

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Doonbeg - An Dún Beag** Ref: **67**
County: **Clare** Mark: **354**
Category: **B** Date(s): **06/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	50	52
Streetscape & Public Places	80	47	49
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	49	51
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	41	42
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	36	37
TOTAL MARK	550	341	354

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 which included a map with projects clearly numbered (thank you), photos and Action Plan 2023-2024. We loved the Action Plan which had areas and projects/actions required, and the names of members and volunteers allocated to these projects/actions clearly specified. This will ensure that the work will be undertaken. You are evidently a very hard-working committee of 3 with 15 volunteers who help you when a project needs extra hands, six of these being new to you this year. Well done on recruiting these. You list the state and semi state agencies, along with businesses and community groups who assist you financially or with advice and activities. Your strong link with Doonbeg Community Development has ensured that they too follow the programme and aspirations of Tidy Towns. We were delighted that you have a dedicated email address and Facebook Page. A social media presence ensures you reach a wide audience as can be seen from your 4.2K followers! This is your 46th year entering the Tidy Towns competition which has given you a focus to protect wildlife habitats, to increase biodiversity and to engage in activities and projects which will enhance the village.

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

The village located on both sides of the busy N67 and on both sides of the Doonbeg River is a mix of single and two storey vernacular houses and businesses, with the RC church, Our Lady Assumed into Heaven, Doonbeg Caste, the pier and tower house and the beautiful six-arch bridge as focal points.

Doonmore cemetery was well maintained and the seat outside a nice resting place for those who walk from the village to the pier. Perhaps a few more seats (made by the Men's Shed?) could be installed at scenic locations around the village and at the pier and White Strand area. We noted the monument to shot champion Pat McDonnell. We admired the freshly painted white farm buildings near the White Strand ½ mile sign. The bright yellow painted benches in the various parks add a great splash of colour to their location. The bike repair centre and bike racks were noted. You have some fine flat iron and wrought iron gates in the village and surrounding area which add to the character of the area. The business premises in the village were well presented and many had floral arrangements to highlight their locations. We were delighted to see the absence of gaudy signage which many businesses now install.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You maintain three green spaces around the village which were well-kept and looked good. We commend the volunteers who do this using their own equipment. We loved Lake View Park with the sloping site giving great views across to the castle and along the estuary. The yellow seats give a splash of colour. Equally Riverside Park looked

good with its view back towards the beautiful bridge. We noted the memorial to those who died in the famine. You also have planters, and hanging baskets that are in your care. We admired the colourful mix of pollinator friendly flowers in these with the variety of tall and trailing plants adding extra interest. We noted suckers on some trees around the village which need to be removed. The low hedging in the church grounds along the path to the 1916 memorial needs to be maintained - we recommend that this be kept low. We suggest you examine the location of planters along the streetscape and locate them in areas where they give maximum impact. This might entail grouping a few together. It's good to carry out a tree survey which will inform you of the quality of the trees, particularly now that ash dieback has attacked most of the ash trees in our communities. The work at the Fair Green Sensory Garden had not commenced when we visited and so we are ignoring this space in the adjudication. However, we strongly advise using landscaping materials which are easy to maintain – grass and tarmacadam/concrete for paths. Gravel, pavements, cobble lock etc. are high maintenance and while they look good when newly installed, they require considerable maintenance.

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

The aim of this category is to encourage people to recognise, engage and celebrate the biodiversity and richness of the wildlife habitats in their surroundings. In Doonbeg and the surrounding area you have a great variety of habitats - hedgerows, fields, trees, stone walls, barns, house eaves, the castle, Doonbeg river and estuary and of course your long shoreline with the numerous beaches. The wildlife panel of Doonbeg Bay gives an excellent aerial view of the bay and shows the bird life which has made it their home. Equally the information panels in Lake View Park show the community and visitor of the biodiversity associated with the estuary. Well done on removing some of the invasive species under the guidance of an ecologist. Compliments to Keving Kenny on the photo of the Aurora Borealis taken from Doonbeg Beach – what a show of lights! Is there any activity that you could undertake with the school children? We read the long list of workshops/webcasts attended and it seems a pity not to pass some of this information on to the school and indeed other members of the community. We noticed hedges being cut (June) by a tractor mounted hedge trimmer which is not acceptable under the Wildlife Act.

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

This category has become increasingly important in the Tidy Towns competition as it now has a marks allocation of 55 – the same amount as the key categories of nature and biodiversity, residential streets and housing areas and approach roads, streets and lanes. We saw solar panels on a few houses. This is something you could get information on and so advise the community on applications and grants available. We noted the Community Book Box and see that you post it on your Facebook Page. The tap at the White Strand giving people a chance to wash sand from equipment etc is a welcome addition. We were delighted to see a Slí na Sláinte sign in the middle of the village indicating a circular 8.6km walk – the sign needs to be freshened up. The domestic water butt at the Fair Green was noted. We also noted a larger water harvester in ... is it a Community Garden? What a great idea of the local hotel to run a staff bus; it would be excellent if more commercial premises would embark on this. We opened the Heritage Trail link ... it is excellent. We loved the old photographs and the information provided. Well done all concerned with it.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You didn't mention if you take part in the National Spring Clean Campaign. We recommend the community to become involved as it helps to focus attention on the need to be vigilant with litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. It might even deter those who are fly tipping in the areas you mentioned when they see their neighbours cleaning up after them. Report illegal dumping as soon as it is spotted – that's all you can do. It was a pity to see the graffiti on the wall at the slipway at White Strand. This too should be removed as soon as it's spotted to discourage the artists/vandals. The bottle banks at the White Strand were clean and tidy but the poles of the information panel near the lifeguards' hut need to be painted. We see that you're also involved in the clean-up of the local beaches where flotsam and jetsam is the main problem – that is a problem for all groups with a coastline. You no longer use any pesticides or herbicides, which is commendable. While the village was practically litter free when we visited, we did notice some weed growth around kerbs and at base of walls. You do most of the work on Wednesday evening and Saturday morning so perhaps also walk one of these days every month to weed removal.

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

The houses in the village are a mix of single and two storey vernacular houses with businesses in between which makes for an active village. The surrounding areas boast bungalows or two storey houses set in neatly manicured gardens or farmhouses surrounded by well-maintained farm yards. Houses along the main streets presented well and many had been freshly painted giving a brightness to the streetscape. Some had window boxes, planters or hanging baskets which added colour and also benefited the insects giving them food and shelter. Doonmore house is very impressive on its site above the pier – is it unoccupied? Wouldn't it make a great youth hostel? We visited the housing estates – Dún na Mara, Church Fields, Lake View and also the caravan/mobile home park. The communal open space of Church Field would benefit from trees and we recommend that a few copses be located in areas where ball play is not required – i.e. the corners. We are delighted to read that the residents also want to engage in planting trees. 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. The housing estates are lacking in seats – this should also be considered as not only will the children gather at them but also adults can sit and chat.

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

Wide open roads with great vistas greet us entering Doonbeg. We admired the village name signs telling us we were entering Áit Speisialta. Trim the grass around the base of the walls at the signs to expose them. We also suggest relocating the seat that's on the pier road in front of the sign – move it to a more user-friendly place/ we're not sure how many people would sit there. Trim an edge strip along the grass margin of the entrance roads so that motorists know they are entering a village that's cared for by the community. We note that pavements had been upgraded in some areas with dipped kerbs and rumble strips added. This will make the journey easier for those with buggies, children on bicycles and those using wheelchairs and other mobility vehicles. Road repairs are due to happen – they are needed as the surfaces are ravelling, there are potholes and we noticed edge breakup in some areas. Well done on painting the kerbs and stonework around the planting beds.

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your village, which we visited many times before, so it's great to see the progress made. We were delighted that you referred 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.

In case you haven't seen it, 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.