

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Barefield - Gort Lomán** Ref: **1766**
County: **Clare** Mark: **302**
Category: **B** Date(s):

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	37	39
Streetscape & Public Places	80	38	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	39	40
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	27	28
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	15	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	61
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	40
TOTAL MARK	550	290	302

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, additional photos, and for your map with notes. Your committee of 7 has an additional 10 who help when a job needs extra hands. We noted the number of young people in the photos who help you – please thank them. This is excellent training for them. It helps them appreciate that to volunteer is rewarding when they see the results of their work. You have a social media presence with your Facebook Page with 328 followers. We suggest you open an Instagram account which the teenagers favour and possibly a twitter feed. Better still get one of the teenagers to do this and let it be his/her role on the committee. In addition, to reach those not on social media, you use the more traditional methods of communicating your information – newsletters, local radio and local newspapers. You list the agencies and individuals who assist and advise you – contact the Environmental Officer in Clare Co Co who may be able to tell you of more state and semi state organisations who help TidyTowns groups. The close association with the local National School will be of enormous benefit to the village in the long term. Being involved with the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition for the past 12 years shows the dedication you have towards your community – this is the true spirit of TidyTowns.

Please see Concluding Remarks for advice on completing the application form and map.

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

What a change the M18 must have made to your village – it gave it back to the community and you have no longer the huge volumes of the Limerick to Galway traffic passing through. Single and two storey traditional and modern houses interspersed with farm houses and surrounding farmyards greets the visitor to Barefield. The beautiful RC church of the Immaculate Conception is dominant in the village standing high above the road. The National School has been extended at various times and now boasts a two-storey building. We loved the small garden at the entrance to the schools and while we don't generally approve of using tyres in planting displays, we liked what has been done here. We admired the flat iron gates which we spotted in various locations – great to see these retained. The centre of the village was very busy with people meeting in the new Le Chéile café. We admired the trees and shrubs in the parking area here. Dereliction is a problem for most rural towns and every Tidy Towns committee struggles trying to get the owners to carry out routine maintenance. One we spotted, which looked very attractive, was the long low cottage set in a field near the traffic calming on the R458 – hopefully that will get a new lease of life. When we visited, the section of the wall into the Community Meadow with the name Coote's Meadow had been completed. We admired the simplicity of the name plaque.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

We entered the village from the north along the R458 to be met by mature trees along the footpath which gave the village an air of opulence. The main structural elements in the landscape and one of the main structural elements in a streetscape are trees. Trees are known to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. By planting and caring for trees, you help reduce pollution, improve your surroundings, improve the appearance of your community and increase the value of your property. In addition, they provide shade for humans, food for insects and food, roosting sites and nesting sites for birds. We loved that you have planted new trees in Coote's Meadow but we recommend that you trim the grass around the bases of these and remove suckers as the trees grow. We read that you only cut the grass at the beginning and the end of the growing season, to allow the wildflower population to thrive. The flower pots on the steps to the church give great colour to this austere façade. The hanging baskets along the church wall were also admired – perhaps have more trailing plants next year in addition to the pollinator flowers for added interest. The Memorial Parden near Le Chéile is beautiful and is well maintained but remove the two ugly signs on the gate at the road entrance. The seats here need painting.

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

The aim of this category is to encourage people to recognise, engage and celebrate the biodiversity and richness of the wildlife habitats in their surroundings. Knowledge of your area and promoting this knowledge to the local population and passing visitors are the key components of this category. This could be done by installing information panels in some central location in the village – perhaps some discrete signage in your community meadow when this is complete. Have you thought about creating a walk – Barefield Ring Walk? You have a great opportunity for this along the old roads which link under the motorway. This will not only get people out walking but also help to develop an interest in the locality. We had a walk around Coote's Meadow and loved the variety of natural wild flowers and grasses. We suggest that you install pathways with edgings of timber, metal or concrete, as this will be easier to manage as the wildness of the meadow can be limited to these edges. Do this a little at a time or maybe look for sponsorship from a local builder/hardware supplier? In various other fields along the entrance road, we spotted great displays of daisies, clover, devil's bit, great mullein, cow parsley etc. growing among tall wild grasses – great for pollinators and hiding places for small mammals. Perhaps collect some of the seeds and plant them in the wildflower meadow? We look forward to seeing the photos of the roundabout in next year's application.

We loved the photo of the boy holding the big fat worm in his hand – perhaps slightly wary of it!

