

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilmihil - Cill Mhichíl**

Ref: **75**

County: **Clare**

Mark: **325**

Category: **B**

Date(s): **08/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	43	44
Streetscape & Public Places	80	44	45
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	48	50
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	30	32
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	22	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	35
TOTAL MARK	550	313	325

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 entry form, map, photos of various activities and events, Biodiversity Plan and your Three-Year Action Plan 2022-2025. It's always good to have plans in place as they target the work to be undertaken. You have an email address and a Facebook page with 456 followers and for those not on social media you communicate your events and projects via the parish newsletter. You are a committee of 10 and we read that you have the help of Kilmihil Community Employment Group in addition to your wonderful volunteers. You list the various state, semi-state and local community groups and business who help you financially or with advice. We welcome you to the Tidy Towns competition – this being your 20th year to enter the competition. In the intervening years you have seen the community spirit being strengthened and the village appearance improving which has encouraged new people to take up residence and grow your village.

Please see Concluding Remarks for advice on filling out the Application Form and producing the map.

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

Your neat, tidy streets give a very good first impression to the visitor. There are some fine structures in and close to the village – the catholic church, a public library, a secondary school (due to be extended) and a national school. These, together with the vernacular single and two storey residential, business and adjacent farm properties, and the undulating winding streets gives Kilmihil its attractive architectural character. Like many rural towns in Ireland, you have some derelict buildings which detract from the streetscape but we see that you are trying to resolve this problem. All you can do is contact Clare Co Co who can issue a Derelict Sites Notice to the owner. St Michael's Shrine is very imposing in the centre of the village. The graveyards too are impressive. We particularly loved the old one with the large number of mausolea set in rows. We read that some seating was repainted in addition to the community centre. Next the structures around St. Michael's Shrine will need to be repainted – the yellow and white paint is peeling in some of the structures. We are delighted that you have made contact with the area engineer with regards to the overhead wiring as this detracts from the streetscape. Keep up with this request as the village needs the work undertaken to improve the streetscape. We admired that where commercial premises have been converted into residential units, the shop names have been retained e.g Clancy. Perhaps others might reinstate the shop names so that the historical connection can be retained.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The People's Park is as you say 'going from strength to strength'. You now have an all-weather pitch which is used by local clubs and those from neighbouring villages. We noted the trees planted – some need attention/ to be

replaced. The new planting bed opposite Keatings was in full flower and we commend you on the variety of the planting. In addition to being pollinator friendly and having colour, we love to see height and movement in planting beds and you have achieved that. You have many areas where you maintain planting beds and in addition you maintain the rose beds and hanging baskets. Check the stone surrounds of all of the planting beds as some need rebuilding. We felt however that there was a lack of trees along the village streets. 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. Do a survey of your streets and see where they could be added – buildouts can be constructed if needed. We admired the Fair Green area with the neatly mown grass, rose beds and trees.

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. Stone walls, hedgerows, pollinator beds, grass and trees – all natural habitats and food sources for our wildlife friends. We are delighted to read that you are concentrating on sowing perennial pollinator friendly plants and flowers. We love the idea of the insect hunt by the school children which resulted with them painting pictures of those they discovered. The school is involved in the Green Schools programme – are you involved with them in this? The peaceful Knockalough Lake, with its seating area overlooking the Crannog, is a wonderful area for biodiversity. Natural habitats around the lake might be a project for the local national school that you could lead. We recommend that grass areas in the playground, which are not required for ball play, be allowed to grow with paths cut through so that small children can visit a 'maze'. Trees in the People's Park need attention – some need to be staked to assist them to grow straight, others need suckers removed and others appear to be dead and need to be replaced. We see from your Biodiversity Plan that you did not complete the actions in the Carbon Store checklist assigned for 2022. Will you continue with this plan or is it now obsolete?

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

This is a category where many communities struggle but it is just about being aware of how we use the resources of the planet so that we cut down on our waste. We must tackle the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. Educating both young and old in Sustainability – doing more with less is crucial so that we advance our knowledge of how we use the resources of the planet in order to cut down on our waste. We read that the Ladies Football club have a used clothes collection day – maybe suggest they have a 'Clothes Recycling' day next year where donated clothes are resold locally thus cutting down on waste. The 'In my Shoes' initiative is very worthwhile. We read that you grow quite a number of your flowers from seed and that you are now moving from annuals to perennials which will reduce the amount of unnecessary work for you, which is commendable. The polytunnel and vegetable area at the People's Park is impressive we're assuming this is a community growing area and that individuals register for plots? Tell us more about this Community Garden next year. We note a few houses with solar panels .. this is something you might investigate and assist homeowners with their application for grant aid.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Like many communities in Clare, you took part in the An Taisce Spring Clean-Up – we commend the community for this as it focuses the attention of the villagers on the need to be vigilant on litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. The village was neat and tidy with very little litter on the day we visited so please congratulate your litter pick up team. There was however some weed growth at kerbs, base of walls and in open gravel areas in most areas which gave a slightly unkempt feel. Weeds only need attention ever month or so during the growing season – a hoe/ spade and a wire brush for those along footpaths and kerbs and the gravel areas can be sprayed with organic weed killer or a mix of vinegar, salt and washing up liquid. We are delighted to see that your primary school registers each year for the National "An Taisce" village clean up. We also recommend that you trim back the roses at the Slán sign – the letters in the sign should be painted white to make them stand out. The plastic under the stones in quite a number of the planting beds was visible and needs your attention – trim it back and/or add more stone. The Kilmihil and 50km sign as we approached from the east were dirty – keep street signs and information signs clean. The timbers in the seat at the Fair Green are missing and need to be replaced. Perhaps add a few more seats in this concrete bed area as it's quite bare. The seat in the church grounds also need to be repainted.

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

The residential properties along the village are a mix of single and two storey vernacular houses while those on the outskirts are modern bungalows or two storey houses set in large sites. In general, houses are well maintained. Those along the street have clean/freshly painted walls and a few had window boxes which added colour and beauty to the streetscape – we particularly noted the green and white properties on the corner. The houses on the outskirts were well maintained and had great displays of colourful flowers and shrubs. We visited a few of the housing estates and found that most of the houses were well maintained by the residents. Some had been freshly painted and gardens had flowers, shrubs and some specimen trees were noted in some gardens which gave an air of opulence to the area. We were delighted to see that buttercups and clover were growing in the grass in some of the communal green spaces e.g St Michael's Place. The Meadow was very well maintained and we loved the planted areas, trees and mural of the countryside. Road markings here need repainting. We noted a painted pedestrian crossing at a parking bay – not an ideal location!

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

The road from the east is well marked and hedgerows neatly trimmed giving the motorist good visibility. A tarmac pavement extends to the 80km sign giving residents living on the outskirts a safe passage into the village centre. While new pavements have been installed in a number of locations this needs to be continued as broken/crumbling pavements were noticed in a few locations. We are delighted to see that the new pavements are concrete and not cobble lock which our engineers have previously installed and which allow for weed growth between the pavements – a difficult job for any community to keep weed free. Repairs to the tarmac pavement near the Fair Green is required. Road surfaces are very poor – ravelling, edge breakup and numerous potholes. Another job for your area engineer. In addition, road markings are worn in numerous locations making exits from side roads a safety issue – this too needs to be addressed.

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your village – our first.

In terms of your Tidy Town's application form you will have seen that we requested that applicants would number their projects as, new projects (N1, N2, N3 etc), or improved/maintained projects (M1, M2, M3 etc) and all 'future' projects should only be included in your 3-Year Plan and NOT in the Application Form. 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. A legend should be added giving the number and a short description of each project identified on the map. This is to help the adjudicators to negotiate their way around your village and see the various projects or locations of projects. 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.

We also recommend that the photos be inserted into the relevant category in the form ... ask a young person to help. We listened to the poem 'Knockalough Lake' very nice. Next year give a link to this in your form.

We need you to make reference 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.