

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballyvaughan - Baile Uí Bheacháin** Ref: **60**  
County: **Clare** Mark: **373**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **09/06/2023**  
**24/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	52	54
Streetscape & Public Places	80	53	56
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	46	47
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	41	42
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	24	26
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	72	74
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	35	37
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>373</b>

### 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 TidyTowns competition and we thank you for your completed application form including photos, and for your map with legend. You also attached your Ballyvaughan Multi-Annual Plan 2023-2026 where you detail your Strategic Goals for the next three years. It's wonderful to be able to visit and see again, first hand, the results of the hard-working volunteers. The three-year absence due to Covid was hard for many volunteers and so it's great to see the effort being made by local communities.

Your committee of 5 has the help of numerous volunteers including your new Ukrainian residents. You also mention that 'young adults' have joined you – always a difficult group to encourage to be part of Tidy Towns, so well done! You have an excellent social media presence which will gain credence from the younger members of the village - your website, a Facebook Page with 3.3K followers, and a twitter feed. In addition, you have a Community Information Hub and a notice board giving information on up-and-coming events/activities. You have a long list of agencies and individuals who assist and advise you. The Info Hub will make a huge contribution to Ballyvaughan and we wish you the best in this venture. Working together as a community is wonderful and we see that Ballyvaughan has gone from strength to strength and has involved new residents in the activities of the village – a win, win for all.

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

The Ballyvaughan quay area and expansive beaches are well known but perhaps not as well known is the beautiful Gothic revival church and the centre of the village with the freestanding public water fountain, erected in 1875, which provided Ballyvaughan with one of the earliest reliable public water supplies in the country. You have carried out maintenance work on the fountain and cleaned the memorial plaques – next clean the stonework. The freshly painted roadside railings of the church set off this very beautiful building. Hylands Burren Hotel is very prominent in its location and was beautifully presented with its freshly painted façade and colourful flowers in window boxes adorning every window. We were delighted to see that thatch was being carried out on one of the cottages along the quayside as very often the easy option is to remove it and slate the roof instead. We spotted a few stiles and we were delighted to see that these had not been removed as we have seen elsewhere. We also spotted some flat iron gates – good to see these too have not been removed. We also saw some new flat iron gates – into the Garden of Remembrance and also being installed into a farmer's field, near the thatched houses, which we were delighted to see. The Heritage Trail plaques are simple and discrete – compliments. The phone app to accompany them will be advantageous to those wanting to find out more information. Generally, the streetscape, thanks to the various businesses and individuals, was well presented – O'Lo lainn (shrubs and pots also admired), J. M. Mooney and

Sons, Monks, Spar, The Sweater Shop, Quinn's Craft Shop, The Soda Parlour and The Wild Atlantic Lodge to name a few. The seats along the quay were well used by visitors and locals when we visited. The various information panels give sufficient information to the visitor on the history of the town, quay, walks, etc

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

The Remembrance Garden was visited – a work in progress, but don't add too much as its simplicity is quite pleasant. Perhaps install kerbs at the edge of the grass to assist the maintenance. The permanent holders for the hanging baskets on the bridge were admired and the baskets were full of colourful pollinator friendly flowers. Perhaps a few trailing plants/flowers could be added to these displays to hide the containers. The planters and tubs along St Joseph's Road are unsuitable/ unnecessary – add low flowering colour to the area at the sign and around the pump and use the planters grouped together elsewhere in the village for maximum effect. Perhaps add another permanent planting bed as permanent planting beds are more suited to an area such as this. We admired the permanent stone surround bed beside the flat iron gate past Spar. Could this be enlarged out to the concrete footpath? The nearby barrels could then be removed and permanent traffic bollards installed. The stone surround planter near the Atlantic Lodge was also admired. Planters should be added for maximum impact and these two locations in addition to the other permanent beds are excellent. Bollards should be used for traffic management if required and not flower barrels. The discrete tree name signs are excellent – nice to see them added – although when you remove the stakes you will have to come up with a different system of installing them.

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

The Heritage Trail is clearly marked and while we didn't do it all we found it easy to follow. You also have an 8km long National Looped Walk; unfortunately, time didn't allow us to do any of this, so a return visit is needed. We admired the signs by the children which were dotted around; a lovely addition of colour and good to see them involved in TidyTowns. The Beehives looked good and the planting area around them had butterflies and bees visiting. The Sans Souci area, picnic area, bird hide, bug hotel and seating area were visited. The bird sign needs to be cleaned but compliments to the artist – it's a beautiful information sign. We were delighted to read that you are creating a seed bank with the help of local gardeners which will benefit the whole community. Sharing seed pods and cuttings is a great way to save money for a TidyTowns group and is also sustainable. We were delighted to see the sign concerning the protected species - Cardamine impatiens introduced by Dr. P B O'Kelly. Well done for bringing this to the attention of the passersby. The school children, Cubs, Beavers and Scouts all assist you and they take their lead from Burrenbeo Trust in their contribution. The mural at the Medical Centre is great. We also loved the poster by the children promising bee orchids, bird's foot etc but more importantly 'and the promise of more surprises' – hopefully they got some in their biodiversity school garden.

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

You continue your water conservation information projects. Why is the water not palatable? Is this something that can be corrected as it seems a pity that people buy water due to the water in the taps being unpleasant to drink? You also continue with Waste Elimination projects along with local businesses – the Spar, Larder's Café, Hyland's Bar etc. The bike repair station and bike stands were noted. Is the water at the fountain near Monks and at the bird hide area potable? Small discrete signs could be added. We were delighted to see the wild crab apple tree and read that you will plant some more of these. The raised beds in the school yard had great displays of lupins, chives, herbs and potatoes .... harvest looks promising. The recycling bins on the new quay road were clean and had been recently emptied. The Burren Ecotourism Network has quite a few Ballyvaughan businesses as members. How are they monitored in their sustainable practices? Let us know how this works. Congrats to the two local businesses for their achievements in the Burren Geopark Awards in 2022. The Farmer's Market is successful – how often is this in Ballyvaughan and is it all year long? The Burren Arts and Crafts Fair held from Easter until October is excellent promoting local craftspeople.

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

Generally, the area was clean and free from litter and weed growth in the centre and along the quay road. With the influx of visitors during the summer months this is some achievement so compliments to the hard work team. Unfortunately, there was considerable weed growth along the roadside in a few areas e.g the access roadway into St Joseph's estate. Is there the possibility that residents would take ownership of this area and remove weed growth (a hoe or spade works) in addition to picking up litter? In addition, the grass around the base of trees needs to be trimmed as this gives an unkempt feel to an otherwise well-maintained green area. The wire-scape (beyond your control) gives the village a slightly untidy feel. We see that you are aware of this and we encourage you to keep in contact with the relevant stakeholders to have them removed. The village would be transformed if the cables were put underground. The hedge at the corner near the fountain almost blocks the pathway – this should be breasted or possibly removed. We saw a lady with a buggy walking on the road as there was insufficient room for her to pass between the hedge and the pole. Perhaps also extend this footpath where there are yellow road markings at present?

We are delighted to see that you highlight your local hero Liam McNamara who works in various locations cleaning and removing litter. We had a look at the Facebook link – stunning photos. We guess he's not active on Facebook any more as the last post was September 2022.

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

The village houses were neat, many had been freshly painted and most had floral arrangements which added to the streetscape. The houses on the approach roads and the small housing estate of St. Joseph's were equally well

presented – freshly painted boundary walls and gates and neatly kept gardens with an array of flowers and shrubs. Some of the thatched cottages had great displays of climbing roses, ferns, daises etc and were alive with pollinators when we visited. The row of cottages along the quay with their large gardens and low boundary walls gave us a great display of vast arrays of pollinator friendly plant and specimen trees – compliments to the residents/businesses. The playground with the formal and informal play areas was busy when we visited with laughter and shouts of excitement emanating from the children present. The name plaque of Saint Joseph's Road estate is virtually illegible. We recommend picking out the name in white paint – white paint on grey limestone works better than black paint (see the Tea Rooms sign). The large green communal area with the rows of trees along the roadside in St Joseph's Road estate was admired – perhaps a meeting area/picnic bench could be added. The Dolmen Holiday Village had great wildflower displays – nice to see these.

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

Stone walls line the approach roads into the village from the south. Entering the central square the visitor can head toward the quay area or continue through the village and head eastwards. New footpaths have been installed in some areas to facilitate pedestrians. We're assuming these will be extended in due course to allow those living close to the village to access on foot – we refer in particular to the L5042 road, to the Dolmen Holiday Village and along the eastern side of the bridge. In other areas footpaths and kerbstone are cracked – do you know when these will be repaired? We see that you cut grass along the road margins where there are no footpaths to allow pedestrians to walk safely along your numerous walking routes – this is admirable. We noted edge breakup, and unravelling along a few roads and hope that Clare Co Co will repair these shortly. Planting barrels should not be used as a deterrent for parking and instead a proper traffic management system should be installed. You should do an audit of the problem areas and approach the Area Engineer in the Local Authority for the installation of suitable barriers. The one-way system for buses works on the Ring of Kerry so hopefully County Claire too will be successful in this venture. We admired the New Way signs – lilac on the grey limestone.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Please put the projects/activities in the correct categories so as to assist the adjudicators – Project 26 - Burren Atlantic Hotel and Wild Atlantis Lodge does not come under the Approach Roads, Streets and Lanes category. This is a Community Involvement and Planning activity. You also have a tendency to ramble in your descriptions – get someone to read and edit the application before you submit it.

You failed to make reference to the Sustainable Development Goals. Tidy Towns in conjunction with Limerick City and County Council ran a webinar on the SDGs in 2021 and the presentation (which has been updated) is worth reading as it will be helpful for your application next year.

The link is: [https://www.limerick.](https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf)

[ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf](https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf)

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

The visit to Ballyvaughan for the purpose of a 2nd round adjudication took place on a warm dry day in late July. We were initially struck by the idyllic setting of the village nestled, between the Burren National Park and the scenic Ballyvaughan Bay. Entering the village from the Galway direction, the superb presentation of this approach to the village, with the distinctive stone Bee Hive structures and attractive birch plantings with neatly maintained grass margins was particularly admired.

The overall presentation of the streetscape and village core in Ballyvaughan is outstanding. Residential and commercial properties are maintained and presented to the highest standard, with freshly painted and colourful shopfronts and building facades, attractive window displays, and colourful window boxes and floral displays. Numerous properties are worthy of special mention, but it is perhaps not necessary at this point to repeat the comments included in the first-round adjudication report. As one example from many, the adjudicator did particularly admire the clipped evergreens along the frontage of Hyland's Burren Hotel. Suffice to say your community can be very proud of what has been achieved this year. The popularity of the village with tourists and visitors has been well earned and is a fitting testament to your ongoing work and dedication and this wonderful achievement.

New residential developments located on the outskirts of the village are beautifully designed and reflect a traditional cottage style vernacular architecture. The numerous thatched cottages were particularly admired. This has ensured a successful integration of those new developments into the very scenic landscape surrounding the village.

Pavements, road surfaces and markings in the village core are for the most part presented to a very high standard. Some cracking of concrete footpaths was noted, camouflaged to some extent by timber planters, but we are aware you are addressing this matter in consultation with Clare County Council. The paved civic space in the centre of the village, adjacent to the imposing Ballyvaughan House, is a delightful stopping off point for visitors. The historic water supply fountain which is still in operation, is a key feature in this part of the village. This area is enhanced with suitable visitor information signage, a seating area, stone planters, ornamental trees and perennial planting. Its popularity with visitors was certainly witnessed on the day. The nearby weighbridge building and O'Lochlainn's licenced premises were also superbly presented. It would be desirable to paint the field gate, opposite the public house to complement the attractive stone wall situated on the roadside boundary here.

The Saint Joseph's Road area was visited and we admired the well maintained and presented houses and gardens and linear open space area here. The open space area complete with attractive tree planting and timber planters and floral displays impressed. The Sycamore, Birch and Sorbus trees planted on the open space have established well and significantly enhance the visual amenity in this area. The name stone and water pump were also admired. We called to the enclosed picnic area with stone seats and benches located along the Ferbane Road. This area

could be enhanced with suitable perennial planting to be provided inside the wall along the road. Where space is available it would also be desirable to provide an off-road cycle/walking route linking to all the amenities along the seafront here. The Garden of Remembrance and Bird hide/Seating area were visited and presented to a very good standard. Gravel paths would be desirable through the wooded area leading to the Bird Hide.

The car park at the New Quay was visited and we admired the neat and tidy presentations of grass margins along the access road to the car park. The recycling facility set back from the road helps to screen the units from public view and they were in pristine condition. We enjoyed the scenic views across the bay from the car parking area, which is well marked and maintained. The public car park located opposite the Church is also nicely marked and presented with an attractive stone boundary wall located to the rear. For the future consider converting the marked traffic islands along the frontage to stone planters, which will accommodate suitable tree and perennial planting. Planting along the frontage of the car-park would help to reduce the visual impact of parked cars, as one enters the village. The Church grounds looked very well. The attractive stonewall along the road frontage and suitable tree planting within the grounds enhances this area. On the day of our visit, we met a Tidy Towns member erecting an information sign on the history of the Church on one of the entrance piers. Similar attractively designed signs were erected around the village providing the public with wonderful information on the local built heritage -well done. It was a joy to visit Ballyvaughan and we will return in the near future. Keep on the good work and you are wished continued success.