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

This is a category where many communities struggle but truthfully it is just about being aware of how we use the resources of the planet so that we cut down on our waste. This category is about tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. Educating both young and old in Sustainability – doing more with less is crucial so that we advance our knowledge of how we use the resources of the planet in order to cut down on our waste. We know this will be tackled by the Green Schools committee and pupils but we now ask you to bring it to the attention of the community. We read that you have planted native apple trees – these will be great pollinators and also delicious for the community to eat. We noted the timber and recycled plastic furniture. Is there a Men's Shed in Barefield – could they make seating from recycled items? The seat made from old electrical wires in the school garden is a bit of fun – we loved it. The Green Flag flew high at the National School – what flag are they working towards now? Could a rainwater collection tank be added to any of the large roofs for use by the community – the church, school, Le Chéile café etc. Rainwater is better for plants than treated water and is also free.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We assume, as with other villages, that you took part in the all-Ireland April clean-up this year? We encourage groups to take part in nationwide Clean-Up events as it focuses the mind of the general public of the high amount of litter/fly tipping/ dumping that occurs nationally. The village was practically litter free when we visited and we are delighted to report that there was also very little weed growth. We always recommend that the litter pick up volunteers also become weed removal volunteers and ask them to bring a hoe or wire brush with them so as to also remove weed growth. The gravel areas can be sprayed with organic weed killer or a mix of vinegar, salt and washing up liquid. We see that you have reached out to the community through your Facebook page to help with weeding or gardening in your Biodiversity Meadow. But not everyone looks at Facebook, so we suggest that you also put a temporary sign at the entrance stating 'Biodiversity Meadow – weeding and gardening; come and help.' and state the time (about an hour) and the day. Then when people are passing, they'll know that it's restricted to just an hour and maybe then will be more willing to help. You informed the community about the Invasive Species Training for Communities and in addition had a biodiversity expert visit your community to talk on the subject – well done as on-site training is excellent. In order to curtail community and other advertisements along the roads ask the Clare Co Co Area Engineer to erect 2.4 x 2.4 Community Notice Boards, painted black, on the approach roads where all community notices are displayed. All other notices on fences, walls, lampposts etc can then be removed. We've seen this in other communities and they work well. Road signs need cleaning and some poles (e.g. the one near the church) need repainting.

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

The standard of presentation of individual houses within the village environs, on the approach roads and in the residential estate was generally very good and we applaud the many home owners and occupiers who clearly take pride in their place and keep their front facades, road frontage, gardens and boundary walls well-presented and neatly maintained in support of your work. Radharc Na Bóirne is a well-maintained housing estate which is located

on the outskirts of the village – a footpath into the centre would certainly be an addition for the residents and hopefully in time this will be provided by Clare Co Co. We wonder if this was this not part of the planning conditions – maybe not? There are pleasant communal spaces in this estate with shrub beds and trees in strategic locations. The trees need attention – check the ties and remove the suckers. This estate was excellently maintained – kerbs clean of weeds, footpaths clean and dipped kerbs added to facilitate children on bicycles, buggies and mobility/wheelchair users. Perhaps the planting bed at the entrance could be a little more colourful to attract the pollinators. Elsewhere in the village the houses are set on individual sites and there is an air of horticulture excellence throughout the locality with a notable abundance of well-designed and attractively planted front gardens. We admired the beautifully maintained entrance and boundary walls to Trinaderry House.

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

The flowerbeds at the traffic calming on the R458 are in need of attention – we suggest that you plant perennial pollinator flowers and low shrubs here which won't need much attention. These beds, due to their location, are an important feature on this access road. While road surfaces generally are good there are potholes and ravelling along the road to the school where parents gather to pick up the children. Equally road markings, including wheelchair designated parking bays, around the village, and along the R458, need to be refreshed. We're unsure of the value of the individual pots with low floral planting along the entrance from the roundabout and feel that one or two large stone surround flowerbeds would be more impressive. We did, however, admire the roadside frontage which is a great example of how to effectively present a semi-wild habitat in this type of setting with its narrow strip of tidily mown grass along the outer edge to show that the wilderness behind is deliberate. The new footpath with its dipped kerb opposite the church is wonderful – perhaps plant some ivy and other climbing plants in the stone area adjacent to the wall. A change of colour of road surface to form a pedestrian crossing to the church should be added. We noticed a large number of parked cars on the outskirts of the village which we assume are commuters who share journeys to Ennis?

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your community. Below are a few suggestions to help you advance in this competition, it is not a criticism of your work.

Your map is very basic ... but it works! However, as projects progress and more are added you will need to be more careful with the map to help the adjudicators find the projects listed.

Next time put the link to the Facebook page in the application form so that the adjudicators don't have to look for it on the internet. <https://www.facebook.com/barefieldtidytowns/> (There are some great photos of the Rás Tailteann on your page – great excitement for the village).

Carefully select the correct category for the various projects /activities e.g. check your Residential Streets and Housing Areas where you mentioned the school's new facilities, the new Café's planting, the enhanced parking of the Clare Crusaders Clinic etc. All of these should be in other categories please help the adjudicator.

Please also list the projects in bullet form and state New (N) and Maintained (M) and give each a number which is then transferred to the map.

You need to reference 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 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.