

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bunratty - Bunraite** Ref: **2030**
County: **Clare** Mark: **289**
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	44	46
Streetscape & Public Places	80	35	37
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	36	39
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	26	27
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	17	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	32	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	33	34
TOTAL MARK	550	274	289

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. Thank you for your completed application form which included photos, four maps and also your Bunratty 3 Year Development Plan 2024-2026 which has projects/actions under each category of the competition.

You have a committee of 10 and 15+ volunteers to help when work needs additional hands. We read that you have stone masons, mini-digger drivers and suppliers who are committed to helping you. We're delighted to read new residents, including some of the Ukrainian community have joined you. You give a list of the agencies/bodies who support you detailing the support offered. Good to see that TUS (Technological University of the Shannon) and Limerick College of Art are now part of that support. Your Facebook page has 1K followers and is quite active with photographs of events/projects posted for the community to see. This is your 7th year entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition and we are delighted to read that you have found the comments in the adjudicators' reports over the years helpful to you in your work.

A nice gesture to plant the tree in memory of an important member of the community.

We wish you a 'Happy 10th Birthday' – it's 10 years since your Bunratty Local Development Association was formed and congratulations on winning Clare County Tidy Towns Endeavour Award in 2022.

Please see Concluding Remarks for advice on filling out the Application Form and producing the map/maps.

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

The Castle with its surrounding Folk Park and Durty Nelly's are the associations most Irish people have of Bunratty, but your village is much much more. The heart of the village has vibrant businesses which were all busy when we visited. These premises are extremely well maintained and many have great displays of permanent planting interspersed with colourful flowers – Blarney Woolen Mills, The Creamery, Jilly and Joe's, Gallaghers, J.P Clarkes to name a few.

The stone clad, slated roofed bus shelters, with their beautiful timber seats, were admired. The new curved stone entrance to the Lower Green area is very beautiful. Compliments to all involved in the construction including the donor of the beautiful antique bollards – Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea? We wonder will many of our English visitors recognise them....! The banners along the roadway installed by the various businesses add additional colour to the streetscape. Good to see the freshly painted VR postbox at the castle entrance and we also spotted and ER VII near the Torc Sculpture. We noted a few flat iron gates, which we were delighted to see – some in need of cleaning/painting. You have made a wonderful entrance to the village from the N18 with the work undertaken as listed and the results are quite beautiful with the drystone wall, stone clad piers and new planting

area. The heritage signs (10 in number) are wonderful. They are not intrusive and give sufficient information on the topic. We look forward to the revised map being available. Are there more signs to be installed? It was a pity to see one sign was already defaced. It will be interesting to see how the Castle and Folk Park continue to develop as now, since June, management has been transferred to Clare Co Co. We admired the entrance to the old cemetery.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have a large number of planting beds and green spaces which you maintain. The Torc Sculpture bed is dominant in the village and was extremely pleasant – we loved the flowers and neatly trimmed box hedging. We admired the wide-open green spaces along the old road opening up to the large village green (Lower Green Area). Here mature trees give a lovely canopy and we see these have been added to in recent years which, when mature, will make this area even more beautiful. The box hedging was neatly trimmed and the stone surround planting beds beside the bus shelters were buzzing with pollinators when we visited. The permanent beds along the footpaths had great healthy hostas and hydrangeas growing. The hanging baskets along the road here and elsewhere gave great colour and movement. Well done on making these generous so that the complete basket structure was covered by the planting. We approve of the bark mulch you have around the base of the trees to suppress weed growth. This will rot in time and can then be reapplied. The landscaping around the entrance to the Castle and Folk Park was quite beautiful – low green box hedging surrounding bright red geraniums. You list a great number of projects – new and maintained. We suggest you reduce some of the planters which are superfluous and instead increase the size of the permanent beds – we refer to those along the road near the Torc Sculpture and postbox. Well done on purchasing the various landscaping equipment which you need to undertake the numerous jobs around the village. We admired the photo montage of the entrance to the village from the N18 undertaken by TUS School of Art and Design. This would be a fitting entrance to the village from both north and south and hopefully something you will undertake in time.

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

The natural stone walls around the village are a great habitat for insects. You also have a great many hedgerows and tall trees which are wonderful nesting and roosting sites for birds. Add to these the river and its salt marsh and bracken marsh as we find yet another type of habitat. Are there any of the 3000 head of deer left around Bunratty that Cardinal Rinuccini spoke about? We read that you are in discussions to provide a new park and habitat area for wildlife. Where is this to be located? You have attended various training courses over the past few years in relation to biodiversity and natural habitats. How have you passed on the information collected? We spotted nesting boxes – have you had any success with these? We saw the new bug hotel made from recycled palettes – impressive. We looked on the NPWS website for reference to your SAC but couldn't find it. Next year add the reference number for the adjudicators.

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

This category has become increasingly important in the tidy towns competition as it now has a marks allocation of 55 – the same amount as the key categories of nature and biodiversity, residential streets and housing areas and approach roads, streets and lanes. 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 read that you source materials locally and have used salvaged materials in many of your projects – the bug hotel, the seats in the bus shelter etc. You have a supply of used timber which you will repurpose in future projects. You have also purchased old cannon balls and we look forward to seeing how these will be incorporated into the village plans – perhaps in a sculpture? You plant the daffodils in pots and then lift them for reuse in the autumn. We read that besides your committee local gardeners are also invited to use the compost which you make. We looked for the rainwater harvest tanks but didn't see them – maybe they're at the rear of the properties mentioned. We're delighted that you have 600ltrs at your disposal. The picnic benches were in use in the lower green area – we chatted to a couple from Germany who had visited the village and were now having lunch and a cuppa before travelling on.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The village was neat and practically litter free when we visited and weed growth was minimal. This is excellent for a village with so many visitors so please commend your litter pick-up team as they are doing a very good job. We chatted with a student who was washing the footpaths around a business premises so the local businesses should also be commended for their contribution. We noted some cigarette butt bins which are good to see as they will be used if provided. Street lamp posts were a little dirty and some need repainting. The metal railing over the bridge and some seats in the village centre also need repainting. We noted some redundant poles which should be removed. Weed growth was noted behind the box hedging in the lower green area - just rough up the earth if you're not intending to plant flowers. Trim a few branches from the trees and bushes so that road signs etc are visible – the 50km speed signs along the entrance road from the north were almost hidden. Trim the hedge along the tarmac path to the old cemetery and stain the timber fence. It's always good to have a volunteer who enjoys his work and you are lucky to have Philip who undertakes litter patrols and ensures the bins are emptied.

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 estates in Bunratty was generally very good and we congratulate 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. Gardens had trees, shrubs and colourful floral

displays with great varieties of pollinator friendly planting. Some had specimen trees which gave added interest to the estate. The Dún Rí estate sign is beautiful but as it's low to the ground take care and don't be tempted to plant in front of it which will hide the name. Various improvements have been undertaken which you list including the completion of four new houses on a derelict site in the RIC scheme. The grass in the communal area of Rosán estate appears to have been sprayed with herbicide around the kerbs. Ask the residents to use a spade/edging tool to remove unwanted grass from the kerbs. This communal area would benefit from a small coppice of trees to give it structure/focus. The green space at the road entrance to Dún Rí should have the edges trimmed and also trim along the hedgerow – this area is unkempt at present. In the estate the planting bed at the entrance was admired - a mix of grasses and roses. What an interesting tree in the Dún Rí estate – we're guessing it has been checked for stability?

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

The Ennis to Limerick traffic which used to pass through your village now uses the N18 which has resulted in only those wanting to visit you now using the old road – this is a great improvement to your village. We see from the dedication on the Torc Sculpture that this by-pass was constructed in 1992. We entered Bunratty under an attractive canopy of trees along the roadway from the north and arrived at the beautifully maintained entrance to Bunratty Castle and Folk Park. We were delighted to see that a safe meandering walking route, behind bollards, is provided for the pedestrian from the large carpark at the castle entrance to the centre of the village. This will encourage visitors to experience the village attractions in addition to the castle. It's also a great photo opportunity as the castle is SO dominant from this road. While road surfaces are good road markings are quite worn in some areas – are you in line for repainting? The wide sweep of the entrance road from the north, while needed when the road was busy, is no longer needed for safety. Could the triangular box hedge surround bed be increased in size making the one-way entrance to the road outside J.P Clarke's narrower? Something for the future perhaps.

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your village, one which we've visited many times. Well done on your achievements to date. We suggest a few amendments to your form and map. This is not a criticism of your work but purely so that you identify the projects and map them to help the adjudicators locate them when they visit.

You will have seen that we request that applicants number their projects as, new projects (N), or improved/maintained projects (M) and all 'future' projects should only be included in your 5-Year Plan and NOT in the Application Form. You are to give each action/project a number as New (N1, N2, N3 etc.) or Maintained (M1, M2, M3 etc). This same numbering system to be used to indicate the locations of these projects on a map – N1, N2, N3 etc and M1, M2, M3 etc. Your maps did not identify the location of your projects; they just named locations around the town.

You also need to state how your projects relate 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 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.