

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Spanish Point - Rinn na Spáinneach** Ref: **2211**
County: **Clare** Mark: **294**
Category: **A** Date(s): **25/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	38	40
Streetscape & Public Places	80	40	42
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	42	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	28	30
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	28	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	27	29
TOTAL MARK	550	279	294

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 which included photos, a map and a 3-Year plan 2023-2026 of actions/projects which you will undertake. Compliments on your integration of the SDGs into your actions/projects. We admire that you have a social media presence which truthfully is necessary in 2023. We liked your audio guide on the website. You have a Facebook page and we encourage you to open an Instagram account where you will then target both the older and younger generations. It is important to keep all social media active with up-to-date photos and information. You are a committee of 7 and with 25-30 volunteers you are an active community group in Spanish Point. You list state and semi-state organisations, community groups, individuals, businesses etc who support you financially and/or who advise you. This is your seventh year entering the TidyTowns competition and we are delighted to read that you have found it beneficial to your community and that the comments in the reports have been helpful to you. Tidy Towns brings communities together, new friendships are formed and communities develop pride in their locality – the true spirit of the competition.

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

You are a dispersed coastal village and your streetscape consists of vernacular single and two storey residences interspersed with businesses. Located to the east of the N67 on a windswept peninsula, it is easy to see why windsurfing is a popular sport. There are some fine structures/houses in the village some now forming part of hotels. The belltower of Cofl Christ Church is quite unusual and the neatly maintained garden was admired – remove the ivy from the pier as this detracts from the entrance. Your audio guide of the history and heritage of the area on the website and via QR codes at various sites was accessed. It is an excellent project which gives the visitor quite a lot of information on the area. Street lighting is crucial for an active town and your new LED lighting ensures that pedestrians are safe as they walk all along the coast road which is a popular walking route for young and old both in the daytime and evening. We were disappointed to read of the damage done to your signs and we hope that this vandalism was a once off, not to be repeated. In addition to the housing stock as a tourist/beach resort you also have caravan/mobile home parks which form part of the streetscape and which presented well. We loved the 'Did you Know' information board on the origins of many of your structures.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

While there are no public parks or public green spaces in Spanish Point there is an enormous public area along the

rocks, sand dunes and beach with a path giving the community access. This public area is well used and we noted walkers along the cliffs and rocks in addition to the beach. We see that you have all year-round colour in your planting beds and planters. Due to your coastal location this is some challenge and we are delighted to see you have embraced it and actively pursue a colourful floral environment of the community. You have selected plants which suit the harsh salt-laden winds as we admire that you have researched this and found suitable plants and flowers for your environmental location. The very beautiful Susie's Garden was visited and was in full flower and buzzing with insect activity. We visited the school and saw your slow growing native trees – yes, the long grass nearby had them hidden in some instances. We also admired the planting along the road edge – it will fill out nicely in time so patience is required. The main structural elements in the landscape are trees and we felt trees are scarce in your village, which is a pity, as there are many places where trees would enhance the buildings and streetscape. Look around and see what species grow best and plant some more of these.

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

With the great number of stone walls, hedgerows, the Annagh river and the dunes and sea front you have a great variety of habitats for insects, mammals and birds. Your dunes also form important natural features and we see that remedial/ stabilisation works are ongoing to protect these. We looked for the Activity/Colouring book on your website and Facebook page but couldn't find a link – this is something you should rectify as parents could see/download a few copies for their children before visiting the area. You had a great number of interested people following the Rocky Shore Safari. People are always interested in learning something new and in addition talks/walks such as this are social events which are also important for a community. We encourage you to organise more events like this. Perhaps one on the dunes, grasses and plants might interest the community? The information panels on the 'Dunes – the Backbone of our Beaches' was noted.

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

This category has become increasingly important in the tidy towns competition as it now has a marks allocation of 55 – the same amount as the key categories of nature and biodiversity, residential streets and housing areas and approach roads, streets and lanes. Tidy towns committees are encouraged to try and prevent the generation of waste when carrying out their day-to-day activities.

The toy library is a brilliant idea. The items left on the beach removed and put in the shelving unit made from recycled timber for the next child to use. There is also a distribution of discarded surfboards, wetsuits and other surfing clothing. You have installed additional seats made from recycled plastic along the seafront since last year which you say have been well used by people taking a rest to admire the sea views. Seaweed fertilizer was quite common and we note that some of the residents have reintroduced this practice. Have you developed a community garden? This is easy to accomplish and a great way for swapping plants thus reducing the waste associated with shop bought varieties. Ask Clare Co Co for assistance as there's probably a site in its ownership that would suit your needs. Do you know of other community groups/businesses and their approach to Sustainability? Let us know what others are doing and how you've interacted with them. We read what the Armada Hotel and Bellbridge House Hotel have done with regards to lighting and compostable cups. What are local shops doing with food waste, packaging etc? We're delighted to read that you shared the information you received on the SEAI course with the community. On Facebook? On the Website? We admired the external showers and foot wash on the toilet block. We chatted to some ladies who were using them after their sea swim.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Similar to many community groups in Co Clare you took part in the An Taisce National Spring Clean-up but unlike others you also arrange a biannual Big Beach Clean-Up. Having a coastal environment, you also have a large beach area to contend with in terms of tidiness and litter control and having 40-50 people helping for the Big Beach Clean Up is excellent collecting flotsam and jetsam. With your many visitors keeping the area clean is a challenge but we are delighted to say that when we visited there was very little litter seen so we commend the volunteers for their work. Unfortunately, there was considerable weed growth along the roads in some of the housing estates which gave an unkempt feel to the area. 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. With regards to beach litter, we saw a sign in another centre saying 'Please take away three items of rubbish you see on the beach' which we thought was a great idea. Is this something that might work for you too? We noted your dog poo bin ... elsewhere we have seen 'Any bin will do' notices for dog poo.

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

As a dispersed community there are houses on individual large sites along the main road and behind these, we find many housing estates that have been built in recent years. Some of the new residential developments located on the outskirts of the village are beautifully designed and reflect a traditional cottage style vernacular architecture which has ensured a successful integration of those new developments into the very scenic landscape surrounding the village. The standard of presentation of individual houses within the village environs, on the approach roads and in the residential estates we visited in Spanish Point was generally very good and we applaud the many home owners and occupiers who clearly take pride in their place and keep their front facades, road frontage, gardens and boundary walls well-presented and neatly maintained in support of your work. A few boundary walls were weather stained and need attention. Many of the gardens had great floral displays adding to the streetscape and some had shrubs and ornamental trees for extra effect. Trees are lacking in many of the estates in the communal areas. While we appreciate that you are a windswept village, look around and see what trees survive in your locality and plant these. Sycamores tend to be wind resistant trees

and grow 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:

Coming from the south and turning left from the N67 we enter the village to be greeted by your village name sign with the reference to the Spanish Armada. We noted that pedestrian connectivity is almost complete with new footpaths and street lights. The footpaths have dipped rumble paving at junctions to facilitate those using wheelchairs/mobility scooters, those pushing buggies as well as small children on bicycles. We loved the snippets of the view of the beach that we got as we drove along the coastal road in anticipation of what was to come. The pedestrian crossing near the golf club works well bringing the pedestrian safely across the road to the dune side footpath. We note that a cycle lane has not been included in the new road/path works which is a pity as cycling in Co Clare is very popular. Road surfaces were good on the main road but in some of the housing estates potholes, edge breakup and ravelling were noticed. Some road markings were a little worn and need to be repainted. We noted the sign in memory of those who died while being inmates of The Atlantic Hotel Auxiliary Workhouse

Concluding Remarks:

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

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2023 competition.