

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinlough** Ref: **2276**  
County: **Cork(South)** Mark: **219**  
Category: **D** Date(s): **25/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	23	25
Streetscape & Public Places	80	24	27
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	28	29
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	22	23
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	16	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	21	21
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	19	20
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>219</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 chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amachanseo. Adh Mór... thank you so much for your entry into this year's competition, and we are glad that you decided to enter again, for this, your second year in the competition, you are most welcome.

You have a relatively small amount of people on your Committee (3) for the size of your town, however, you have a small army of 42 volunteers to assist you in your endeavours which is fantastic.

You have developed connections and support with a variety of different organisations and groups such as Cork City Council, local businesses (Green spaces for health, Carey tool hire, Scallys , AXA Insurance, Supervalu, B&Q, Woodies and Abaccess to name a few) and voluntary groups (Mens Shed) which we hope will be a great source of help for you. It might also be worthwhile to contact some local TidyTowns Groups in neighbouring towns to perhaps get ideas and swap hints and tips.

There seems to be very strong communication with both formal and informal 'pop up' meetings and use of both social media such as Instagram, WhatsApp and email as well as church newsletters and the new noticeboard. It is good that you are also trying to involve the local schools as much as you can with them being invited to attend events such as the 'National Spring Clean Day'/Easter Litter Hunt etc.

Well done to the secondary school who made and painted picnic benches for your community garden as well as painting the lovely mural, and the 'Sunflower Competition' sounds like a fun event for the younger children in the four primary schools.

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

The new 'Ballinlough News' noticeboard was spotted in the local park, and it looked very smart indeed and looked like it was being well used, and thanks due to the Credit Union and AXA Insurance who sponsored it.

The picnic benches were also seen and fantastic work by the transition year students. Well done also to the secondary school students for their involvement with the Community Garden. The day I visited the Community Garden it was a riot of flowers and colour and various plants.

Good work also on your work of cleaning and weeding the entrance to the park/Japanese Gardens from the Douglas Road laneway.

Last year's adjudicator mentioned that they didn't see a 'Welcome to Ballinlough' sign, great work on rectifying this, the new sign looks very smart and welcoming, well done!

Also, it would be useful to have any landmark buildings or structures referred to in the entry form, or any projects you are undertaking to improve buildings or streets or footpaths etc.

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

The Ballinlough Community Garden was a lovely area to spend some time, and I particularly liked the colourful handpainted sign in the recycled tyres. The signage on some of the various planters showing which ones belonged to which group or area such as 'the Grove' or 'Ballinlough Gardeners Club' were very attractive. Some fantastic work being done in this areas with plenty of homegrown vegetables and flowers as well as wonderful display of colour, and it looks as though there is a huge involvement by the local community, and judging the lovely photographs that you included with your entry form, a lot of fun and enjoyment along with all the hard work. The Sensory Garden, again with a lovely handpainted sign looked well, with plenty of Lavender plants to help our pollinator friends such as the bees and butterflies.

The 'No Mow' and 'Pollinator Friendly Zone' signs were also spotted, a great way to let people know that these areas are being left 'wild' for a reason and to raise awareness of what you are doing. It was very interesting to read the information note about the history of market gardening in Ballinlough, and it would be fascinating to hear more of this in the entry form, even just a few bullet points.

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

You are quite active in this category, and a lot of work being done in relation to pollinator plants and biodiversity. Some of the actions that you have undertaken have included the new fruit trees planted in the Seamus Quirke Park estate that was sponsored by the DCs for Bees project. There was also a 'Tree Nursery' planted in the community garden of native Irish trees, and great to read that you are able to get sponsorship for some of your initiatives, with this being sponsored by 'Trees on the Land' as well as Cork City Council. And thanks to the Penny Dinners Cork for donating the three 'Trees of Hope' to the Community Garden.

There were nest boxes installed at your schools and parks for Robins, Great tits as well as Blue Tits. There was also a talk held with Bird Watch Cork and a local ecologist about bats in the school. It was really interesting to read about you being able to identify the different types of bats in your park using a bat detector, it would be lovely to hear more about this, perhaps you could provide more information next year about which types you found and if possible how many.

Other work that you have done included planting more native hedging as well as the fruit trees, great work.

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

The Community Garden has already been mentioned, but it deserves to be commented on in this category as well. Some absolutely fantastic work being done here with sustainable growing of various plants and vegetables. The Polytunnel and potting shed must help enormously with the work that you are doing. We also note that you are collecting rainwater to be used in the garden, and have also constructed a new compost heap and Leaf Mould container to help provide nourishment for the raised beds in the garden. You also held a compost information workshop with 'wasteDown' in order for members of your Tidy Towns team as well as local residents to learn how to make this themselves, bravo!

Other work that you have done was to have a 'Climate Day' in conjunction with the local primary school, recycled old milk cartons and cans to make bird feeders and bug hotels as well as upcycling used car tyres to be used for your new herb garden.

Good work on the survey of traffic calming measures, Ballinlough was quite busy on the day that I visited and your initiative will hopefully make it safer for school children to get to school safely, and we look forward to hearing in the future how this has worked out. It is also good to read that you took part with other groups in Cork City in order to share ideas about sustainability measures, and it would be interesting to know more about this and your conclusions and proposed projects coming out of these discussions (if any).

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

The Bring Bank areas looked absolutely immaculate on the day that I visited which is fantastic work, and they looked very colourful and clean.

Overall, Ballinlough was fairly free of litter the day I adjudicated which is no mean feat given its size and population. There were however unfortunately a few black spots, in particular, one of the trees in the park area had quite a number of empty plastic bottles underneath it. There was also a dog bowl beside these, so perhaps they had been used to keep this bowl full of water for our furry friends, but it is a pity they weren't disposed of properly.

Work you are doing includes involvement in the 'National Spring Clean Day' as well as regular litter pick ups.

It is great to hear that the new noticeboard in the park has helped reduce fly posting, and great work on the mural by the primary school and clearing the area by the swimming pool to be used as a wildflower area.

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

In general, all the residential areas visited were in good condition and well maintained. There were a few housing estate entrance signs that could do with a bit of a clean up and refresh to make them easier to read and more attractive. Areas visited included the Seamus Quirke Park estate, the Beechwood Park Green, as well as Ardfallen Estate green amongst others, and good work on the work done in the Ardfallen Estate with walls painted, hedges trimmed and planters with seasonal flowers installed along with native trees and spring bulbs. Spring bulbs also planted in the Silverwood Estate and Beechwood Park Green. It would be good to get the residential estates more involved in your work on pollinators and try to make sure that estates as well as individual house owners are aware of which plants best help our bees and butterflies.

Another idea which might be interesting is a best kept estate or garden competition.

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

It was fantastic to see the new Welcome to Ballinlough sign at the top of the Ballinlough Road and Boreenmanna junction, it looked very smart and fresh.

Some great work which has been mentioned before in relation to the planting of spring bulbs in various estates. And well done to the students from Eglantine Girls National School for their work on the mural near Ardfallen Estate.

**Concluding Remarks:**

It was a pleasure to visit Ballinlough, the first time that I have been in this part of Cork and I particularly enjoyed the time spent in the Japanese Garden/Park and looking around the great work being done in the Community Garden. Well done on the amount of work that you have already accomplished in your very short time in the competition, and we wish you the best of luck with your future endeavours and seeing you back next year!.