

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cross - An Chrois** Ref: **1930**
County: **Clare** Mark: **271**
Category: **A** Date(s): **05/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	35	37
Streetscape & Public Places	80	35	37
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	38	40
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	26	27
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	28	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	29	30
TOTAL MARK	550	259	271

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 thank you for your completed application form and map. Your committee of 7 has the help of another 10-15 volunteers when work needs additional hands. It would be good if you had a 3/5 Year Plan as this would give you a focus for your work and would also get the local community even more involved. Having 50 rural groups in Loop Head Together is great and you help one another when called up. You list state agencies, the local shop and bar and other businesses who support you financially and with advice. You have an email address and a Facebook page (232 followers) – we like the posters inviting the community to meet at a specific area in the village to do 'some general tidying, weeding etc.' This is your 7th year entering the Tidy Towns competition which has resulted in the community being focused on coming together to develop new activities and projects that enhance and make the village more appealing and a better place to live. We also love that you consider Tidy Towns activities to be a social outlet and inclusive by nature. Please see Concluding Remarks for advice on filling out the Application Form and producing the map.

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

Located on a small hill in rural west Clare, your village is surrounded by neat farmhouses and well-kept fields. The buildings in the village itself consist, in the main, of single and two storey vernacular structures. Add to these the Digital Hub (the old school) and the RC church of Our Lady of Lourdes to complete the architecture of the village. You were awarded a grant through the Town and Village Paint Scheme and we are delighted to report that you used it well and the village was fresh and welcoming. Window boxes were in full colour and added to the streetscape. The freshly whitewashed galvanised roofed shed looked very presentable. Perhaps paint the roof a dark red ... similar to rust? Remove the bucket with lobelia from the pump so that the pump is more visible. We loved the mangle chopper proudly on display. The white wall of Foley's Bar would be a great location for a mural – something for the future.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The great displays of planting at the cross roads to the east gave a promise of what we were about to experience. Here you maintain stone surround beds of hydrangea and climbing roses. The new planters along the entrance roads looked good and we were delighted to see that you had used a variety of plants including trailing ones. We recommend that you consider additional trailing plant and also tall plants for next year so that the planting rather than the containers takes priority in the streetscape. We must state however that we have a preference for permanent beds – could you put one long stone surround planting bed in this location similar to the ones near the

church? While the planters around the village looked good with colourful plants, we recommend adding trailing plants and tall plants for impact (and to hide the planters themselves). The village lacks trees and while we appreciate that you are probably a windswept village due to your location, we suggest that you add trees along the street and as suggested by last year's adjudicators at the digital hub. The main structural elements in the landscape and one of the main structural elements in a streetscape are trees. Trees are known to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. By planting and caring for trees, you help reduce pollution, improve your surroundings, improve the appearance of your community and increase the value of your property. In addition, they provide shade for humans, food for insects and food roosting sites and nesting sites for birds. We noted the trees in the grounds of the church – some need replacing.

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

The natural stone walls around the village are a great habitat for insects. You also have a great many hedgerows which are wonderful nesting sites for birds. To promote biodiversity, we need to manage habitats in such a way that we provide food and shelter for our fauna and a place to grow and thrive for our flora. We spotted a small well-built bug hotel, which provides a safe nesting area and hibernation place for insects and bees. It is on the wall beside the Digital Hub and water from the eaves will damage it if it's not relocated as there's no rain water pipe here. Don't forget to clean it to keep it free from parasites which kill the insects/bees. Is this the only bug hotel? Equally bird nesting boxes must be cleaned once a year so as to attract nesting birds. You mentioned that you have some but we didn't spot any. The village orchard in the communal space of Rinevalla View was noted – trees are maturing well but keep an eye on ties so that they don't damage the bark of the trees. You also attend talks on native species, biodiversity and sustainable gardening.

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. We loved the idea of the plant swap which you introduced this year and where you used the local hall of Kilbaha to hold the event. Is there a Men's Shed locally? Something you could introduce? The rain water harvester at Cross Digital Hub was seen but there isn't one at the church as noted in your form. There's a bit of a jumble of planters/containers along the streetscape – some should be removed as they really don't add to the area. Are there any solar panels installed in your village – this is something you could assist with. Find out about the grant situation and let the community know. 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. Also check the Tidy Towns website for ideas of projects to undertake for this category.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We are delighted that you took part in the An Taisce annual clean-up in April and also Clean Coasts Beach Clean Up. These events are now well known and are a great way of involving the volunteers in the work of a committee and also focus all on the need to be vigilant regarding litter, fly-tipping and weed growth, and for the coast, in marine debris. When we visited, the village was virtually litter free so compliments to your litter pick-up team. Kerbs at road edges were clean and free from weeds in most areas. Weed growth was noticed at the base of some walls but this was minimal. It is extremely kind of Foley's to install a waste bin outside their premises to support your litter pick-up team. Is it the intention of Clare Co Co to install a waste bin? The recycling bins at the GAA pitch were visited – they need a wash as they are quite dirty. The area around them had a small amount of litter but not too much. Now that you have built a permanent planting bed close by (which was very pleasant) remove the two freestanding pots. Spray gravel areas here and elsewhere in the village with a mixture of vinegar, salt and washing up liquid to remove/suppress weed growth.

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

The standard of presentation of individual houses within the village environs 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. Those with an on-street presence had colourful window boxes or hanging baskets and, in addition to being homes and food for our insects, these flowers and shrubs gave the streetscape an added beauty. The small cul-de-sac of dormer bungalows in the centre of the village, Rinevalla View, was well presented, generally, with well-tended gardens. One had great displays of pollinator friendly flowers and shrubs which were buzzing with insects when we visited. It is great to see that residents have also undertaken the maintenance of the communal open space and we see that here the orchard has been planted. You'll be surprised that this will reach maturity and will produce fruit in a few years.

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

Wide open roads with great views across the west Clare landscape greeted us as we entered Cross from the east on the R487. We admired the townland names displayed at various locations. It would be good if the one with Tullig etc was fixed to the wall. We admired the village name sign with the pictogram of the horse drawn plough referencing back to your rural location. There are some fine stone-built walls and piers recently built around the village – compliments to the stone mason. The stone wall with the grass topped bank along the entrance was well maintained. We were delighted to see that a path extends from the village eastwards making it safe for parents to take their children on a short walk. Some road surfaces are poor with ravelling, edge breakup, and potholes. You have quite a few areas where new concrete footpaths have been installed which looked good. There was

considerable ponding in the grounds of the village hub – a French drain is needed.

Concluding Remarks:

This was our first 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. Below are some recommendations; this is not a criticism of your work but purely to encourage you to improve your application.

Add some photos to your application to let us see activities/projects which take place outside of the adjudication period – nature walks, daffodils along the roadside, Christmas etc. Just insert them into the relevant category – ask a young person to do this if you don't know how to do it.

While you identify the projects as new (N) and maintained (M) you fail to number them. As you undertake more projects as a community you will need to number them so that the adjudicator can find them. These numbers should then be transferred to the map.

We also need you to refer 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.