

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ennistymon - Inish Díomáin** Ref: **69**
County: **Clare** Mark: **337**
Category: **C** Date(s): **23/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	54	56
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	44	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	34	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	35
TOTAL MARK	550	320	337

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 application form which included photos, a map and your 3-5 year plan showing achievements from 2019 until 2023. You have been involved in the TidyTowns competition since 1997 and we hope the comments in the reports have been useful to your community in the intervening years. Your committee of 12 is assisted by a further 30 when projects/activities need more hands. You list state, semi-state, community groups, businesses etc who advise or assist you. We see that you have a website and a Facebook Page (a group page) – both very active with good up-to-date pictures and information. We often advise to get a teenager to be your social media PRO as it'll look good on their C.V. He/she can also fill out the Tidy Towns application form and write articles for the local press. Nice idea to have collection boxes in businesses – every penny counts! Well done for referencing the SDGs in each category of your application.

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

With the mix of traditional single, two and three-storey structures along the main streets and the topography of the town with its river and cascades, Ennistymon is quite unique. To these we add the Cofl church of St Andrew's (now a community hall), the RC church of Our Lady and St. Michael, Ennistymon House (now part of the Falls Hotel), Ennistymon Courthouse (now a museum), the modern Ennistymon Library and the very beautiful seven-arch rubble-stone bridge to complete the architectural merit of your town. We note that you are proud of your architectural streetscape and wish to preserve it. When we visited, we saw some of the beautiful 'Ennistymon Past and Present' photos these for next year's adjudicators. The hand forged gate is beautiful – truthfully, we assumed it would be bigger and missed it twice! We like the challenge that you have to continue with the restoration of these gates. We noticed quite a number of flatiron gates around the town and on the approach roads. Congratulations also on the restoration of the traditional shopfronts – keep up this good work. We also admired the new railings and gates on Church Street. Like most rural Irish towns, you have a few unoccupied and derelict building and we see you are addressing this. All you can do is try to get the owners to maintain them and if there's no response contact Clare Co. Co.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have a great number of green spaces dotted around the town which are accessible to the community. In addition, the walkway beside the cascades is a wonderful amenity area. The old Ennistymon House (the Falls Hotel) has wonderful grounds associated with it – amazing trees with great canopies. We assume some of these are

protected under Clare Co Co Development Plan? We note that you are planting 1000 trees per year ... where are you doing this? What type of trees are you planting? Great work has been done to the Library garden – unfortunately it was closed when we visited but we had a look through the fences to the sides and saw the beautiful planting and of course your shed. The large planting beds on the Square are very beautiful and that they are also seats is a bonus. Generally, we advise planting in the ground and the provision of stone surround planting beds. These are easier to maintain and require less watering and maintenance. We admired the baskets along the stone wall entering from the Ennis side and along the bridge. Sometimes hanging baskets are necessary to give added impact to an area. We hope that you have winter/spring planting in these too? The picnic area on the Lahinch Road was visited. It would be lovely to trim back some of the branches and undergrowth here so as to have a wide view over the river. There's a River life in Ennistymon sign but we can only barely see the river! Is access to the river a possibility? That would be a bonus.

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. We are delighted to read that is exactly what you are doing and that you have been recording, with specialists' help, nesting sites, breeding site, habitats etc and that you aim to share this information in order to protect these areas. You have a great number of photos provided in the application form showing your rich and diverse natural habitats – peacock butterfly newly laid eggs, young caterpillars on nettles along the River Inagh, a male frog awaiting a female for the spawning process in The Glen etc. You have certainly taken advantage of these natural resources and we commend you for expanding your knowledge of them so as to ensure their survival. The Ballymacraven River walk has wonderful habitats and being so close to the town is enjoyed by many. We note that the Inagh Estuary SAC is close to Ennistymon with its five qualifying interests. Have you engaged in a FIT count? Did you become involved in measuring the difference your actions for pollinators have made? Flower-Insect Timed Count (FIT Count) from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (biodiversityireland.ie) is something we'd suggest for your committee.

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. What an achievement for the Falls Hotel to be carbon neutral! They now run on Hydro Powe getting 100% of their electricity from the river when it's in full flow. We saw the recycling machine in the basement of the Supervalu store ... good. We admired the contactless water refill station – this is something that all towns and villages should have. Is there any chance that your four old water hydrants could be connected too? Elsewhere we've seen this has been accomplished. We note that you have planted an additional 18 fruit trees in the old Ennistymon Pleasure Garden. Are there many people in the town who carry out repairs – shoe repairs, dressmakers, electrical repairs, washing machine repairs, etc. Perhaps make out a list and circulate it on your website and social media. It is something that new people to your town won't know and indeed those living there all their lives might also not be aware of. Put the list on your Facebook page and in doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms, hair salons etc. Great work by the violin restorer/craftsman.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Like many communities in Clare, we assume you took part in the An Taisce Annual Clean-Up in April. This focuses the attention of a community on the need to be vigilant on litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. For a town busy with tourists, we are delighted to report that there was only a small amount of litter on the streets when we visited – we commend the litter pick-up team. Unfortunately weed growth was noticed at kerbs, base of walls and in open gravel areas in a few areas which gave them an unkempt feel. You mention that dog fouling is a problem and we suggest that you paint 'clean up after your dog' on the footpaths where dog fouling is most prevalent. We have seen this in other communities and have been told it works better than signage on poles. We admired the recycling facility at the council depot – colour coded holes in the wall with the bins located to the rear.

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

Within the town living over the shop was noticed which we were delighted to see as this leads to an active town day and night. Single, two and three-storey houses line the main streets and these were generally well maintained some with great displays of flowers in window boxes, baskets and planters. It was good to see that the majority of the houses were occupied as vacancy leads to dereliction in a very short space of time. You have some interesting rows of terraces of houses in your town varying in architectural styles which give great character to your streets. The narrow plot sizes are also quite unique. The standard of presentation of individual houses within the residential estates we visited, was generally very good and we congratulate the many home owners and occupiers who evidently take pride in their place and keep their front facades, road frontage, gardens and boundary walls well-presented and neatly maintained. A small number of boundary walls need attention where walls have become weather stained. We see that you are engaged with the residents' associations. Encourage them to grow pollinator friendly flowers. Have a look at the website <https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Garden-Pollinator-Guidelines-2022-WEB.pdf> for ideas for the garden.

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

Situated on the junction of two national roads brings with it large volumes of traffic passing through as we witnessed when we visited. The approach roads had neatly trimmed hedges, with some tree canopy, giving the motorists good visibility of the roads. We entered from the east along the very busy N85 and admired your neatly trimmed narrow margins allowing the area behind to present as a semi-wild habitat. Your town's name signs on the approach

roads were admired. The pictures need replacing and we also recommend low level planting in front of the signs so that we can read what's on the signs. If you wish to have high level planting to draw the motorists' attention then these should be planted to the side. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a long permanent stone surround bed outside the council depot instead of the planters on the gravel? This is something that would make a huge impact on entering the town. The bulb planting (daffodils) photos looked good and we are sure brought positive comments from the community

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Ennistymon and we look forward to a revisit – hopefully soon. Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition. Please commend the volunteers, residents and business owners for their work in making your town a beautiful place to visit. Your success in this competition is a result of your drive, determination and the hard work of the committee and your volunteers.