trail where co-ordinated signage provides the background story to each sculptural piece. We were delighted to see that your two most recent installations have had signs installed and it was lovely to read that your Slip Slidin' Away slide sculpture is, in fact, a tribute to 6th Class of 2020 whose primary school journey ended abruptly as a result of Covid. We also lingered to read the background story to the intricately designed and constructed animal structures, now aptly titled Animal Magic, and we were very taken with the fact that your master craftsman designed the dog in the image of his childhood pet. How lovely it is to be able to pay



tribute in that way! The attractively signed Heritage, Sculpture and Ecology Trails are a great way to explore the village as they nicely reflect the theme of where they are positioned and give a lovely insight to the built and natural heritage of the village. The Credit Union Garden really is an idyllic space that is home to wonderful planting arrangements that have more to offer than just pure beauty and colour but are frequently used



for medicinal purposes as illustrated so beautifully on your Notice Nature panel. The six beds leading to the wooden pergola were meticulously maintained with the pergola itself beautifully threaded with deeply coloured red climbing roses. The wildflower section at the lower end of the garden has been significantly extended this year and was in full, natural bloom with blues, yellows, red, purple and white wildflower blooms attracting a host of butterflies and bees, all identified on the on-site Notice Nature panel. Magnificent globe thistle and lavatera planting is prominent inside the roadside boundary wall with the basket of deep purple petunia at the Credit Union logo sculpture being particularly outstanding this year in terms of visual impact. Lawlor's Peace Garden is another reflective space that is beautifully landscaped and affords lovely views of the Monastic Site from the well appointed seat. The recent capping of the entrance piers and the provision of a glossily painted red wooden gate completes the presentation of this pocket garden to perfection. The AOH Garden looked exceptionally well this year with the boundary bollards pristinely painted, ground level containers bursting with vibrant colour from luscious red begonia and blue lobelia - used widely in your displays this year and a combination that you should continue to use in future years. The almost impossibly lofty and splendid blue cedar tree otherwise dominates the site where the Ring a Rosy sculpture also enthral and is beautifully highlighted by single colour cranesbill – a plant choice that works perfectly. The Notice Nature

sign is a wonderful awareness tool in educating people on the various species of native trees while also highlighting the success of some of your Eco Tribe projects. The verge opposite the garden is a delight – glossy red pump highlighted with a bucket of your signature red begonia and blue lobelia, line of graceful rowan trees, red farmyard gate and container planting combining to produce compelling appeal. An anvil shaped container

and a stone enclosed bed of red geranium provide pops of opulent colour along the Main Street. Your hanging basket displays are stunning this year – bursting with colour from cascading floral displays of multi coloured petunia and the extravagant flower towers at the Church produced a cauldron of colour and bloom from the flamboyant red begonia and beautifully contrasting blue lobelia. This is the best visual impact we have ever witnessed from your seasonal displays and we would recommend that, now that you have got it so right, is a combination of plant choice and colour that you should consider repeating annually. Flags flying high drew attention to the newly planted tiered planters on the Co-Op Field which have been totally refurbished with the cascading blooms of the newly planted nasturtiums providing exuberant flashes of colour and the central planting of viburnum chosen to provide year round support and nutrition for wildlife. Your No Mow Zone has developed into a large and lovely natural wildflower meadow which was buzzing and humming with insect life on adjudication day. The container herb garden at Centra has also received a facelift and looked simply splendid as a result of a summer project with Junior Tidy Towns where the painting and planting initiative improved its already very good visual appeal and practical benefits. The crossroads bed always appeals, and even more so this year, with the addition of three cypress trees to add to the strong visual appeal of the lilies, lavender, bistort and agapanthus – charm personified! The Heritage Park



is an irresistible public space with its heritage banners, wildflower planting, beautifully surfaced pathways, extensive tree planting, paving setts, decorative lighting standards, stone enclosed rose beds and a variety of interpretative panels and artifacts. We are really amazed at how it has developed to this standard in such a short period of time. A visit to the Church/School grounds is a real treat with a number of new projects unveiling themselves this year to add to the more established and meticulously maintained planting arrangements. Your new Green Infrastructure sign, incorporating an Eco Alphabet insert, combines visual attractiveness and practicality in that it is beautifully designed and looks great while highlighting the many “green” areas in the village that one can visit and enjoy. The stylish three panel sign is flanked by a trio of sculptural flowers on either side to add to its sophisticated impact at the entrance your Incredible Edible Garden which was very neatly presented and home to fruit laden trees, vegetable plots, composting area and panels providing advice and tips of how to Stop Food Waste and Compost at Home. The planting has developed very well in the lengthy linear bed in the Car Park with new planting of echinacea, alliums and strawberry plants to add to the existing grasses, jewelled coloured lilies and catmint that produce a potent mix of colour and texture that really catches the eye. New planting at the base of the Slip Slidin’ Away sculpture caught our eye as we made our way towards the Outdoor Classroom where a new sign has been installed at the entrance and the seating and blackboard have been freshly painted to showcase them to perfection. Pollinator friendly planting borders the fence that surrounds the classroom where multicoloured butterflies feasted on two buddleia plants whose purple branches drooped with pollen filled blooms. What a spectacle awaited us at the entrance to the Dreamtime Garden where a junior project has resulted in Wavin pipe cut-offs colourfully painted and used as planters for lustrous seasonal planting to the backdrop of jaw dropping “flowers” created from hubcaps and hose pipe cut-offs – what a wonderful upcycling project. The

Dreamtime Garden also looked splendid, home to an Insect Village and clearly in receipt of ongoing meticulous maintenance with the well planted beds designed to replicate the shape of a Celtic Cross, fruit trees aplenty and a line of sunflowers, not yet in bloom, along the boundary fence. The mini Round Tower, in front of the Old School, is a lovely feature but the planting is a little underwhelming at this stage and offers the potential to add some colourful plants to showcase it to perfection. The Biblical Garden is a unique piece of landscaping that is clearly the subject of regular maintenance but the graffiti artists have left their mark on the nearby picnic table which needs to be dealt with. The kerbed beds in the Church car park, like the linear bed, have a new bark surface and, with not a weed in sight, were looking their very best. The Peace Bed was neatly clipped with the letters clearly depicted and the nearby 1916 sculpture is really standing the test of time. The Church grounds were in impeccable condition with oxeye daisies standing high displaying their familiar heads of white and yellow combining with delicate rose planting to beautifully complement the Church building. The Chapel Cross triangle put its best foot forward with relocated planters nicely planted and placed to highlight each corner and add to the impact of the central souterrain sculpture. What a lovely surprise awaited us at Jack’s Hill where your recently planted purple pollinator patch greeted us – the informal crowding of purple loosestrife in the former unkempt area is already making great impact and will only improve as time passes. You have also been busy upgrading your Bee Positive Gardens – the six formal beds looked sublime and were buzzing with activity and well done on the verge planting of coral dam cotoneaster to create a pollinator friendly corridor that is further enhanced by the maturing buddleia in the designated Butterfly Gardens. We love the colourful signs that give concise information on the importance of bees – a lovely way of increasing awareness. Ginnety’s Pond is such a fabulous amenity to have in your village – the views from your viewing stand provide a wonderful glimpse of this natural haven and a walk along the pathways

that circle the pond is a treat with sights and sounds of nature abounding. We look forward, with eager anticipation, to the next stages of development of this area and wish you every success with your ambitious plans.

Appearance of Approach Roads

Upgraded, hand carved bespoke wooden name signs provide an original and distinctive welcome to your village. As recommended last year you have removed all existing planting from the natural stone surround beds and replanted with colourful perennials that give a hint of the high quality landscaping to be seen in the village. It really is a delightful planting arrangement that will serve you well for years to come! The entrance at Jack's Hill/Ardee Road junction produces its own unique appeal where, in addition to your signature Welcome signage and associated planting, the hues of the molten orange and gold in the planting in the sleeper surround beds are an added attraction and produce strong visual impact. Footpaths were all maintained well with excellent kerbside weed control while natural roadside hedging is maintained with minimal maintenance intervention.

Individual Contributions – Residential/ Business

There is a noted improvement in your performance under this heading this year. Mulligan's Shop has been transformed in its new palette of delicate colours and sits more comfortably into the streetscape. We love the fact that the new sign incorporates your Tidy Towns logo of the Viking Boat highlighting the co-operation with your committee very effectively. The adjoining residence has been repainted in the same colour scheme and displayed two magnificent hanging baskets to match those in the public realm. The small car park attached to the shop looked splendid with its picnic table freshly painted cream

and enjoying a backdrop of deeply coloured roses. The presentation of the Centra Complex also reflects great credit on the proprietor – while this is a very heavily trafficked area it, nevertheless, makes a very positive statement with superb hanging baskets along the front of the building and two half barrels of multi coloured petunia at the petrol pumps. A similarly exuberant hanging basket was displayed on the gable wall of Dromiskin Pharmacy with a further two on the beautifully painted Fagan's Take-Away. Herity's Public House was also embellished with three of your superb hanging baskets and while it was generally well maintained the weather stained paintwork would benefit from refreshing and the car park surely offers the potential for some planting arrangement along its roadside boundary? The container planters framing the door of the Credit Union building were simply but very effectively planted with central snapdragon and bursting with colour from cascading nasturtium. The school building was beautifully presented with vibrant fence planters in full bloom and not a weed in sight in the permanent planting arrangements despite the school being on its summer break. It was also lovely to see the Green Flag flying high. Church View housing estate certainly plays its part with its clearly highlighted entrance and beautifully landscaped public spaces. All private estates within the core village area village area feature coordinated name signs with the standard of presentation varying considerably. Innis Linn boasted some superb gardens and seasonal displays as well as neatly presented estate greens while the landscaping maintenance and general presentation in The Hamlet was excellent but there remains the potential for improved presentation in St. Ronan's Villas and Ard na Tuíre. How lucky are you that three of your four derelict sites have been transformed into beautiful residences on the Commons Road – two eliminated by the construction of two dormer bungalows with





nically landscaped front gardens and a third developed into a charming residential development of five houses with significant tree planting undertaken within the overall site. The impact of your House and Garden Awards is clear to be seen with an ever increasing number of captivating presentations. Some wonderfully lush gardens were to be seen on Chapel Road all combining to create a very positive appeal while the pink property at Chapel Cross is quite chocolate box pretty as usual. Bungalows set back from the road at this location boast beautifully maintained gardens and luxuriant floral displays that really catch the eye as do a number of lovely properties on the Commons Road. The cottage garden on the Dromeenagh Road is home to a dizzying array of informal planting while the bungalow on Main Street, whose garden is tucked behind a lovely stone wall and red gates, looked splendid with mature trees and shrubs as well as colourful border planting and sunflowers just coming into bloom. St Teresa's on Docking Street also boasted delightfully informal planting that created great visual appeal. St. John of God Community House looked splendid on adjudication day with seasonal displays in bespoke containers producing eye-catching appeal and while Seabrook was presented in a very neat and tidy manner we can't help wondering if there is scope to



introduce additional planting – it is clear from the lovely gardens that there are many residents of the green fingered variety in residence.

Overall Impact

First of all congratulations on the 30th Anniversary of your participation in the National Tidy Towns Competition which was brought to our attention, in the most spectacular way, by your exceptionally attractive 3 Decades of Tidy Towns sign prominently displayed on a wall at the Centra Complex. This beautifully designed sign reminds us of the quite startling improvements that have been carried out over the 30 years period, some of which are perhaps taken for granted but all of which have made such a difference to the visual impact as well as to the heritage and ecological value of the community. The relentless enthusiasm and determination of your committee and volunteers, motivated by a ferocious pride in the obvious and continuing improvements, is palpable and you appear to have turned almost every possibility identified in your Tidy Towns Plans into a reality with renowned success. Congratulations on a terrific performance that sees you comfortably retains your Runner Up position despite the strong challenge from an increasing number of ever improving competitors.

