

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kilmurry - Cill Mhuire na nGall** Ref: **76**
County: **Clare** Mark: **282**
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	41	43
Streetscape & Public Places	80	34	36
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	30	31
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	25	26
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	17	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	46	48
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	40	41
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	36	37
TOTAL MARK	550	269	282

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. Thank you for your completed application form which included photographs. We also received a map and a 3 Year Plan. In your 3 Year Plan we read that the entry form can be a little overwhelming, which is a pity. We suggest that you get a young person to help with this aspect of your work. This can be their contribution to your committee – the PRO of Kilmurray Tidy Towns (it'll look good on a C.V. later in life!). We are delighted to see you are active social media with a dedicated email address and a Facebook Page with over 330 followers – another job for your PRO. You are a committee of 8 and have 8-10 volunteers who help you when needed. You list state and semi-state organisations and agencies, businesses and community groups who support your work financially or with advice and help. We are delighted to read that you are in communication with other TidyTowns groups which encourages an exchange of ideas and skills. This is your 8th year entering the competition and participation has resulted in the visual improvement of the village due to the projects undertaken. It has also resulted in residents taking an interest in their village, which has increased a great sense of community spirit, togetherness and pride. This is the true spirit of Tidy Towns.

See Concluding Remarks for advice on filling out the Tidy Towns application form and producing a map.

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

Vernacular single and two storey structures interspersed with more modern structures make up the Kilmurray streetscape. St. Mary's RC church, Kilmurray National School and the wonderful Ballymulcashel Castle sitting proudly on the edge of the road, add to the architectural merit of your village. What a wonderful gesture of Beckam Coulter workers to volunteer their labour which you co-ordinated for a range of improvements at the National School. You list the works carried out including cleaning gutters, painting gates, creating an outdoor class room area, in addition to planting, weeding and removal of dead bushes etc. The Historical walk sounds interesting – will you make a brochure of this so that others can enjoy it? We admired the village pump and its newly made flat iron gate and railing. We also admired the simplicity of grotto and we were delighted you weren't tempted to 'beautify' either the pump or the grotto with the addition of pots with flowers. Sometimes simplicity wins, as is the case here. We noted repairs to stone walls – compliments to the owners and to the workmen. We loved the mural along the school walls with the native and exotic animals, plants and fish.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have great tracts of green spaces along some of the roads making it very pleasant for walkers.

The landscaped area at the junction of the R462 and the L7006 was admired – but maybe make the forge more visible by cutting back some of the planting. There are some very pleasant grass margins, some lined with mature trees, which give a natural appearance and are aesthetically pleasing. You have a great number and variety of trees around the village. The main structural elements in the landscape and one of the main structural elements in a streetscape are trees. Trees have a positive effect on our wellbeing. In addition, they help reduce pollution, improve the appearance of a locality and increase the value of property. They also provide shade for humans, food for insects and food roosting sites and nesting sites for birds. So, a win win for all! You are now growing trees in pots which were given to you during Nation Tree Week – have patience they will be ready for planting out in a few years.

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

You have a Junior Tidy Towns committee which this year included pupils from 3rd and 4th class and you list the activities they have undertaken – please commend them. It's great that the older students are involved in the Gaisce programme and the work they undertake with you will be memorable for them. We recommend that you examine the grass cutting regime in the village, including entrance roads and communal spaces in estates. We feel that there are many areas which would benefit from allowing grass to grow and only neatly trim a narrow strip to show that the area is managed and the long grass behind is deliberate. While we note that you no longer use chemicals to remove grass/weeds unfortunately your message hasn't filtered to the whole community... something for your Facebook page. You mention swift conservation but failed to indicate where there are nests or swift boxes. Are Skeheen Lough and Castle Lake (with its crannog) accessible to the public?

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

This is one of the categories in the Tidy Towns competition where communities struggle but we are delighted to see that you have a long list of activities/projects identified under this category.

The Montessori school is part of your associates and these children planted vegetables and when ripe harvested them. This must have been an exciting time for the parents as well as the children. The local reed beds are noted – the gates were locked so we couldn't inspect the area unfortunately. We were amazed that 90% of the respondents to your survey used bleach – the power of tv advertising! Let us know about the awareness seminar held in May. Hopefully you had a good attendance and now those who used bleach have changed their products to environmentally friendly products. We loved the idea of the pop-up-shop selling 'seconds' in wool garments. Do you know if many householders have installed rain water harvesters/butts? We see that you collect coffee grinds and apple peelings from the local coffee shop and local bakery respectively to add to your compost. The pigs unfortunately weren't at home in the garden on the day we visited. Harvesting your flower seeds is excellent as not only does it save money but also saves on the waste associated with shop bought plants. We saw the irrigation system in the poly tunnel – impressive! The bark mulch walkway around the school grounds was admired.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Like many communities in Clare, you took part in the An Taisce National Spring Clean-Up and had 25 volunteers on the day. This is wonderful as it focuses the attention of a community on the need to be vigilant on litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. It's disappointing to read that people still carry out fly-tipping and that many bags of rubbish were pulled out of ditches and the sides of roads. This will continue until rubbish removal is free and we all have a charge levied against our houses. When we visited, the village was practically litter free but, unfortunately weed growth was noticed at kerbs, base of walls and in some open gravel areas in which gave a slightly unkempt feel. We know that it is difficult to keep weed growth under control and we appreciate the work you and your volunteers do. We are delighted to read that you no longer use harmful chemicals to remove weed growth. We suggest that the litter pick up volunteers also become weed removal volunteers and ask them to bring a hoe or spade and to also remove weed growth. The gravel areas can be sprayed with organic weed killer or a mix of vinegar, salt and washing up liquid. Trim the ivy from the walls and from the sign around the village pump so that it is free to clearly admire. Remove posters etc attached to poles – if you remove them, it will become known that they are unacceptable.

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

The original village housing is quite small with farm houses and yards in the immediate hinterland. Due to your close proximity to Ennis, Kilmurray has seen a number of one-off houses set on large plots of land along the entrance roads and also a large housing estate of detached houses. Many houses had been recently painted along with their boundary walls and presented well. Gardens had neatly tended lawns, and colourful flowers and shrubs, many of which were pollinator friendly. Many residents had specimen evergreen trees in their gardens which gave a great impact to the estate. We admired the low name sign of Ballymulcashel estate with the flowers in front adding to its beauty. The trees along the entrance road to the estate are maturing nicely and will be very pleasant in a few years' time, giving great shade to humans and roosting and nesting site for birds.

The communal open space in this estate is quite bare and would benefit considerably from the planting of coppices of trees. These to be located in areas not required for ball play. Perhaps a seating area could also be included where residents can meet and chat. This would be particularly good meeting place for young people to socialise.

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

Approach roads had good visibility with trimmed hedgerows and grass margins making it safe for the motorists. We admired that some footpaths extend to the houses on the outskirts of the village making it safe for pedestrians to access the village amenities. It would be good to see this continued so that the residents of all estates have safe access on foot to the village. The sign showing that you are twinned with Nort-Sur-Erdre in the Loire Atlantic is

proudly displayed. We admired the low-level colourful planting beds at the village name signs. The grass margins were neatly trimmed. We noted a few areas where new pavements had been installed – was this in association with the ESB works and street lighting?

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your village and seeing the work undertaken by you and your volunteers. Keep up the good work.

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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 3/5-Year Plan and NOT in the Application Form. 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 village 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.

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition.