

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cree - An Chrioch** Ref: **925**  
County: **Clare** Mark: **275**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **05/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	38	39
Streetscape & Public Places	80	36	37
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	35	37
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	29	30
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	15	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	29	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	32	32
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>275</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....

You are welcome to the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Thank you for your completed application form which included photos, map, legend and a list of actions under Biodiversity, Streetscape, Sustainability and Tidiness which you will undertake in the next 3-5 years. Put a date on each of these in the application form next year as dates help a group to focus. Your committee of 5 has the help of another 20 volunteers when a project needs additional hands. In addition to the 3 Tús workers, you list 4 agencies/bodies who support you – we assume there are more? You have a Facebook Page (536 followers) and you also use more traditional methods to inform the community - posters, local newspapers, and parish newsletter. What a lovely name for your organisation 'Cree Community Spirit'. You have been in existence for 12 years and for the past 4 years you have entered the Tidy Towns competition. This has resulted in the development of a great sense of togetherness in the community and an increase in pride of place.

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

### 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 with the topography of the village and the great vistas you have across the Clare countryside gives the area its character. Add to these St. Mary's RC church, Cree National School, Cree Community Hall and the beautiful triple-arch hump-back bridge over the river Creagh and we complete the attractive character. Your neat, tidy roads give a very good first impression to the visitor. We see that you have reused recycled plastic wood originally purchased to form a fence in front of recycling bins and which you have now transformed into planters and benches for the village. 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. The turnstile and the railings along the Amenity Park need to be painted.

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

The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and there are many places in Cree where trees would enhance the buildings and streetscape. Trees are known to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. In addition, they provide shade for humans, food for insects and food roosting sites and nesting sites for birds. The roadside margin on the approach road from Doonbeg, with its narrow strip of tidily mown grass along the outer edge, is a great example of how to effectively present a semi-wild habitat showing that the wilderness behind is deliberate. The manager of the Vandeuleur Gardens is certainly able to advise on the suitability of planting and

following his advice you planted new perennial plants and shrubs. We too visited these gardens and were impressed by his knowledge. The green triangular open area on the entrance road from the west (R484) would benefit from a few trees planted in small groups – mountain ash or silver birch. The planting bed looked good but needs a little more colour for a greater impact. We also suggest some tall grasses would look good as their movement would add to the bed. The Amenity Park is a credit to your village – a very peaceful area with planting beds and picnic areas. You have a number of trees which have ash dieback which will need to be removed – another reason to plant new trees. The planters at the church door looked good – we suggest in addition to the tall plants you also add some trailing ones for added impact. Where is the Memorial Garden ..... we looked and didn't spot it and it wasn't indicated on your map. Is it a future project?

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

Hedgerows, long grassed areas, stone walls, trees and the Creegh River and its banks are all wonderful environments for nature and biodiversity which exist in your village and surrounding area. We need to ensure that these are protected and expanded to safeguard our flora and fauna. You have had a Biodiversity Audit from an agent and following this you have reduced mowing in the amenity park. A mowing regime to encourage wildflowers takes some time but the results can be better for biodiversity than sowing wild flower seeds. Next year send in the audit so that we can read it. We also look forward to reading your plans for the protection and expansion of the river banks. Have any of the residents had success with the bird boxes? Include photos next year. The bug hotel was spotted in the amenity park – don't forget you must clean this to get rid of any residue, debris, and old loose, dry materials to prevent fungus and mites from spreading. The murals in the school lean-to shed are very beautiful reflecting your rural location.

### **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. The National School is pro-active in sustainability and we are delighted that the children have a vegetable garden (overgrown when we visited) and also a rain water harvester. The munching lawnmower will be better for the grass as when the chippings break down, they release nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus which are essential nutrients that your grass areas need to stay healthy. We're assuming that the local farmer (mentioned in your application form) no longer collects the grass cuttings? There was a small domestic water butt at the church – get a bigger one or connect three or four domestic ones together. How do you bring this water around the village to water the planters etc? Please commend the National School for their involvement in Picker Pals. The recycled plastic fence has been made into a bench and planters – we commend the men's shed for their assistance to you. Both Cree National School and St. Michael's Community College take part in the Green Schools programme. LED lighting was installed along one road .... will this continue on all village roads?

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

We question if, like many communities in Clare, you took part in the An Taisce National Spring Clean-Up in April? This focuses the attention of a community on the need to be vigilant on litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. As it involves young and old it teaches those taking part to be attentive to their litter. When we visited the centre of the village was virtually litter free but unfortunately weed growth was noticed at kerbs, base of walls and in open gravel areas which gave a slightly unkempt feel to a few areas. The Tús workers take control of the litter in the village. Are any of the villagers involved in litter pickup /weed removal jobs? We see that you 'encourage' them but are they doing it? The recycling bins were relocated which has resulted in less litter being left at them. Village name signs, direction signs and speed signs were all clean and legible and easily read. The timber plank seat in the stone picnic area we assume has rotted – install a new plank so that the picnic area is usable. Some of the black and yellow (and black and white) poles along the roads need to be painted. There are a number of very beautiful stone surround raised planting beds along the roads but cut back the grass on each side so that they are visible in the streetscape – some were almost hidden. Remove the posters (and old cable ties) which are attached to poles – if you remove them immediately it will stop people from installing them.

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

The standard of presentation of individual houses within the village and along the approach roads was generally very good and we applaud the many home owners and occupiers who clearly take pride in their place. Front facades, road frontage, gardens and boundary walls were well presented and neatly maintained in support of your work. You help homeowners who are unable to maintain their premises, which is commendable. We noted the two buildings at the road junction were being renovated/refurbished and due to their prominent location, these will when complete, add to the streetscape. The new building near the bridge and the renovated post office were also noted. The small estate of dormer bungalows, Luí na Gréine, presented well. Many had freshly painted houses and boundary walls with contrasting capping. Gardens were well maintained, some with neatly trimmed grass while other had shrubs and colourful flowers in planting beds. The communal green space, while neat and tidy, is very open and would benefit from trees planted in small coppices and some stone surround planting in areas not required for ball play. Perhaps a few seats could also be added so that children/teenagers and adults can gather and meet.

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

A narrow strip of neatly mown grass is now cut on all approach roads to increase biodiversity on the adjoining banks. We admired the new village name signs and love that the name of the village is picked out using white paint

(an annual job for your team) so that it is noticeable to the oncoming motorists. Don't be tempted to put a planting bed in front of any of these as plants would obscure the signs because they are very low to the ground. Speed warning signs are important as they help in reducing the speed of some motorists ... unfortunately not all obey. The Stop/Yield signs at the bridge work well – we saw motorists obey them and allow traffic to pass. Road surfaces are good along most roads and we were delighted to see that road markings were clear. The yellow and black painted low wall on the secondary access road from the east warns the motorists of potential danger. This paint scheme is also needed on the main bridge – this should be considered an annual job for your volunteers. We were delighted to see that a footpath extends from the village to Cree Community Centre making it safe for pedestrians to access this amenity building.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your village, and we wish to compliment you for the care and attention you give to your local community. Keep up the good work and we hope that this report provides some guidance for your programme next year.

While you identify the projects as new (N) and maintained (M) you fail to number them. 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. This is to help the adjudicators to negotiate their way around your area and see the various projects or locations of projects. As you undertake more projects as a community you will need to identify them clearly so that the adjudicators can find them. Please also continue to include a legend which is very helpful to the adjudicators.

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition.