

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Corofin - Cora Finne** Ref: **64**
County: **Clare** Mark: **344**
Category: **B** Date(s): **27/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	44	46
Streetscape & Public Places	80	44	46
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	45	47
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	33	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61	63
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	41	43
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	41	42
TOTAL MARK	550	329	344

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 and supporting documentation - photographs, a map, Corofin Biodiversity Plan 2019-2024 and Corofin Community Development Plan 2020-2022. You had 8 actions in your Development Plan and we hope these were all completed within the timeframe. If not, and you still wish to carry them out, just add them to a new plan. Projects sometimes take longer than the time allocated. Your committee of 6 has an additional 30 who volunteer offering a variety of support roles. You list state and semi state organisations in addition to businesses, individuals and local community groups who support you financially or with advice and assistance. You are represented on social media with a dedicated email address, and a Facebook page with 1.8K followers. An Instagram account appeals to the youth so maybe open one too. In addition, for those not on social media, you inform the community of your activities and projects through the traditional methods of notices in parish newsletters, local newspapers articles and face to face meetings. You first entered the competition in 1961 and since then you have entered almost every year. You have seen a marked improvement in the visual appearance of the village in the intervening years and the competition has encouraged residents to be proud of their village and to work together to make it a better place.

It was nice of you to dedicate the entry for 2023 to the memory of your former chairperson - Marie Neylon. May she RIP.

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

The village is a dispersed rural community with vernacular single, two and some three storey structures in the centre and farmhouses, surrounded by well-kept yards, dotted along the approach roads. The village itself is an ACA and renovation work to all façades must be approved by Clare Co Co so as to retain the beauty of the streetscape. You were awarded a grant under the Clare Co Co Town & Village Paint Scheme 2021/2022 and the photos included in your application show the wonderful work to the facades of buildings as a result of this grant, and which we saw when we visited. You also had work carried out under the Public Area Enhancement Scheme including the installation of new steps at the local community field and the construction of a stone wall. We admired the clear new sign on the gable wall of this building. We also admire the new sign directing us to Laghtagoona Cemetery. We noted the painting of the ESB substation. Have you an artist who could disguise this by painting shrubs on it? We suggest that would be better as it would then fade into the surrounding landscape. Having an information panel about Corofin and the surrounding area is not only good for tourists but also for new residents in your village. Do you know when the Corofin Property Feasibility Study and Streetscape Enhancement Strategy will be available for implementation? We admired the shopfronts of P.Crowley, O'Riain's, Daffy's Bar, and Hair Flair.

We noted some commercial units had been converted to residences, which is good. But we'd love to see the

names being reinstated on the fascia as these are part of the social history of the village and it's a pity to remove them. Compliments to the owner of O'Sullivan for retaining the name.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have a number of communal green spaces along the roads in the village. We admired the one where the corten sign is located telling us of the Burren Discovery Trail and creating new legends. Equally the low planting area at the Communality Centre was quite beautiful along the stone planting bed. We admired the wildflowers at Laghtagoona Cemetery which was in full flower and buzzing with bees and other insects when we visited. Remove the three loose planters and use them elsewhere for impact. The guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible; they should not in themselves attract any notice. There were quite a few planting beds located around the village which looked good. We admired the Cora Finne boat tilted in the rocks so that the floral arrangements can be better seen. The grotto is very beautiful and an important structure in the streetscape, but remove the ivy from the rocks/structure. (See Tidiness and Litter). We advise mulching the grass rather than removing it, as when the grass clippings break down, they release potassium, nitrogen and phosphorous back into the soil. The roadside boundary treatment of Lakeland Service Station was admired – the stone wall and shrubby bed behind, many of the shrubs in flower. The graveyard of Kilvoydane was visited – what wonderful views across the rural landscape and to Lough Atedaun. We admired the various picnic areas that exist around the village – all well built with stone.

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

What a wonderful range of habitats you have! Besides mature trees, stone walls, grasslands, hedgerows, and forests, you also have the Corofin Wetland which is an SPA. Here there is a great variety of waterfowl which you list. In addition, this area is designated as an SAC giving protection to the flora and fauna that exist. We read that part of your Biodiversity Plan is to develop 'a series of marked trails around the circumference of Corofin Village and also to make a marked biodiversity walk linking Ballycullinan Lake to Lake Attedaun and onwards to Lake Inchiquin with a subsequent off-road connection to the Burren Way'. Have you any of these completed? Are they all commenced? We assume you have partnered with experts to undertake these ambitious projects. We see that Scoil Mhuire is working on its 7th Green Flag. We commend the Green School committee for the list of achievements which were included in your application for. Based on your interactions with UCD we see that Pipistrelles have been identified as being present in Corofin. We would assume that there are other species also present. Purchase a bat detector (they're not expensive) and contact Bat Conservation Ireland for information on how to do a bat study. An enjoyable evening's walk around the village and when you become proficient you can organise bat walks. Let us know the varieties of flowers and grasses that grew in the one cut meadow – it sounds like an interesting project. Maybe an area to measure the difference your actions for pollinators have made? Flower-Insect Timed Count (FIT Count) from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (biodiversityireland.ie)

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

We recommend to all committees to try and prevent the generation of waste when carrying out their day-to-day activities. We see that the old pump at the grotto is being used again for fresh drinking water is wonderful and we love that it is now on the Refill Ireland Tap Map – more communities should have this facility. Little by little your street lights are becoming LEDs. A grass mowing machine with a mulcher should be used where possible to trim all green areas as these cut the grass into small clippings which then break down and provide nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus to the grass. We question if you make your own compost for use in your landscaping schemes as this avoids all of the associated packaging and other waste that comes with shop bought fertilisers. Growing your own pollinator friendly plants, harvesting your own seeds or sourcing donations of plants from keen local gardeners is also something you should consider as this also avoids the waste associated with shop bought varieties. The 600lt IBC was noted at the graveyard. Are there more? The planting beds in the school had catmint and a variety of herbs and were being visited by numerous bees. Window boxes painted by the children and with colourful floral displays adorned the school windowsills. The Christmas village lights looked good and we note they are LEDs. We read that two of your volunteers attended the Climate Action Workshop in April 2023 and so we look forward to hearing what was advised for Corofin following this seminar.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Like many communities you took part in the An Taisce National Spring Clean and are joined by volunteers for this event. Participating in this event with volunteers decked out in high-viz Tidy Towns bibs gives a focus to the rest of the community on the problems of litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. Please thank all your volunteers for their work in litter pick-up and especially the children for joining the adults and working hard. On the day we visited Corofin was virtually litter free but weed growth was noticed in a number of areas. Weed growth is a problem due to our climate and it must be tackled on a regular basis. We suggest that the litter pick up volunteers also become weed removal volunteers and ask them to bring a hoe/spade and a brush and 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 noted a lot of ivy growth on various stone structures which should be carefully removed. While ivy is a wonderful for insect life and is acceptable/good on block or 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. Overhead service cables diminish the visual amenity of the streetscape especially where they feature several cables radiating from a single pole; the local engineer should be approached regarding a possible date for ducting starting with the most unsightly poles first. We liked the idea of your ploggers – hopefully their run isn't disrupted too often to pick up litter. We noted the cigarette butt bins as we walked around the village.

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

We were delighted to see that single and two storey houses line the main street along with business and commercial units. Many had been freshly painted, having taken advantage of the Village Paint Scheme, and were well presented giving a very positive impression of the village. The houses along the streets have a great variety of architectural styles which gives additional character to your village. Many had window boxes or hanging baskets with colourful flowers and trailing plants adding to the beauty of the streetscape. The green area at Páirc na hEaglaise was a little unkempt – perhaps this could become a wildflower area? The estate of The Glebe with its great majestic trees was admired. The name of Laghtagoona estate is clear and easily read on approach. Trees are maturing nicely and give a great privacy to the houses along the entrance road. In a few areas around the village, we noted the use of herbicide to control grass growth along kerb lines and around trees – we strongly advocate minimising this practice as it is bad for the environment and the scorched earth and dead vegetation is unsightly.

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

We entered Corofin along the R476 from the south and were met by your clear name sign telling us we were entering An Angler's Paradise. We were delighted to see that the grass was allowed to grow a little and it had daisies and buttercups abounding. What a wonderful display of wildflowers you have along this ditch and with the boat and its floral displays the area certainly gives a very good first impression of your village to the visitor. There are some very pleasant stone surround beds on the entrance roads with neatly trimmed shrubs, many in flowers, and low planting around the edges. We recommend cutting a narrow strip of grass along the approach roads. This form of 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. It also has the benefit of warning the motorists that they are entering a settlement and so reduce speed. The carriageway narrows over the River Fergus and as there is no pedestrian refuge area this must be very dangerous for walkers. Is there a plan to have a pedestrian route along the outside of the bridge as we've seen in many other communities? We admired the photo of the daffodils along the approach road. We see that the proposed West Clare Railway Greenway will pass either through or near Corofin and this will result in amendments to your roads to facilitate the increase in cyclists. Some road surfaces were in a poor condition and the complete road needs to be resurfaced in some instances as previous repairs are breaking up.

Concluding Remarks:

We were delighted to visit your village, one we know quite well, and thoroughly enjoyed our stay as we meandered around taking in the sights. Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition and we look forward to seeing you again next year.

We love the Christmas cake – compliments to the baker/artist!

Thanks to the school Principal Geraldine who told us of the school's wonderful achievements. The Green Flags are proudly displayed.

The photo at the grotto taken in 1958 was interesting Ní bheidh a leithéid arís ann.

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition.