

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Quin - Cuinche** Ref: **85**
County: **Clare** Mark: **365**
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	49	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	48	50
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	51	54
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	35	36
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	72	74
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	37	39
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	40
TOTAL MARK	550	350	365

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 welcome to the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition and we thank you for your application form which included photographs and a map. You also forwarded your 24-page Three Year Plan with Actions/Projects under each of the 8 categories in the Tidy Towns competition and we wish you the best of luck as you embark on these. Your committee of 10 has an additional 55 who help when needed – it's great that you have so many willing to assist you. You have a long list of state and semi-state agencies, community groups, individuals and businesses who help you. We are delighted to see that you have a dedicated email address and also an active Facebook page which, we see, has 1K followers. You also use the traditional methods of informing the community of your activities for those not on social media - parish newsletters, meetings and newspaper notices. The Gaisce award is a great idea – well done. Quin Village Tidy Towns has existed for over 40 years and in the intervening time the village has increased in size and the residents see the benefit of the competition with a sense of pride of place evident amongst all.

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

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

Your built environment has a great variety of architectural styles which gives character to your village. Single and two-storey vernacular buildings sit side by side more modern interventions. Add to these the beautiful triple-arch hump-back road bridge over the River Rine with the adjoining cut stone steps descending into the river, St. Mary's RC church, St. Fineen's Parochial Hall and Quin National School to complete the architectural merit of the village. You also have considerable archaeological remains in Quin, amongst them Quin Franciscan Friary and St. Finghin's church and we read, elsewhere, that the remains of a school which was attached to the Friary also exist. We were disappointed to read of the decline in the businesses etc in the village over the past few years – this is sad news for any village. As a result, like many rural villages and towns in Ireland, you have dereliction which detracts from the streetscape and we see that you are trying to resolve this problem. We commend you on the work you have done with the house opposite the Community Centre. The overgrown planting was cleared and the building painted - it looked fresh and was very presentable with the murals in the windows. The fountain and picnic area will be a great addition to the village and we look forward to seeing it on a return visit. You have some fine flat iron and wrought iron gates in the village and surrounding area which add to the character of the village and we see that the ones to the graveyard were repaired. The ER post box was also noticed as were your Tidy Towns awards.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The two largest green areas in the centre of the village are managed by others – a farmer and the OPW. We walked through the space managed by the OPW – it's very pleasant. Your volunteers have taken responsibility for individual green areas and planting beds ensuring that all are maintained. You have a number of stone surround planting beds with great varieties of flowers and shrubs which you manage for both visual amenity and biodiversity. We read that you have a sub-committee who takes charge of this and we commend the work as most were extremely well presented. We are delighted to read that you plant for all seasons and that you had over 1,000 tulip bulbs which flowered throughout Easter in addition to primroses, daffodils, crocuses and snowdrops. Hanging baskets, window boxes and planters adorned the village streetscape and gave a great display of colour and were buzzing with bees and other insects when we visited. The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and there are many places in Quin where trees would enhance the buildings and streetscape - particularly along the wide R469. 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.

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

You have a great number of stone walls, high hedgerows, mature trees and grasslands in and around the village and also the banks of the river, all of which are wild natural habitats of value. We see that you have secured funding from The Community Foundation for Ireland to carry out a comprehensive biodiversity survey and biodiversity plan. We look forward to this in next year's submission. We admired the painted stones with thoughtful words. We also look forward to your Community Garden which the sign tells us will be commenced on June 12th 2023. We looked for swift boxes around the town – are there any? These are easy to install and very important in our towns which 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:

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 6th class children planted a variety of vegetables in addition to flowers. The school is part of the Green Schools programme and we commend you for assisting the teachers and pupils in this. You have a 'Take a Book, Leave a Book' facility which is well used – Quin little Library. You use only peat free compost but do you make your own compost? We admire the 'Grow and Share' initiative as this is not only more economical than buying new flowers/plants, it also avoids the waste associated with shop bought varieties. The painted handprints on the Bring banks are a reminder to the community of their responsibility to future generations. We recommend that you actively encourage the community to try and prevent the generation of waste when carrying out their day-to-day activities.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We see that you were ahead of most communities in that you took the opportunity to clean up all approach roads in early January – well done. This focused the attention of the community on the vast amounts of litter and fly tipping that occurred and showed them that they need to be vigilant on litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. When we visited the centre of the village was virtually litter free. Some weed growth was noticed kerbs, base of walls and in open gravel areas which gave a slightly unkempt feel to that area. But generally, weed growth was well controlled. We love the idea of the Gaisce connection with the youth and it's a win win for the village and for the students. Perhaps present them with a certificate at a social occasion where the press and local elected representatives are invited? The Bruscar/Litter bin at the R469/L3148 junction is very rusty at the base and some street poles with finger signs need painting. Ivy is encroaching on some of your stone walls and on the bridge. While ivy is a wonderful habitat for insect life it should be removed from natural stone walls, bridges, etc as the roots cause damage to these structures. Natural stone constructions are in themselves great habitats for insect life and also very beautiful in the streetscape. The bring banks had fly-tipping behind the bins – close off this access point to deter this.

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

Vernacular single and two storey houses line the main street and many of these had been freshly painted/cleaned and presented well. Those on the street had floral displays in hanging baskets, window boxes and/or planters which added to the beauty of the streetscape. Your proximity to Ennis has resulted in a number of housing estates being built in recent years. We visited a number of these – Dún na Manach, Arbutus Grove, Ard na Mainistreach, Cluain Gearráin, Maigh Dara, Manor View, etc. We loved the large stone name of Maigh Dara and painting the name in white is excellent as it makes it extremely clear for the motorist. This was also undertaken for Manor View. The planting beds in Dún na Mara along the entrance road were very pleasant. Some of the trees in the grass margins were leaning badly – they need to be re-staked to, hopefully, straighten them. Are there residents' associations in the estates? This is something you could encourage and advise on grants etc. that are available. Perhaps have a 'Best Kept Garden' competition – nothing like a little friendly rivalry. The certificate to be presented, like the Gaisce certificate, at a social event.

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

We loved the wildflower beds dotted along the roads and in some of the residential estates. You have assigned your volunteers to maintain the approach roads and we are happy to report that they are doing a good job. The roadside frontage is a great example of how to effectively present a semi-wild habitat with its narrow strip of tidily mown grass along the outer edge to show that the wilderness behind is deliberate. We noted a number of new pavements

including rumble dipped paving to warn those who are visually impaired and to facility those who use wheelchairs or mobility scooters in addition to those pushing buggies. The pedestrian crossings on the main street and near the school are well indicated. Some of the roads are in a very poor state of repair – do an audit and bring it to the attention of the area engineer. The picnic area on the entrance road was noted and we were delighted to see that parking spaces were located close by. A few trees or shrubs to enclose the benches would enhance them as they are very exposed in their present location. The gravel around the new beds will be a problem with weed growth – we recommend planting grass.

Concluding Remarks:

We were delighted to visit your village, our first visit, and thoroughly enjoyed our stay as we meandered around taking in the sights. Below are some recommendations for next year.

While you indicated New (N) and Maintained (M) projects you didn't number them. We need this and we also need these numbers to be transferred to a map. Your map, while great on your billboard in the village, is not ideal for this competition. We need you to make the map the full A4 page size for next year and to transfer the project N1, N2, N3 etc and M1, M2, M3 etc onto it. 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.

Please also let us know how your projects relate 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)

We suggest you consult the Tidy Towns Handbook which has been revised. It is available to download it from the Tidy Towns website. It includes plenty of suggestions for suitable projects to consider under the various categories. Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition and we look forward to seeing you again next year.