

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Connolly - Fíoch Rua** Ref: **1181**  
County: **Clare** Mark: **319**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **16/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	39	40
Streetscape & Public Places	80	38	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	39	41
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	35	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	36	37
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>319</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 application form including photos, map and legend. You also attached your Biodiversity Plan 2019-2024, your Bog Walk flyer, and a very lengthy document (137 pages) on Invasive Species – one wonders of the benefit of this large document. Sometime less is more and for a small voluntary group a large document might be off-putting. Similar to 2022 the adjudicators are delighted 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 communities and so it's great to see the effort being made again by the volunteers to help their local community.

Your committee of 11 has the help of an additional 8 volunteers when projects need workers. We were delighted to read that you 'tie in' with the Green Flag endeavours of the local school – we are very supportive of this commitment. You have an active Facebook Page (592 followers) which is great for a village of less than 200 people - well done on this active social media presence. In addition, you inform the community of your activities using the 'traditional' methods – parish newsletter, newspapers, etc. It's kind of you to help Kilmaley and inch as they begin the TidyTowns journey .... we hope, like you, that they gain hugely from their participation. Working together as a community is wonderful and we see areas going from strength to strength where new residents become involved and are welcomed by the local community – a win, win for all. See concluding remarks for suggestions on application form and map.

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

Your village, located on the busy R474, is long with a variety of features along its length primarily of an agricultural theme celebrating your rural location. These agricultural items are painted a variety of colour – orange, black, green, red – and we suggest that this be rationalised and that one colour is selected for maximum impact. We can accept that the tractor be painted green as this is the colour associated with the John Deere tractor but the other items should all be painted the same colour. Personally, we thought the red was very pleasant and complimented the green foliage and the colourful flowers. It also relates to the Irish name Fiach Rua ... red wild grass. We admired the picnic benches painted green and the area around them on the entrance to the village from Ennis is very pleasant. Paint the blockwork under the stone table green – there's no need to introduce a grey colour. The painted walls and steps at the school were admired – compliments to the artists. The church area is quite barren and while we accept that parking (particularly at funerals) is vital we wondered if a footpath with a row of trees could be introduced along the roadside with an 'in' and 'out' traffic management system. This would certainly add to this streetscape. The cast-iron rainwater goods on the church are in need of painting. The simplicity of the grotto and stone seat was admired. The repainted derelict cottage was pleasant and the planting - lemon thyme, grasses and

geums - added to the area.

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

You have a great variety of planting beds dotted along the length of the village with flowering shrubs and colourful flowers featured in most. We admired the stone surround beds which had great displays of flowering shrubs, roses and perennials. We suggest however that you rationalise some of the other planting beds as truthfully, they would make more of an impact if there were less of them. We suggest removing the smaller ones and concentrating on larger stone surround planting areas and if necessary, adding one or two more stone surround beds for impact. This will also reduce the workload of your volunteers. The John Deere tractor is a bit of fun and has replaced the caterpillar which you showed in the photo in your application. Congratulations to those who made the tractor as it's very well made - we'd make a tiny suggestion to paint the black exhaust pipe yellow so that it's more noticeable. The work to the field boundary is ongoing and the post and wire fence has been planted with guelder rose, rosa rugosa, bird cherry and whitethorn. This will mature in a few years and completely transform this area. Equally the new trees will add to the approach into the village from the east and help to channel our vision.

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

You have changed your grass cutting regime and are allowing areas to grow so as to produce flowers and seeds for biodiversity and ground cover for small mammals. This is admirable and we were delighted to see this approach. We love the idea of the poster/ logo/ photo competition for the school children each year with a biodiversity or recycling theme. The Green Flag flies high outside the school and we encourage you to keep up the work you are doing with the school children. Your Biodiversity Plan, produced following attending five two-hour long training sessions, is excellent. We admire when groups examine what's local to their area and then protect/develop this. You have 15 actions and we wish you well as you advance these. We look forward to seeing the Community Park – this has yet to commence but plans are advancing for its development. Curran's Cross has been designated as the biodiversity area but truthfully with your grass cutting regime there are other areas too where biodiversity will improve. We suggest that before the next print of the Bog Walk is undertaken that you include the map in the flyer and perhaps identify the exact locations of some of the species/flowers/trees that can be seen on the route. The turf information sign and bog walk map at the pub are excellent.

