

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Macroom - Maigh Chromtha</b>	Ref: <b>183</b>
County: <b>Cork(South)</b>	Mark: <b>352</b>
Category: <b>D</b>	Date(s): <b>09/07/2022</b>

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	50	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	44	46
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	48	51
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	41	42
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	22	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61	62
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	39
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>352</b>

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2022. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. We are pleased to welcome your incredibly hard-working committee of 3 officers and 20 volunteers to this years competition. We would like to thank you for your comprehensive and thoughtfully prepared entry form as it was helpful during adjudication. Well done also on relating your projects to the relevant SDG's. The entry form could be further improved by adding page numbers and ensuring that only projects completed at the time of submission are indicated as new (N) and describing all proposed / yet to be completed projects as future projects (FP). Your map was an excellent piece of work and it made our job so much easier. We note that your committee and volunteers have taken part in the competition for almost 40 years and it shows! It can be clearly seen in the number of links that you have built up with agencies and bodies that include Cork County Council (with Macroom Municipal District Council), Tus, the RSS, Pobal (who provide funding), IRD Duhallow, the Lee Valley Enterprise Board and Foroige. You are also commended on attracting private sponsorship such as Optimal Chiropractic whose contribution to the sensory garden was much appreciated. Whilst we are pleased to see that Men's Shed and the Macroom Local Environmental Group get involved in your projects, we were surprised to see no mention of sports or social clubs in your entry form. Are they involved? Perhaps you could let us know in 2023? The contributions of the Church are noted and it is heartening to see that the project work undertaken by your committee and volunteers is fully inclusive with all nationalities made welcome and encouraged to participate. We are pleased to see that you have developed a comprehensive communication strategy and this appears to be working very well for you. It is great to see that there is good engagement with the schools in your town and that the schoolchildren get involved in litter picks and tree planting. We were particularly interested to hear about your involvement in IRD funded mentoring sessions which are designed to provide your committee with a new organised approach to the competition. We note that you intend to establish subcommittees based on themes such as communications, schools, commercial, well-being, heritage, biodiversity, sustainability, environment and residential – each of which will have its own plan of action. This sounds most exciting and we wish you all the best with this new approach. Be sure to keep us up-to-date with your progress in 2023.

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

It was a pleasure to return to Macroom this year and to see the excellent work of your committee and volunteers at first hand once again. We are delighted to report that the town centre looked great with the vast majority of commercial and public buildings looking their best on adjudication day. While many businesses impressed, it is not possible to refer to them all in this brief report. Notwithstanding this point, a number stood out with the Haven Pharmacy, Killian Lynch Auctioneers, Dan McCarthys, Clancy's fish shop, Quinlans, Corrigans Insurance, Matt

Murphy's Pharmacy, R. Collins and Granvilles all deserving of a special mention. The Dunnes supermarket (with apartments overhead) is a very attractive mixed use development. Well done also to An Caislean Hotel and Siopa Leabhair MacGearailt on their well maintained premises and 'as Gaeilge' signage. The Riverside Park Hotel on the western approach road also looked nice in its new coat of paint. Public buildings were no less impressive. As always, Macroom Castle provides a striking and eye catching feature and we admired the new fire station with its contemporary design. We were pleased to see that the development of your town centre theatre and library is continuing at the Briery Gap and we look forward to seeing this progress in the year ahead. There is no doubt that the completion of high quality murals has continued in Macroom during our Covid enforced absence and numerous eye catching examples were to be seen during our visit. The tribute to our excellent front workers was admired on Learys Lane and we were pleased to see that it also included details of community support services. The lament for Art O Laoighaire mural at the College of Further Education is a lovely piece of work while the Fair Day Macroom and the 'last train at Macroom' murals both looked exceptionally well. We were delighted to read that a heritage brochure for your historic town centre is being produced and be sure to include this (or provide a link to it) in your 2023 entry form. It is heartening to read that Cork County Council are intent on addressing dereliction in your town and it is encouraging to see high quality developments completed on infill development sites in town centre locations (such as the retail outlet and filling station constructed on a former derelict site on the Millstreet Road and 50 new social houses at Pairc Uí Muirithe). We applaud the continuing focus of your committee on public spaces in Macroom as there are now plenty for residents to enjoy. The upgrade to the playground is appreciated and well done also on adding 15 seats to different public areas (including two in the Castle Demesne). The grotto also looked neat and tidy during our visit and congratulations to the committee on acquiring your new operational base! The future projects under this category such as reusing the former Church of Ireland, completing the Massey town upgrade, promoting cycling / walking and adding more street furniture are acknowledged.

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

A number of high quality landscaping projects were visible during adjudication and we were impressed with the variety of schemes to be seen. We loved seeing the gravel based shrub bed that could be seen on the N22 alongside St Colmans cemetery (complete with a beehive) with lavender and other pollinator friendly species on view. An impressive range of shrubs and perennials could also be observed in the long linear bed adjacent to the grotto. We admired the planting in the Castle grounds with colourful summer flowering plants on display in the natural stone circular beds at the castle entrance and inside the gates. The roses in bloom and carefully maintained grassed areas to the front of McEgan College also looked very well. The 65 planters that are positioned around the town drew positive attention with their cascading floral displays and warm summer colours. We also enjoyed seeing the attractive entrance planting at a number of the residential estates with notable examples visible at Castlecourt, Dan Corkery Place and Sullane Weirs. There is no doubt that Macroom is spoilt for choice when it comes to high quality parks – as the town park (adjacent to the river) and the fairy / sensory garden provide appealing spaces to visit. The town park is lovely with its mature trees, pleasant seating areas and great views of the river Sullane. The fairy garden is a delight and it is clear that a lot of work has gone into this area! It looked tremendously well with its picnic tables, numerous small sculptures and activity areas while the sensory garden is also very impressive. We were pleased to see that the pollen rich herbaceous plants on view in the sensory garden were labelled as this is an effective way of bringing these species to the attention of visitors. Praise is also due to the committee for taking determined steps to provide for pollinator friendly species in your planting schemes and grass cutting regimes. While the linear shrub beds that can be found along the N22 (at St Colmans cemetery and alongside the Grotto) and on the approach to the underway entrance to Colemans Park provide obvious examples of this, the hedgerow planting and long grass visible at Colemans Park also demonstrate a strong biodiversity focus. Well done also on planting a grove of alder trees here and we encourage you to look for other areas that would be suitable for hedgerow and tree planting in Macroom. We also enjoyed seeing the colourful wildflower planting that was in place at the base of the bull sculpture on the Cork approach road to Macroom.

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

We were interested to read about the many projects that are underway which are focused on the bird life in your town. With a swift tower at the Mart, swift nesting boxes at the McEgan and De La Salle schools and barn owl boxes also in position, we wondered if any thought has been given to carrying out a bird survey in Macroom? Noting that there are already active collaborations with the pupils of the McEgan and De La Salle schools, perhaps a survey could be undertaken in conjunction with the school children? We understand from the entry form that monitoring of the swift bird population is ongoing and we would like to know if the data is being inputted on the Birdwatch Ireland website? We are glad to read that a pollinator action plan has been drawn up for Macroom with the assistance of the Cork County Council ecologist and we would like to hear about the proposed works that are aligned to it next year. In addition, we wondered if there are plans to ask members of the wider community to engage in pollinator planting to further boost pollen sources and benefit biodiversity in your town. We are delighted to see that your committee and volunteers are very active in controlling invasive species such as Japanese knotweed and rhododendron in the Castle Demesne. We applaud your collaborative work with the Inland Fisheries and Macroom District Angling club and noting that bank stabilization measures are proposed downstream of Macroom Bridge, we would like to hear more about this project next year. Don't forget to also tell us about the awareness raising events that you have undertaken with the help of the Macroom and District Environmental Group and local experts.

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

Your entry form reveals that your committee, volunteers and project partners have been very busy with projects under this category over the last 12 months with many fine initiatives taking place to promote recycling, minimize resource use and avoid the generation of waste. We were interested to read about the projects which are designed

to encourage more sustainable behaviour with respect to reusing and recycling materials. Examples include the use of recycled plastic seats in parks and walkways, using recycled plastic posts for sensory boards and tree identification nameplates, using old pallets for firewood (Mens Shed) and promoting the use of second hand and repair shops. Well done also on conserving energy by switching street lighting to LED lighting and for giving talks to transition year students on this theme. We are pleased to read that collaborations have taken place between your committee and the school and we wondered if there is any interest in carrying out a survey on transport use in your town with the assistance of the schoolchildren? As a notable number of new houses have been constructed in your town, we wondered if any consideration has been given to setting up a sustainable energy community? While we appreciate that clear attempts have been made to promote recycling in your day-to-day tasks (like reusing pallets and recycling plastic), we wondered if your committee and volunteers are making your own compost, harvesting rainwater or growing your own plants? These projects would enable you to cut down on resource use and promote best practice to the wider community in your town.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

We are pleased to report that the standard of litter control and tidiness was generally high with many key areas in the Town Center and in public places such as the Massey Town Park and playground appearing neat and tidy. However, litter could also be seen in a small number of areas such as along Bowl road, at the picnic area opposite the O'Riada premises, on the entrance road leading up to Lidl and at the Macroom Fair mural. It is recommended that these areas are subject to more frequent monitoring during your litter picks in the year ahead. The standard of tidiness was also considered to be quite high and you are commended on your fine work removing old signs and posts, weeding laneways and streets and painting / cleaning street furniture. Our visit revealed that further improvements are possible. A small number of signs were spotted that were in need of attention and they included the stop sign at Bowl road and the no parking signs at Chapel Hill and close to the playground. The picnic area opposite O'Riadas is in need of a revamp as the area was weedy and both the decorative lamp and the picnic tables were in poor condition. In addition, untidy substation boxes (and a supporting pole) could be seen at the junction of Chapel Hill and the N22. Well done on working with Cork County Council to manage the excess litter that is being generated at the outdoor seating areas in your town. Would it be possible to get some of the businesses in the town centre to assist you in this? We are also pleased to read that your committee is working with McEgan College in maintaining beds in the town centre and we urge you to continue with this excellent initiative.

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

The range of residential dwellings in Macroom is second to none from quaint traditional style terraced properties (found on Chapel Hill and Masseytown Road), to high quality apartments (above Dunne Stores) and modern housing (at Oakwood and Ard an tSulain). The standard of presentation was also generally high so well done to home owners and occupiers for working hard on their properties and estates. We are delighted to see a focus on developing derelict and vacant sites for residential purposes as the development of two new residential estates on the Millstreet Road have proved to be fabulous new additions to Macroom. The visit also revealed that there are other opportunities for high quality infill development with vacant / derelict buildings spotted opposite the playground and beside Bealick Mill. We were surprised to see a small estate of houses at the entrance to your town from Tralee which appeared unoccupied. Given that it is a national government priority to regenerate our town and village centres and increase the number of homes for our communities, the productive reuse of these sites (and buildings) should be prioritised.

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

It was noted during our visit that considerable attention has been paid to maintaining the main entrance roads into Macroom. Praise is due to the committee, volunteers and Foroige for their fine work on the approach road from Tralee as it looked really well during adjudication with its pleasant landscaping, attractive stone entrance feature (the replica castle entrance), mature trees and natural stone boundary wall. The Mill Street approach looked very well with its trimmed grass margins and carefully maintained housing estates. We also enjoyed visiting the Mill Road which is a lovely part of town with its winding country lanes, pleasant natural boundaries and numerous mature trees. However, the surfacing on some parts of this road appeared rough and in need of attention. While major road improvement works were continuing on the approach road from Cork, the triangular rose beds (with pink roses in bloom), the large bull sculpture and wildflower patch were eye catching features.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

We enjoyed the time we spent in Macroom and we loved seeing the great work that has been undertaken since our last visit. We would like to thank your committee and volunteers for your continuing efforts and we would like to assure you that your projects are leading to significant improvements for your town. Keep up the good work and we look forward to returning again in 2023.