

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Coolmeen - Cúil Mín** Ref: **1169**  
County: **Clare** Mark: **274**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **07/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	39	41
Streetscape & Public Places	80	39	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	34	36
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	28	29
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	16	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	29	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	25	27
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>274</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....

Thank you for your completed entry form, map with references, and list of 5 future activities/ projects. You are a dedicated committee of 4 with 5 volunteers who help when needed, which sometimes rises to 8 for a clean-up. You communicate your activities to the general public via the parish newsletter. We suggest that you open a Facebook Page – get some young member of the community to help. Here you can add photos etc and news of forthcoming events (yours and other community groups). It will ensure that your activities/projects news reaches a wider audience. You list state, business and local groups who advise you or assist you. This is your fifth year to enter the Tidy Towns Competition and you tell us that there is a greater awareness of the environment, biodiversity, and litter control within the community. Participation in the Tidy Towns competition will always raise awareness amongst the local community which leads to a sense of pride in one's surroundings.

Please see Concluding Remarks.

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

You are a dispersed rural community with a mix of vernacular single and two-storey buildings and these, along with the topography of the village, its location where two roads intersect and its great vistas across the countryside, gives the village its character. St Benedict's RC church, adjoining parochial house and shrine were well presented. The memorial monuments to those who fought in 1919-1921 were noted. The picnic area on the Labasheeda road was a work in progress when we visited. Have you thought about where cars should park so as to use this facility? The previous location opposite the school (now the location of the memorial monument) had a parking area adjacent. This will be needed for the new picnic area and so must be considered. The murals on the walls in the National School are quite beautiful – compliments to the artist.

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

The planting bed on the entrance road for Labasheeda is quite beautiful and we see you have planted heathers and shrubs (including roses). The whitethorn hedge was noted and the fuchsia will in time be a hive of activity when the pollinators visit. The colourful planting beds at the cross roads gave great impact on our arrival. Planters, including wheelbarrows etc., should only be used where it is not possible to introduce a ground bed and which will give impact. You have a number of planting beds and these were full of colour and were welcoming. We see that you also have spring colour along approach roads with displays of daffodils. Ash dieback was noted in a number of locations which will necessitate the removal of these trees.

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

You have a great variety of habitats for our insect and mammal life - stone walls, hedgerows, fields, trees, barns, house eaves, and also the Clune river (1.4kms from the village). The roadside frontage is a great example of how to effectively present a semi-wild habitat with its narrow strip of tidily mown grass along the outer edge to show that the wilderness behind is deliberate. We read that you ask Clare Co Co not to cut hedgerows during the bird nesting season ... to be honest we doubt that they would embark on such a job as it contravenes the Wildlife Act. We read that the school partakes in the Green Flag programme and we recommend that you assist the teachers in this programme which will be of benefit to both you and the children. The large bug hotel will help to educate the children about the nesting sites of insects. House martins were nesting under the eaves of the school which we have no doubt delighted the children. We encourage you to advise the GAA to allow some of the grass areas not in use for ball play to be allowed to grow – trimming a narrow strip around the edge to show that it is being maintained.

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

We visited the school grounds and were much impressed by the work seen – vegetables in the ground, raised vegetable beds, new trees planted, outdoor learning area, compost area, etc. We commend the teacher(s) and pupils for all the work. Are the LED bulbs around the walking track of the GAA motion activated? We look forward to the day when the forest service/farmers will plant deciduous trees again but, in the meantime, you hope to develop a walk through the newly planted evergreens. You mention a foraging walk – did you invite the community to join you? Let's see the poster, and also photos taken on the walk, in next year's application. The Group Water Scheme talks sound good – we commend the speaker who's bring information on the importance of clean water to the school children. They in turn will, hopefully, adapt their habits in due course. We like the idea of vouchers to local shops being the prizes awarded at local community events. This will encourage people to shop locally, which is good for a community as it is crucial to support local business in order for a community to survive.

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

Like many communities in Clare, you took part in the Annual Spring Clean-Up in April – we commend the community for this as it focuses the attention on the need to be vigilant with fly-tipping and weed growth. Have you a weekly get together to pick-up litter and remove weed growth? If the community knew you were meeting on a regular day, it might encourage others to join every now and again. We recommend that you limit the time so that people know it is for an hour or an hour and a half on a regular day. We are delighted that your members also pick up litter as they do their daily walk. We noted a number of community type signs etc which detracted from the village and entrance roads. We recommend that you request Clare Co Co (the area engineer) to install a 2.4m x 2.4m Community Notice Boards board, painted black, on the main entrance roads to the village. All community posters etc are restricted to these boards and then all 'illegal' posters which are attached to posts, fences etc around the village are removed as soon as they are noticed. The bridge over the Clune River has considerable ivy growth which needs to be removed. While ivy is a wonderful for insect life and is acceptable/good on rendered (plastered) walls it is not acceptable on stone structures as the roots penetrate between the joints in the stones, making the walls unstable and leading to their collapse. Natural stone constructions are in themselves great habitats for insect life and also very beautiful in the streetscape. The grass margins at the bridge should also be cut to expose the beautiful stonework. Weed growth on some gravel areas needs attention - spray with organic weed killer or a mix of vinegar, salt and washing up liquid.

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

Neatly kept single and two storey houses within the village are surrounded by neatly kept farmhouses and adjoining farmyards which add to the beauty of your area. Some houses had been recently painted and presented well. Those with gardens had colourful pollinator friendly flowers and neatly tended grass areas. We commend the owner of the farmhouse on the Kilmurray McMahon Road who planted the row of colourful flowers at the base of the roadside freshly painted/cleaned wall and also had a great display of climbing roses – a lovely welcome to your village. Another home owner had a beautiful roadside display of hydrangeas and lilies. We read that four new families have moved into the area in the last four years and this will be great for the local National School numbers in addition to the life in the village.

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

The new village name signs are very pleasant. We recommend that the name is painted in white which will make it more prominent as the motorist enters the village. We liked that you cut a narrow strip along the roadside grass margin which indicates that the area is maintained and that the grass inside the cut strip is allowed to grow for biodiversity. This method could be extended to all entry roads. The low name sign of the village with the low colourful planting in front draws the eye as the motorist enters the village. We are delighted to see that the GAA has a walking track around it for the use of the community. We noted that road surfaces are quite uneven and ravelling in a few places and will need attention in the near future. Some road markings exist but some of these are worn and will also need attention. Road signs are clear and visible to the motorist. We liked the concrete channel along the school which helps remove the surface water from the forecourt.

## **Concluding Remarks:**

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to our village and enjoyed seeing what was on offer. Your map, while pretty, is not clear. You mentioned projects in your application form and gave them reference numbers but these did not correlate with any of the numbers on the form. The projects should be marked New

(N1, N2, N3 etc) and Maintained (M1, M2, M3 etc) in the application form and these numbers should then be transferred to the map so that the adjudicators can easily locate them when they visit. We also ask that you put a north point on the map as this too helps the adjudicator.

We suggest you consult the Tidy Towns Handbook which has been revised and includes plenty of suggestions for suitable projects to consider under the various categories. It is available to download it from the Tidy Towns website. We also need you 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 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.