

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clonlara - Cluain Larach** Ref: **870**  
County: **Clare** Mark: **302**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **13/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	40	42
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	46
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	40	42
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	35	36
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	15	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	28	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	35	35
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>302</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. Thank you for your completed application form with photos, and for your maps. Your Clonlara Community Development Plan 2020-2023 with eight Actions identified as being important. Hopefully these have been completed and you are now preparing a new plan. If, however, any of the Actions are unfinished then put them into your new plan ..... sometimes projects take longer than we think. Your committee of 12 has the help of another 45 regular volunteers when additional hands are needed and which increases to up to 70 when larger numbers are needed. You have new residents including those from the Ukraine who have joined you as volunteers. It's unfortunate that the local youth club hasn't resumed its activities since Covid – is there anything you can do to help? You list state and semi-state organisations and agencies, businesses and individuals who support your work financially or with advice and help. You have a great presence on social media – a dedicated email address, an Instagram account, a Facebook Page with over 1.4K followers, and a Twitter account. In addition, you use the more traditional methods to inform those not on social media of your activities – leaflet drops, local newspapers and associations with local clubs. You are a fairly new association having been formed in 2019 and we see that the number of volunteers you have (70 when needed), shows that the community hold you in high esteem and value the commitment you make to the village – well done and keep up this excellent work. Participation in the SuperValu TidyTowns competition has resulted in the development of a great sense of togetherness and pride and community spirit.

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

Set in rural Clare, the village is very unusual in that it is located on land between two canals – Killaloe Canal/ Plassey Errina Canal and the larger Ardnacrusha Canal. The village existed prior to the construction of the Ardnacrusha canal and boasts an 1870 built RC church – Saint Senan's, Clonlara Cofl church and the adjacent rectory. For a small village you have quite a large National School and speaking to Donnacha, the Principal, children from the countryside are amongst the pupils.

We spotted some flat iron gates – it's great to see these have been retained as they are an important feature in the rural landscape. Like many rural villages in Ireland, you have dereliction which detracts from a streetscape and we see that you are trying to resolve this problem. We commend you on the work you have done to date with the old cottage and adjoining forge – the work undertaken adds to the streetscape. The recently painted capping along the church flower beds and boundary wall gave a great freshness to these. The gutters and downpipes of the church should be your next paint project. We admired single arch the stone bridge over the Errina Canal with the Sheela-na-gig stone inserted on the wall. The fountain in the church dates from 1765 – do you know where this was taken from? Something to add to your 13 stop historical trail. It's always good to install picnic benches along

walking routes as not only will locals use them but so too will the long-distance walker/cyclist. The central area of the village is quite beautiful but the loose gravel needs to be rolled in as it's being kicked onto the tarmac footpaths.

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

The canals and their banks are great manmade green areas which surround your village. We see that a group of your volunteers maintain these banks which are a popular walking trail. We read that a public consultation concerning the Clonlara to Ard Clooney cycle and walkway route was held in the Parish Hall and we assume that you engaged in this. The planting at the school was in full colour when we visited and was active with bees and butterflies. The GAA facilities – pitches and a surrounding walkway are located in the village and with the adjoining Leisure Centre are a wonderful asset to the village. Your underage GAA groups planted 5,000 bulbs and also help maintain the planting bed at the Community Centre – please commend them for their help. Great work was carried out on the large mound beside the forge and planting a mix of flowers and shrubs which flower at different times of the year will ensure colour in this bed all year long. We see you are awaiting the completion of the Village Renewal Scheme before you undertake planned landscaping of the entrance to the village from Killaloe – probably a good idea. This entrance is quite pleasant so don't overdo a planting scheme - some low colourful planting along the edge of the roadway/path will be sufficient. You have a number of pots/planters around the village, some of these could be removed and the plants put directly into the soil – this is a better option. Maybe this is planned when the Village Renewal Scheme is complete?

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

Fields, stone walls, green spaces and mature trees are great habitats for wildlife and you have all of these in abundance. In addition, the canals with their grassy banks are also habitats and you have embraced these and ensure that they are nurtured to protect these habitats. We see that you are committed to conserving the unique ecosystem of the Errina Canal and have erected an information panel to highlight its importance. You have an environmental scientist in your community who gives advice. Perhaps arrange a nature walk led by him/her which would be aimed at the adults? This will help get your information out to the community. You organised some biodiversity projects with the scouts .... what did you do? We loved that resulting from the art competition organised by you we saw the collection of signs around the village. These included 'No Mow May', 'Put your litter in a Bin', 'Keep it Tidy' etc along with the art work. Nice to see the water bowls for dogs outside O'Shea' Public House.

### **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. It is a global and a local problem. To save the Earth we need to move quickly to a zero-waste society. We noticed the small domestic water butt at the forge. While these are suitable for domestic use, they don't hold sufficient water for Tidy Towns groups and so we recommend that you invest in a larger water container for the community centre. It is wonderful to read that you now have five daily return bus service to Scariff and Limerick. You are embarking on a mechanical and electrical retrofit of Kiltenanlea church including the installation of solar panels. Keep us informed of progress in this. During Covid quite a number of state and semi-state organisation organised Webinars and many were on subjects which relate to this category. Did you take part in any? Some are still available on-line. We suggest that you contact your environmental officer and he/she will assist you. We also suggest you consult the Tidy Towns Handbook which has been revised. It is available to download from the Tidy Towns website. It includes plenty of suggestions for suitable projects to consider under the various categories.

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

Your Spring Clean-Up was a great success – well done on having 42 volunteers come out on the day to help. This raises awareness in a small geographical community when so many are seen working. We loved the anti-litter/biodiversity/nature signs drawn by the children. What a great way to get them involved in your work. You have removed ivy and brambles from the long village wall which has greatly improved the streetscape. The large bright yellow sign at the entrance to the walkway to O'Briensbridge is a little obtrusive – perhaps something less garish would be better in the landscape. Look what other communities are installing for ideas. Remove the dog fouling sign and slip of timber from the wall opposite O'Shea's. We suggest that you continue to paint 'Clean up after your Dog' on the footpaths where dog fouling is a problem. We have seen this in other communities and have been told it works better than signage on poles. Remember signage detracts from a streetscape. Paint the flagpoles at the school in addition to the gutters and rainwater pipes at the church, mentioned above. Gáirdín Liam was quite overgrown and the shrubs in the pots beside it appeared to be dying. Remove these pots and put the plants directly into the ground – they need less maintenance when planted directly into the soil. The surrounding timber fence needs to be stained.

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

The houses along the main street are single and two -storey vernacular structures interspersed with business properties. They were well presented and those with gardens had trees, shrubs and colourful floral displays with varieties of pollinator friendly planting. Elsewhere village houses are predominately in housing estates - Derryvinna, Cloonmra, Glór na Srutha and Church Fields. We see that volunteers worked on planting beds that had fallen into disrepair in Derryvinna estate. The name sign Derryvinna at the entrance to the estate was difficult to read. If the letters were carefully painted white this would make them stand out. We are delighted to see that each estate has a

residents' association. Weed growth was noticed along roadside kerbs in a few of the estates – a wire brush and a hoe/spade used twice/three times a year will remove these weeds. Encourage the residents' associations to do this work in addition to picking up litter. The communal space in Church Fields with its surround of trees will be a wonderful space in a few years when they mature – we look forward to a return visit. Have you a Best Kept Garden competition? This is a very coveted annual award and allows for healthy competition. The award presentation could be made at an annual event where the local press and elected representatives are invited.

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

The approach roads to your village had neatly trimmed hedgerows giving good visibility to the motorists. We notice new pavements with dipped kerbs and rumble strips in some of the housing estates. If it's not too late we suggest that you ask Clare Co Co to install concrete pavements as part of the Village Renewal Scheme due to take place instead of block, which you mentioned in your application form. Block pavements by their nature have many, many joints which are VERY difficult to keep weed free. We admired that a footpath extends as far as the bridge making it safe for walkers to access your village and visit the commercial premises. The speed alert system has succeeded and now motorists have reduced their speed – although we did notice a few who ignored it. Road surfaces were poor in a few areas but we're assuming that these will be upgraded/retarred under the Village Renewal Scheme.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your village – our first. We look forward to a return some day when we can walk along the canal banks and experience the looped walk.

Below are a few suggestions to help you advance in this competition. We wish to state that this is not a criticism of your work but to explain to you that as adjudicators we rely on a clear application form and accompanying map to inform us of your projects and make our visit rewarding.

You will see in the application form that we request that applicants number their projects as, new projects (N), or improved/maintained projects (M). All 'future' projects should only be included in your 3/5-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) and then transfer these to a map. This is to help the adjudicators to negotiate their way around your town and see the various projects or locations of projects. Your village is small so there's no reason why all the projects can't be included on one map – this will help the adjudicators by reducing the time taken to scroll through your on-line application. You numbered projects in your application form but didn't say if they were New or Maintained. You also transferred only some of these to your maps making it very difficult for the adjudicators to locate your projects.

Please put your project in bullet format (long passages of typing on projects are unnecessary) and also put the projects into the correct category – we found tree planting in Nature and Biodiversity and there were others.

We also need you to make reference to the Sustainable Development Goals and how they relate to your projects.

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.