

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Killaloe - Cill da Lua** Ref: **73**
County: **Clare** Mark: **283**
Category: **C** Date(s): **12/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	41
Streetscape & Public Places	80	38
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	38
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	30
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	32
TOTAL MARK	550	283

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 after, as you say, a hiatus of nearly 9 years of participating in the programme. We look forward to many more years of your entry into the competition. Thank you for your completed application form, photos, map legend and map. We recommend to all voluntary groups that they prepare a plan with projects, actions and a timeframe under each category so that you have targets. Don't make it too onerous – just add projects and actions which you know are feasible to achieve. You can add partners to this plan who will help with the projects. Ask for advice/ help from the Environmental Officer in Clare Co Co. Your committee of 6, with dedicated tasks, are assisted by 9 volunteers. When the community sees you out and about with your high-viz Tidy Towns vests, and they look at your activities which you post in social media you'll hopefully get a few more who might help, even if just a few times a year. You have an excellent social media presence which will gain credence from the younger members of the town – a dedicated email address, a Facebook Page with 860 followers, and an Instagram account. Don't forget to also put articles in local newspapers, church notices, and posters in local shops publicising your activities and projects. In the past your town benefited from its involvement in Tidy Towns and we have no doubt you will benefit again and the community will take an interest in their town which will result in a sense of togetherness, pride and community spirit. And this is the true spirit of Tidy Towns. We admired your logo on Facebook and Instagram – the bridge and cathedral tower.

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

Vernacular single, two storey and three storey structures, the undulating topography, your street pattern, the thirteen-arch road bridge and the River Shannon go to make up the architectural character of Killaloe. With these we have the imposing St. Flannan's Cofl cathedral, Clarisford Palace, St. Flannan's RC church (the Harry Clarke, stained glass window is beautiful), St Molu's Oratory, the Courthouse (soon to become a community & arts centre), and St Flannan's well with its Sheela-na-gig, all adding to the architectural merit, history and beauty of the town. We love the pedestrian refuges along the bridge which served a very important function when the bridge was two-way! You are an ACA which shows the importance of your historic streetscape. We learnt in our research for this report that Killaloe was a base for Brian Ború! We see that the Killaloe Ballina History Society has installed signage referencing the historical importance of buildings and locations. We admired the simplicity of these signs with black surrounds, a photo and clear descriptions. We're assuming the removal of weed growth from the walls and roof will part of the work of the contractor to St. Flannan's cathedral. We admired the mural on the building opposite the cathedral and the ones on the building with the curved corner. Overhead service cables diminish the visual amenity of your 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.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your long river front is of immense value to the town and we see that you have capitalised on this by the provision of facilities making it a safe environment for all to enjoy. With the by-pass the riverfront will be further opened up as a key amenity area. Tobermurragh Wood & Wetland Park is a beautiful wooded area close to the Pier Head but the scourge of Japanese Knotweed in the nearby Bane Field has put improvement plans on hold. We read that the area was named after Brian Boru's eldest son Murrugh. We liked that a narrow strip of grass is trimmed on each side of the pathway leaving the area beyond to grow wild. Following Clare County Council Tree Design Guide for Towns and Villages we see that you have requested landscaping plans for the town. While you have a considerable number of trees there are areas/streetscapes which would benefit from more. Do a survey of the town and identify where trees could be planted. 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. Only plant trees suitable for an urban setting on the streetscape. The freshly painted white bollards and black timber car barriers at Between the Waters added to the landscaping of this area. We loved the lock area with historical equipment painted red. Green areas are being nicely managed for both visual amenity and biodiversity within Killaloe. Flower displays are colourful and have trailing and tall grasses and looked good along the streetscape. We admired that you made clusters of the planters so as to give maximum impact. We have no doubt that they are pollinator friendly given the level of awareness of the importance of biodiversity within the town.

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

Stone walls, trees, hedgerows, forests and the great banks of the River Shannon give the town a great variety of habitats for insects, mammals and we read a wonderful colony of Daubenton bats! Truthfully, we thought they only lived under bridges or in holes in trees near a river/water course so we've learnt something new. It will be important not to disturb this colony when you begin your bat walk. Do you take part in the Daubenton bat survey? We also read that you have four different varieties of bats in a bat house in the 30-acre Clarisford park – wonderful. You had a talk on the Clare swift survey of 2020. Swift nesting sites are in decline so if you haven't noticed swifts in your area, we recommend putting up swift boxes on the community buildings. These are easy to install and very important in our towns which, as we've said, now have few locations for the swifts to nest. Contact www.birdwatchireland.ie or www.swiftconservation.org for advice on their installation and maintenance.

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

This is a category where many TidyTowns struggle but remember it's just about being aware of how we use the resources of the planet so that we cut down on our waste. We see you are registered as a Sustainable Energy Community but you now must undertake doing just that. We see that St. Anne's Community College have entered into the An Taisce Green Schools programme and will be awarded their first green flag this year. 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 planting beds. This is a simple process which truthfully most householders should be doing. You however will need larger rainwater harvesters so perhaps add one to the new community hall/arts centre. Using waste or surplus products (like timber) to make planters are other items like bird boxes and seating benches is also encouraged. Needless to say, avoid chemically based pesticides in favour of weeding by hand or naturally based alternatives. We admired the guided kayaking tours – but we didn't have time to participate. The bike repair stand was noted. We admired the planting beds in the Mercy Convent Girls School – well done to the pupils and teachers. We visited the Community Garden – great work to be seen too.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We are delighted to see that you took part in the An Taisce National Spring Clean as this focuses the whole community on the need for vigilance with regards to litter, fly-tipping and weed control. When we visited Killaloe was practically litter free but weed growth was noticed in a few areas giving a slightly unkempt feel to these. Add some litter bins in areas where people sit to help them to get rid of takeaway cups, water bottles etc. You have a designated day for your volunteers to litter pick – please ask them to also bring a spade/hoe and to also remove weeds. We suggest that in the estates you put up a sign stating that you'll be removing weeds and litter picking in that area. This might encourage volunteers who wouldn't join you on a general clean-up but are happy to help in their locality. Put it up a few days in advance to give the residents some notice. With regards to poster etc we recommend that you request Clare Co Co to install 2.4m x 2.4m Community Notice Boards board, painted black, on the main entrance roads to the town. All community posters are restricted to these boards and then all 'illegal' posters which are attached to posts, fences etc around the town are removed as soon as they are noticed. What a great gesture by My Next Adventure staff to do a daily litter pick during the summer months at Between the Waters. Congratulations to the students who spoke at the 'Neat Streets' conference in 2022. The Pick-a-Patch initiative is a great idea and community groups and individuals take responsibility for their 'patch'.

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

The centre of Killaloe is very special with its steep narrow streets with vernacular houses sitting side by side commercial properties. The standard of presentation of individual houses along the streets, on the approach roads and in the residential estates we visited was generally very good and we applaud the many home owners and occupiers who clearly take pride in their place and keep their front facades, road frontage, gardens and boundary walls well presented and neatly maintained in support of your work. Colourful window boxes and hanging baskets were seen along the narrow streets. We noticed that some commercial units have been converted to residences – we encourage you to ask those who have removed the shop name to reinstate it, as this is part of the social history of your town and it's a pity to lose it. We admired the row of house on St. Flannan's Road – some with flat iron gates set into the boundary wall. The name of Arda na Deirge would stand out better if it was painted in white paint. We know that this will then become an annual job but it will be worth it. A small number of boundary walls in some of the estates need attention where walls have become weather stained. Don't forget to encourage the residents to grow pollinator-friendly flowers. Have a look at the National Biodiversity data Centre website <https://biodiversityireland.ie/website> and <https://biodiversityireland.ie/publications/> for ideas for individual gardens and for communal spaces. Killaloe Childrens' Playground was visited and the upgraded surface noticed. You have received funding for further upgrading works.

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

Entering from the east we see Killaloe nestled on the banks of the River Shannon with the cathedral and its tower dominating the view. The new bridge will be a wonderful asset to Killaloe and Ballina with through traffic which uses the R496 diverted south, and so the towns will become peaceful and pleasant and safe places to visit. The pedestrian bridge giving access across the canal and onto the Killaloe/Ballina bridge is quite a beautiful feature. Footpaths are quite narrow along your streetscape – but perhaps when the town has its by-pass this can be examined to make it more pleasant for the pedestrian. We walked along some of your laneways which give great linkages in the town for pedestrians. You have a number of new footpaths in the town and we noted the dropped kerbs (and rumble strips), to give ease of access to those with mobility issues and those pushing buggies. The new, attractive, tree lined footpath along the avenue to Clarisford Park will make this pedestrian route safer.

Concluding Remarks:

We were delighted to be asked to adjudicate your town as it's one we know quite well, having visited many times as tourists. Keep up the good work and we look forward to seeing you again next year. We see Anthony Trollope had a 'temporary home' in Palliser House while he worked in Ireland.

In terms of your Tidy Town's application form we request that applicants number their projects as, new projects (N), or improved/maintained projects (M) and all 'future' projects should only be included in your 5-Year Plan and NOT in the Application Form. These projects can be undertaken by you or others – all can be included as you can be a partner to another organisation. 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 town and see the various projects or locations of projects. We wish to state that this is not a criticism of your work but to explain to you that as adjudicators we rely on a clear application form and accompanying map to inform us of your projects and make our visit rewarding. A legend, similar to that which you submitted, is also required.

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition.