

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Sixmilebridge - Droichead Abhann Ui gCearnaigh** Ref: **89**  
County: **Clare** Mark: **348**  
Category: **D** Date(s): **15/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	48	50
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	47
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	47	50
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	34	36
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	63	65
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	39	41
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	37	38
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>348</b>

### 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 completed application form which included photographs and maps. We commend you on a very clear application form and equally for very clear maps with the project locations identified making it easy for the adjudicators to locate them. Truthfully, it was a joy to receive your application and visit your town! But remember no Future Projects are to be included in the form, only New and Maintained. All Future Projects are to be in your Town Plan ..... that's what it's for. Please include your 3-5 Year Plan next year – you need to include it every year as the adjudicators change.

Your committee of 9 has an additional 45 who volunteer when a project needs extra hands. It is wonderful to see that you have a large number of volunteers as it shows the community holds you in high esteem. You are well represented on social media with a dedicated email address, a Facebook page with 1.1K followers, and an Instagram account (new this year), so young and old are catered for. In addition, for those not on social media, you inform the community of your activities and projects through the traditional methods of notices in parish newsletters, local newspapers articles and posters displayed in local shops. You list state and semi state organisations in addition to businesses, individuals and local community groups who support you financially or with advice and assistance. You have been in the competition since 1991 and you have seen a marked improvement in the visual appearance of the town in the intervening years due to the commitment of the community to the competition. In addition, the competition has encouraged residents to take pride in their town and to work together and make Sixmilebridge a better place to live, work, play and visit.

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

You have a pleasant mix of vernacular single and two storey structures, and these with the topography of the town, the network of roads and the river, give the town its character. Add to these St Finnachta's RC church, Sixmilebridge Library (the old St Finnachta's Cofl church), the Credit Union building, and the RC Little church to add to the architectural merit and attractiveness of the town. We see that you will have a Town Centre First Masterplan and you are actively engaged with the community and with Clare Co Co in this. This project will result in a direction for the development of the town and will also address vacancy and dereliction which are a blight in many rural towns in Ireland. We wish you well with this and we look forward to seeing it in future Tidy Towns applications. In the meantime, it would be good to see an improvement in the streetscape with an upgrade/painting of derelict buildings which are in prominent locations. Some of these are quite large and are important buildings in the streetscape. Try to get the owners to carry out routine maintenance and if results aren't forthcoming contact the Derelict Sites section in Clare Co Co for assistance. The work to the lampposts, bins and electric boxes has made a great improvement –

compliments and thanks to Joe Hogan. Did you apply for funding under the Town and Village Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2022? This provided funding to other communities for paint schemes. You mention that you have applied for funding for street name signs. These will need to be legible from a distance and also weatherproof as they will be in-situ for a long time. Have you a design in mind for these? The discrete historic plaques were noted and admired. We admired the numerous flat iron gates which we saw around the town – good that these are no longer being removed and instead are appreciated for the skill of their makers. While not in your application this year we saw the statue of Brendan O'Regan which was unveiled in July, when we passed through heading to another centre in Co Clare. Well done to all concerned.

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

Mature trees abound in Sixmilebridge with the banks of the river on the outskirts of the town almost forest-like. It is excellent that within the town you also have a great many mature trees. The main structural elements in the landscape and one of the main structural elements in a streetscape are trees so we were delighted to see yours. We admire that you have a tree management plan in place which ensures that suckers, dead branches etc are removed. Unfortunately, you will have to replace some of your ash trees due to ash dieback and we recommend that you begin planning for this. The statue of Brendan O'Regan looks good surrounded by the trees and stone walls. Shrubbery and panting beds need regular maintenance and you are now embarking on revitalising the plant beds near the train station. These are quite large and we recommend that you investigate varieties of ground cover plants which will require less maintenance than bushy shrubs. Perhaps also some roses for colour? You maintain other beds, as noted and visited, and in the town centre you give year-round colour to the various beds dotted around. This takes quite a lot of man-hours which, we have no doubt, the community appreciate. We admired the well with the freshly painted red gate and colourful flower beds over. Perhaps some trailing flowers would add to this as the stone structure is quite tall. It's good to see that the sporting facilities are located very close to the town, giving additional green spaces with their large pitches.

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

With your mature trees, hedgerows, stone walls and river banks you have a great variety of habitats for insects and mammals and for native wildflowers and grasses to grow. To promote biodiversity, we need to manage habitats in such a way that we provide food and shelter for our fauna and a place to grow and thrive for our flora. You undertook a biodiversity project at the entrance to Mount levers Estate which was a success – thanks for the photos. Planting 1kg of native flowers was commendable and we hope that you collected seed and planted them this year? When we visited it had great displays of ox-eye daisies and a variety of grasses. What other flowers bloom later in the summer? We read that Clare Co Co removed two trees – do you know why? You mention that you upload sightings to the National Biodiversity Data Centre. As you now have a dedicated biodiversity project, we suggest that you undertake a 10-minute FIT Count (Flower-Insect Timed Count) and see what difference your project has/will make to the insect life in Sixmilebridge. This too can be downloaded onto your mobile from the website <https://biodiversityireland.ie/surveys/fit-counts>

We saw the sign for the bird sanctuary – what about installing a bird hide here so that people can sit and watch the birds that visit?

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

Being sustainable we become aware of how we use the resources of the planet so that we cut down on our waste. We must reduce pollution, unwanted land use and the use of dwindling resources. Tidy towns committees are encouraged to try and prevent the generation of waste when carrying out their day-to-day activities and also to inform the community on ways that they too can do this. Like many communities you have a 'No Mow May' campaign for the communal areas – but have many of the local community followed your example? We commend St. Finnachta's NS for the ingenious use on the poly tunnel which now, in addition to being used for plants etc., is an indoor drying facility for sports gear. We noted the new large water butt – what capacity does it hold? The repairs to the seat near the church were well executed and looked good. You will inform the community of the Sustainable Development Goals through social media but don't forget you must also let us know, in your submission to this competition, how each of your activities/projects relates to them. The bike repair station and cycle stands were noted. Is there a community garden in Sixmilebridge – these are extremely popular and so we suggest this might be a project for you to investigate with Clare Co Co/ a local landowner. Nice to see the hens and geese in the field and we're sure the eggs are tasty as they really are free range! 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)

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

You took part in the An Taisce National Spring Clean-Up event which we encourage for Tidy Towns committees as it focuses the whole community on litter, fly-tipping and weed control. When the community see the high-viz jackets of Tidy Towns they become more aware of their surroundings and the need to put litter in bins and correctly dispose of their rubbish. We know that, unfortunately, not everyone does this but your presence on the streets certainly helps. What a nice gesture of Gleeson's pub to provide complimentary tea and coffee to the volunteers at the conclusion of the day's work. You JIS and TÚS workers are invaluable to you and you identify tasks that are required, which vary depending on the season. When we visited there was a small amount of freshly discarded litter which, we have no doubt, was removed quickly by your volunteers. We suggest installing some chicken wire behind the red gate to the well as this was littered with plastic bottles etc. Volunteers also power-washed the iconic statue

in the river "The Miller Returns" and the paths surrounding the church area. We noted a number of dirty street poles so these should be added to your work list. We commend the local scout group and young members of Sixmilebridge, who you tell us, support you in various actions including local cleanups. The sign for the Owengarnny River was almost hidden behind ivy. While ivy is a wonderful for insect life and is acceptable/good on rendered (plastered) walls it is not acceptable on stone structures as the roots penetrate between the joints in the stones, making the walls unstable and leading to their collapse. Natural stone constructions are in themselves great habitats for insect life and also very beautiful in the streetscape. Graffiti, unfortunately, is common on our streetscapes – all you can do is remove it/paint over it as soon as it is noticed. In other communities we have seen that walls/fencing are provided around skateboard or pump parks for the graffiti artists – some of the 'art' work quite beautiful!

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

Being close to both Limerick and Ennis, in addition to your vernacular single and two storey houses along the streets, you have a number of estates, some of which are quite new. We admired the gently sloping streetscape with the neatly kept houses interspaced with business and retail properties. Some had great displays of colourful pollinator-friendly window boxes which were buzzing with insect life on the day we visited. The bike mural was admired – Teach na Rothar. We were delighted to see that a prominent large house had been sold and we look forward to visiting in the future and seeing it restored to its former glory. We see that you are very engaged with the residents' associations and assist them with insurance, information on grants, advice of plants and trees and manpower if needed. The housing estates, generally, were well presented with many residents having recently painted their houses. Gardens were full of colour and some had shrubs and ornamental trees for added impact. Some estates had great floral displays, with tall grasses for additional effect, in the communal areas, which were very beautiful. Cappagh Lodge had a very pleasant area along the roadside, with mature trees, and numerous neatly kept, strategically located, colourful flower beds. There is an absence of trees in communal areas in some estate (including entrance roads). This is something you could assist with. Compliments to the residents of Mount levers for facilitating those who want to sit and chat – three benches facing a very pleasant planting bed. Perhaps also encourage the installation of seats/picnic tables in other communal areas. We admired the variety of estate name signs all clearly legible – Mill Court, Mount levers, Inis Orga, O'Garney Heights, Shannon Road, and Cappa Lodge. There was a beautiful wildflower bed all along the entrance road to the new Dún na Coille estate – hopefully this will continue to be undertaken by the residents.

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

We entered Sixmilebridge from the east along the R471 and admired the well-trimmed hedges giving motorists good visibility of the road. You are located at the junction of the busy R462 and R471 and we were delighted to see that pedestrian crossings exist in strategic locations along the streetscape making it safe/viable for the pedestrian to cross the road safely. Road markings are worn in quite a number of places and need to be repainted e.g. the SLOW signs on the R471 are almost illegible and in addition the change of road surface needs to be replaced. We noted quite a number of cars parked along approach roads and we assume these are parked here all day by those carsharing and travelling to Limerick or Ennis? It would be good to have a carpark (free of charge or with a minimal payment) provided for these. New pavements with dipped kerbs and rumble strips were noted which facilitates those on mobility scooters and those pushing buggies. Some of the pavements are very narrow - hopefully this is something that will be resolved in the Town Centre First Masterplan.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your town, which we've visited before as a tourist, but this time our visit was with more critical eyes and we were delighted with what we saw. Keep up the good work as it's reaping its just rewards. Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition.