

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Inch - Inis Beag** Ref: **1001**
County: **Clare** Mark: **227**
Category: **A** Date(s): **09/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	32
Streetscape & Public Places	80	33
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	32
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	22
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	41
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	24
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	23
TOTAL MARK	550	227

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 very welcome to the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. We love when new centres join us and we hope that our reports will help your community to progress. Thank you for your completed application form which included photos, a map, and a three-year plan for your community. Your committee of 10 has the help of another 50 volunteers, which is fantastic for a community of less than 200 people. We are really looking forward to seeing progress in a few years with that level of commitment. We looked for your Facebook page but couldn't find it. Next year give a link so that we can have a peep. It's important to keep a social media account active so remember to post photos, information etc. regularly so as to keep interest alive. For those not on social media you inform the community of your activities in the Parish Notes, Church noticeboard, newspaper articles and a leaflet drop. We're delighted to see that taking part in the TidyTowns competition has brought the community together – this is the true spirit of TidyTowns. Please commend the artist for your map which is very clear and easy for the adjudicators to find the various structures and projects, but the numbers need to be slightly clearer next time. Well done on contacting other groups of similar size to you as this is always helpful when starting out. We suggest you consult the Tidy Towns Handbooks which have been revised. They are available to download from the Tidy Towns website and include plenty of suggestions for suitable projects to consider under the various categories.

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

Located on the busy R474, you are a dispersed rural community with a mix of vernacular single and two-storey buildings and these together with the topography of the village gives the area its character. Your neat, tidy area gives a very good first impression to the visitor. We see Our Lady by the Wayside RC church set high above the surrounding road, Scoil Mhuire Inis Bheag with its very beautiful gable mosaic/feature of a child blowing bubbles and the beautiful five-arch rubble stone bridge over the Inch/Claureen river adding to the architectural merit of the area. The school and church are central to the village. We noted the recently painted school along with its bright red entrance gates and railings and its plaque celebrating the first building of 1858. The small grotto at the church was admired. We noted some flat iron gates along the side roads which are to be celebrated as they were usually made locally.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

As a dispersed rural community, you have no large open green space and we read that you are developing a new green amenity area at Inch bridge and to date you have undertaken scrub clearing, soil enrichment, destoning and planting of trees and wild flowers. We admired the work to date and advise that this will take a while to develop so

have patience and don't be tempted to fill it with 'clutter'. Simplicity in areas such as this is always best. There are trees in abundance along the roads but we recommend that some are planted at the church – possibly a line along the road with an in/out system for the carpark. 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 large playing area behind the school is perfectly located and we note that adjacent to this you will have a community garden which will be run in collaboration with the students. Here you plan to grow plants for community planting schemes and the spin-off will be the education of the children of plant life cycles. We suggest that you also grow vegetables and herbs with them in the garden. Having a walkway around the community pitch will be an excellent amenity for the whole community as truthfully walking along the R474 is dangerous. Funding is available for projects such as this – contact your local Leader office for advice.

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. You have a great number of thick hedgerows, long grassed areas, stone walls, trees and the Inch River and its banks, all of which are wonderful environments for nature and biodiversity. We are delighted that you are undertaking a study of the biodiversity of your village and we look forward to seeing the results in the coming years. The roadside frontage is a great example of how to effectively present a semi-wild habitat in this type of setting with its narrow strip of tidily mown grass along the outer edge to show that the wilderness behind is deliberate. This is an excellent approach as not only does it show the oncoming motorists that they are entering a settlement and so must slow down but also that it is a great feeding, nesting and secure environment for our insects and mammals.

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

This category is one where many communities struggle but it's just about being aware of how we use the resources of the planet so that we cut down on our waste. Tidy towns committees are encouraged to try and prevent the generation of waste when carrying out their day-to-day activities. As a committee starting off, it is recommended that you get the basics right and focus on simple but effective measures. For example, you could 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 recommended as this also avoids the waste associated with shop bought varieties. Consider harvesting rainwater in order to avoid using treated water when maintaining your planters – put a large receptacle on the rainwater pipes of the church? We would also like to hear about what the school is doing to reduce the amount of waste that they are generating. Are they in the Green Schools programme? The mural made from recycled plastic items is very beautiful and together with the seat it's good to show the students that items can have a second use.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Like many community groups you took part in the An Taisce National Spring Clean-up in April 2023. We are delighted that the community involvement exceeded your expectations and having every road in the parish removing litter and fly-tipping resulting in nearly 500kg of litter being collected. Hopefully next year the amount of litter will have reduced as taking part in the clean-up focuses the attention of a community on the need to be vigilant on litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. When we visited the village was virtually litter free so we commend your volunteers. A small amount of weed growth was noticed along the footpath leading from the church to the houses which gave a slightly unkempt feel. Elsewhere the area was weed free so compliments to the litter/weed control team. We noted ivy on some stone walls. While ivy is a wonderful for insect life and is acceptable/good on rendered (plastered) walls it is not acceptable on stone structures as the roots penetrate between the joints in the stones, making the walls unstable leading to their collapse. Natural stone constructions are in themselves great habitats for insect life and also very beautiful in the streetscape.

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 properties in support of your work. Front facades, road frontage, gardens and boundary walls were well presented and neatly maintained. Some had great displays of colourful flowers and shrubs and in some of the gardens specimen trees were noted which added to the streetscape. There are some derelict /unoccupied houses and it would be great to see these being reused. It's always a pity for a community when a property becomes unoccupied as unfortunately dereliction follows quickly.

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

The new Inis Beagh sign is clear, visible and beautiful and notifies the motorists that they are entering a settlement and so to reduce speed. Your beautiful road bridge is very narrow but the yield system seems to work well and approaching drivers give way to whoever is already on the bridge. As stated under Tidiness and Litter Control, ivy should be removed from stone structures and the bridge wing walls are badly in need of this. Not only is removal good for the structure but it would enhance the view of your village entrance seeing the well-built stone wing walls. The road surface was good but we noticed that road markings were almost worn in some location and in need of repainting. Contact your area engineer to arrange this

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your village, and we wish to welcome you and 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.

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition.