

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Lahinch - An Leacht** Ref: **80**
County: **Clare** Mark: **263**
Category: **B** Date(s): **23/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	43	44
Streetscape & Public Places	80	43	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	33	34
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	23	23
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	13	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	48	49
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	26	27
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	28	29
TOTAL MARK	550	257	263

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, photos and PowerPoint survey study. Is this the same survey referred to in last year's TidyTowns adjudicators' report? Now that you've undertaken the survey, we encourage you to prepare a Five-Year Plan with projects under each category in the application form and a timeframe for each project so that you have targets to be met. Don't make it too onerous, one or two projects/activities under each category is sufficient. While it is helpful to get professional advice to prepare a plan, it is important that the community has ownership of it and is familiar with the various action plans that it will contain. Just list what you know is feasible to achieve. You can add partners to this plan who will help with the projects. Ask for advice/help from the Environmental Officer/Heritage Officer in Clare Co Co. Once again, this year, you have submitted a blank application form – please put in at least one or two projects in each category as otherwise it is next to impossible to give additional marks. Like last year's adjudicators we marked on what we saw as we visited the various areas of the town.

We suggest that you ask a young person to get involved in the committee and undertake the job of PRO. They can fill out the application form, open social media platforms, put notes in the local newspaper (perhaps written by another committee member) etc etc. This will look good on their CV – PRO of Lahinch Tidy Towns Committee. Please see Concluding Remarks for advice on filling out the Application Form and producing the map.

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

Lahinch consists of vernacular single, two and three storey structures with wide vast views across the flat countryside along the entrance roads. Your built environment has a great variety of architectural styles which give character to your village. The main streets have residential properties interspersed with commercial units which ensures vibrancy in your village day and night. As a holiday village there are numerous mobile home/caravan establishments and visitors enjoy the services which the local community offer. Overhead service cables diminish the visual amenity of the 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 unsightliest poles first.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

While you don't have many green spaces you have a wonderful public coastline space which is enjoyed by the community and visitors alike. There are however pockets of unused land within the village so we suggest you approach Clare Co Co with the aspiration of making some pocket parks for the enjoyment of the community. The main structural elements in the landscape and one of the main structural elements in a streetscape are trees and

there are many places in Lahinch where trees would enhance the buildings and streetscape. Trees are known to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. While your coastal environment is harsh, a good place to start to see what trees could be planted is to look and see what trees presently survive locally. In addition, Sycamore tends to grow in poor soils and harsh conditions. Also, as suggested by numerous adjudicators, enter into discussions with the Environmental Awareness Officer of Clare County Council for further advice.

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

We have no doubt that having stone walls, hedgerows, trees and a spectacular coastline in your locality you have habitats for a great number of insects, mammals, birds etc. You now need to tell us about these and any measures that have been taken by you or your partners to preserve or enhance these habitats. 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. Knowledge of your area and promoting this knowledge to the local population and passing visitors are the key components of this category. This could be done by installing information panels in some central location in the village – perhaps a poster on a community noticeboard. Have you a Ring Walk around Lahinch or could you establish one? This is an excellent project and it not only gets people out walking but also helps to develop an interest in the locality.

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. As a recently formed committee, 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. Using waste or surplus products (like timber) to make planters are other items like bird boxes and seating benches is also encouraged. Avoiding chemically based pesticides in favour of weeding by hand or naturally based alternatives should also be considered. Undertaking all of these actions will enable you to avoid generating waste in the first place and allow you to lead by example in your community.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Did you, like many communities in Clare, take part in the all-Ireland An Taisce Clean-up in April? We strongly recommend that you become involved in this as it focuses the attention of a community on the need to be vigilant on litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. When we visited the centre of the village was virtually litter free but as we went towards the outskirts, we noted quite an amount along green areas and along road edges. Unfortunately weed growth was also noticed at kerbs, base of walls and in open gravel areas in most areas which gave an unkempt feel. We suggest that the litter pick up volunteers also become weed removal volunteers and ask them to bring a hoe or wire brush 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. We loved the 'bag it, bin it' notices on the pavements – they need to be renewed. The metal railings along the sea front needs to be cleaned /repainted. The blue metal bins along the promenade are unsightly and should be removed. Big Belly bins are probably needed for your busy tourist season. We noted a number of sandwich boards along the street which are unpleasant for the visually impaired.

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

There are a number of residential estates in Lahinch and we visited some. Generally, homeowners kept their properties well and many had been freshly painted and looked well. Those with gardens were neatly tended, had floral displays and some had specimen trees for added effect. A small number of boundary walls need attention where walls have become weather stained. Some estates would benefit from tree planting in the communal spaces e.g Greenfield Park, Station Road, An Cregg Ard, etc. While we appreciate that you are a windswept village look around and see what trees survive in your locality and plant these. As stated previously, Sycamore tends to be a wind resistant tree and grows on very poor soil. But whatever you plant will need staking and attention – so be prepared to work at these.

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

The large stone Welcome to Lahinch name sign is very beautiful but don't plant flowers etc in front which hide the name. Having a footpath extend out the N67 as far as Ennistymon is wonderful so as to make it safe for pedestrians to walk along this busy road - well done Clare Co Co. There are very ugly large bounders and empty timber planting troughs at the beginning of Station Road from the N67. These should be removed and a tight row of trees planted to secure this area. Road surfaces around the village were good and road markings clear for both motorists and pedestrians. We liked the painted yellow kerbs in the centre of the village making their locations distinct. Many kerbs are cracked and in need of repair/replacing – do a survey and contact the area engineer.

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your village/town which we have visited on numerous occasions in the past, but this time with a more critical eye as an adjudicator.

In terms of your Tidy Town's application form you will have seen that we request applicants number their projects as, new projects (N), or improved/maintained projects (M) and all 'future' projects should only be included in a

5-Year Plan and NOT in the Application Form. 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. As stated above ask a young person to help you do this. Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition.