

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **St Mullins - Tigh Moling** Ref: **1155**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **339**
Category: **A** Date(s): **12/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	53	54
Streetscape & Public Places	80	39	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	43	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	38	39
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	22	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	63	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	39
TOTAL MARK	550	332	339

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2023. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór! Welcome to the 2023 Supervalu National Tidy Towns Competition St. Mullins. As a result of 24 years of dedicated involvement with Tidy Towns, your community has experienced great benefits, something you should be very proud of. You use a variety of communication means to engage the community like personal approaches, text messages, newsletters, social media posts and local newspapers which demonstrates your dedication to engaging all residents regardless of age or background. Carlow Tourism, Carlow County Council, Waterways Ireland, schools and local establishments have undoubtedly played a critical role in the success of some of your activities, keep up this collaborative spirit. Your submission was clearly laid out – perhaps placing photographs (ideally before and after) under each entry would make the Adjudicators job easier. Try and see can you align each project to the UN SDGs not just each category. Finally, be careful when scanning your map – it was a little hard to read at the resolution provided but don't worry I didn't miss out on anything.

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

St. Mullins has made significant strides towards improving both its streetscape and public places. Even as you enter, the wonderful stone name plaque with beautiful roses shows the visitor they are in for a treat! We note your desire for additional improvements such as road markings and a possible roundabout at the Green junction to address safety concerns and it is great to see you using your standing in the community and maximizing your role as advocates. Great to hear about repairs to the Heritage Centre's collapsed ceiling as well as the fallen wall. Also well done on meeting with the consultants appointed by Carlow County Council who have been commissioned to develop a strategy for the village. It is so important that local views are taken on board during this process. Great to see all the buildings so well maintained – of special note were the Old Post Office, Blanchfields, Siopa Glas and the Bicycle Hire. The Holy Well here was exceptionally well maintained and a wonderfully peaceful place to visit. At the Quay and river area, regular cleaning and maintenance efforts have helped create a pleasant environment. Disabled fishing stands are a great inclusive measure and have been well-kept while the Muilleacháin has expanded their offering with more outdoor seating which was exceptionally well maintained with friendly staff as I took a much need lunch. Your carpark was very well maintained.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You work diligently to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of St. Mullins. The park boasts well-kept trees, flowerbeds and containers which add colour that bring life and vibrancy to the village. You deserve credit for focusing on planting in harmony with the environment and supporting biodiversity, as evidenced by establishing

wildflower areas in Pilgrim's Park. Re-establishing growth on the walls within a graveyard gate while providing cover for insects and wildlife shows thoughtful planning. Is there scope for reduced cutting in Temple na Bo? Though well done on leaving some stands of dead trees, excellent for biodiversity when the initial thought would be to remove them. By collecting perennial seeds to use in future planting projects and sharing them with locals to use in their gardens, sustainable planting practices are demonstrated here. Regular upkeep of communal green spaces - without cutting their grass too short - ensures their usability by the public. However, I did note use of herbicide which should be discontinued. Perhaps not by your group but if by others use your standing to ask that it be stopped. Your proactive approach in improving the condition of planters and beds by purchasing new containers and perennial plants demonstrates a dedication to continually enhance the village's appearance. However, some planters were still empty such as by the bench in front of the burial mound and others needed attention such as by the water pump and in front of the library. You have struck an admirable balance between aesthetic appeal, biodiversity support, and sustainable practices.

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

St. Mullins has shown commitment and dedication in protecting natural habitats, cultivating biodiversity, and actively engaging with the local community. You have successfully maintained and improved the Sli na Sláinte walk, creating a scenic route along Barrow Track which adjoins a Special Area of Conservation. When faced with challenges of Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed invasions, you sought advice from professionals which demonstrates responsible decision-making. I did note a very small new stand of Himalayan Balsam behind the Monastic Ruins near the Millstones – perhaps try and nip this new infestation in the bud, pardon the pun! There were amazing wildflower banks within this site which is to be commended. The Drummond Bog Committee deserves praise for their ongoing work to develop Southeast's only raised bog. Their dedication is evident through plans to publish a book of folklore from Drummond Wood and collaborate with Carlow Tourism on creating new walks to provide sustainable tourism and increase natural spaces. Your efforts extend to creating habitats for various wildlife species from wood piles behind the communal composting bins to planting native trees. Well done on efforts to support the Pollinator Plan by planting pollinator friendly flowers and shrubs. Also, I really liked the way in which you engaged local children which will engender ownership and instilled an early love of nature in them.

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

You show a dedication in supporting sustainable waste and resource management practices that emphasise reduction, reuse, repair and recycling. Participation in the Green Flag Programme has had an enormously beneficial effect, raising awareness among children and families while instilling an immense sense of civic duty and responsibility. Your local schools have made significant strides towards better waste segregation, encouraging the use of reusable drink bottles and adopting composting procedures for apple cores. Your commitment to sustainability can be seen through meticulous care in maintaining and segregating waste during cleanups, along with composting of spent flowers. Rainwater collection practices and compost bin use help conserve resources more efficiently than ever. Proactive measures such as repairing compost bins and organising the upcoming Green Home Awareness Programme are all excellent approaches to promote sustainability. I loved the Free Wee Library and spent a few minutes browsing the selection.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Congratulations on maintaining a clean and welcoming environment for residents and visitors. This is accomplished by painting and decorating homes, maintaining neat gardens, and conducting regular litter patrols - showing just how dedicated you are to improving the overall aesthetic appeal of the area. Some litter was noted on the approach to the village but it was fresh and no doubt was picked up shortly after adjudication; certainly not something that would impact your scoring in this category. You mention removal of litter bins from the Green and Quay – whilst this can create an atmosphere where individuals take greater ownership for their litter, it can also lead to littering so make sure to strike a good balance, which I have no doubt you will. Some litter was evidenced around the Burial Mound, maybe bins strategically placed where people are encouraged to sit might be an idea. Collaborative initiatives such as cleaning after high tides or reinforcing the "Leave no Trace" message during fishing competitions demonstrate your shared dedication to protecting and maintaining the natural beauty of our surroundings. Some issues noted during my visit which might form part of next years work plan include:

- The 50km signage at the entrance to the village was slightly askew.
- There was an array of signage in the Green. Could this be reduced?
- There is a redundant pole that could be removed by the Old Post Office.
- Remove the COVID sign from the gate entrance to St. Molings Church.
- As the IWAI sponsored bench is underneath the trees it needs more regular cleaning than others.
- There is a redundant pole by the Millstones.

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

St. Mullins has shown great pride and care for their individual homes and gardens, contributing to an attractive environment. Improvements have been evident at Old Mill Estate, with all four homes now occupied and further projects planned for completion of this development. Some hoarding was noted in the Glebe, are their plans to remove this? Aside from this all the homes here were well presented. The beautifully restored Lock House with its cottage garden adds to the scenic beauty of St. Mullins area, and renovated storage shed near Mullichain Cafe further enhances the presentation of the cafe. Overall, your community group's dedication to maintaining and improving residential and public spaces is commendable; attending to areas requiring attention will further elevate the appeal of the area.

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

You have made significant strides toward addressing various issues and providing visitors with an attractive entrance to your village. As tourism numbers increase, we understand your concerns regarding traffic management. Use your standing in the community to engage with the County Council and get the necessary changes made; though I appreciate this will take time. Your efforts in maintaining and improving entrance approaches, repainting various areas, and conducting regular litter patrols demonstrate a dedication to improving the overall aesthetics to your various approach roads. Again, whilst already mentioned please do your best to stop all use of herbicide outside the control of invasives species.

Concluding Remarks:

Your dedication and proactive approach in meeting various challenges and improving the local environment is truly impressive. Stay motivated as a force driving positive change in St. Mullins.