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

Feed the Pig are located in the school grounds and at the housing estate entrance and are well used. When the bins are full, we assume they are brought to a main composting area - where is the main composting area located? We like that you are growing your own flowers etc from seeds and cuttings and that you intend to increase the number of perennials in your flowering beds. You teamed up with a second-hand book shop (Banner Books) and received €0.40 for every book you gave her ..... was this a 2022 project? Have you thought about having a book swap area in the village? Would the local petrol station/shop provide an area in their carpark for this? The 'Cupán Glas' project was successful and that the cups are now being used must be heartening for the committee. There are many projects/actions which you could undertake/ instigate under this category - check on the internet for ideas for households, communities, businesses etc.

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

Your village was clean and tidy when we visited which, as you are located on a busy road, is difficult to maintain. So, compliments to the team. Your National Spring Clean-Up day had 18kms plus of roads covered by volunteers, which is excellent. Fly tipping/dumping is a problem for us all and reporting it as soon as it is spotted is important. Areas which are blackspots are often redesigned (gates/fences erected) which helps to discourage the offenders. Signage is often a problem for communities and the one in front of the Fáilte sign blocks it somewhat. We suggest this commercial sign (if needed) is repositioned to a location after the 50 km sign into the village. We also suggest the 'Pardon the Weeds' sign is unnecessary .... remember signage is clutter and very often blocks our view. The Mid Clare Way sign faces the fence and is partly hidden. Can this be put on the other side of the posts? We noted that glyphosate herbicide was used in a few areas ... we encourage you to inform the residents and CE workers to cease using this and use other methods to remove weeds and control grass growth.

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

Set in rural Clare the residents of the village have contributed positively to making the village extremely pleasant with freshly painted boundary walls and fences and neatly kept gardens welcoming the visitor. Shrub and herbaceous borders were noted in many gardens and some residents had specimen trees as features. Single and two storey traditional houses are the predominant style of houses along the road. The small housing estate had well-kept houses and gardens and here too colourful flowers were noted. In the immediate vicinity of the village and along the main road farm houses with well-kept farmyards were also noted and some had well-built stone walls as roadside boundaries. Some of these farm yards had flat iron gates and these were well maintained. Boundary hedges were neatly trimmed giving good visibility to the motorist.

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

The limestone name sign is clear – Fíoch Rua Connelly and is very pleasant in its simplicity. It's a low sign so don't be tempted to plant around it which could result in blocking the name. The commercial advertisement blocks the Fáilte sign as do the long grasses. We suggest that the Fáilte sign be relocated near the tractor. (And the sign needs a fada over the 'A' to be correct). The work to the bridge over the river is very pleasant and we loved that the

stonework of the bridge was visible for all to admire – don't be tempted to allow ivy to cover this man-made feature. The Farm Yard Fruit Garden area needs some work ... is it needed here as we suggest that there are sufficient items/features in this area? Perhaps the Fruit Garden could be located in the school where the children could benefit from the information? We suggest that a large stone surround planting bed is built the entrance /lay-by area where the orange farm implements are currently located. The bed to extend from the cart with the wheels (i.e. from the ditch) to the Stop sign thus closing off entrance to this picnic area from the side road. This will make the area more pleasant and will result in it being safer for those picnicking here. As stated previously large planting beds give more impact than lots of smaller ones. We also suggest this approach be taken where the L8354 joins the main road – make one large stone surround bed in the centre of the open area for impact as the four that are there at present are lost in this large gravel area. The pedestrian crossing at the school is excellent as the children must cross the road to the waiting cars on the far side of the road. Are there plans to extend the footpath to make it safe for children to walk to and from home to the school? Some road markings at the junctions of minor to major road are badly worn – contact the area engineer and ask that this be put on the schedule of works to be carried out by the council.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your village but your map was extremely difficult to read – in fact we couldn't read some of the numbers even when we enlarged the page on our desktop computer. When you scan the map next year make it the full A4 page size and this will hopefully help – get someone young to do this, if nobody on the committee can do it. Check the pdf. before you send the document to Tidy Towns to ensure that all numbers and words are legible.

Also please number the projects N1, N2, N3 etc M1, M2, M3 etc as this will also help the adjudicators to locate the projects. e.g. we had no idea where Kilcolumb Cross is located – we're assuming that the entrance to the village from the east is Kilcolumb Cross.

Making reference to the Sustainable Development Goals was admirable. We encourage you to look at the presentation by Limerick Co Co as it is extremely helpful

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.