

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Inistioge - Inis Tiog** Ref: **394**
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **373**
Category: **B** Date(s): **10/07/2022**
28/07/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	52	54
Streetscape & Public Places	80	50	51
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	55	56
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	45	48
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	27	30
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	40	41
TOTAL MARK	550	361	373

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

It was a pleasure to visit Inistioge for the first time and to be adjudicating in this your 60th year of entering the Tidy Towns competition. The depth of experience is reflected in the well organised entry. The committee and volunteers are doing great work and link with other events organised to reduce impacts of those on the village. Work with the schools is comprehensive and children are engaging with the tidy towns in a host of activities which bodes well for the future. The use of local media and a range of means of communication is welcomed. The webpage inistioge.ie is one of the best I have seen, the Facebook page is well curated, good images and documentation of key events. The map was a very helpful guide to the location of activities in the village. The key to the map was helpful too in locating new, continuing and future projects.

You have done well with the indication of which SDGs are being addressed in each of the sections of your entry. The goals are explained in <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>. This will help with identifying exactly which goals apply in each of your activities. SDG 14, Life Below Water is referring to the marine environment and not freshwater resources.

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

Overall, the village presents a wealth of architecture, and the commitment of house and business owners is reflected in the generally high quality of houses, gardens and shop fronts. The Heritage Guide gives the visitor an excellent introduction to the history of the village and highlights the range and history of the village's built environment. Your ongoing work with the Band Hall and Museum Building are noted, keep up with the work and I have no doubt the results will show in coming years.

Work was in progress to repair the damaged wall on my visit, a prompt response.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The village nestles in the landscape and the surrounding countryside, river, forests and farmland merge with the landscaped river park, swimming area, and gardens and open greens spaces. The development and maintenance of these reflects the commitment of volunteers and committee. The garden displays continue to amaze, Point Road, as mentioned last year and the work done by business owners is evident in the flower displays and seating. The refurbished farm equipment stood out against the grass verges on entering the village.

Church street, on the approach to the village, has a well screened car park but the signage on the shop may be excessive, this signage carries on into the shop front. I understand this has been mentioned before but, if possible, in this instance, less could be better for the image of the business.

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

Inistioge is of course surrounded by nature. The rivers and woodlands are assets the village has used to great effect in development of walks and areas to sit and listen.

Your activities in relation to biodiversity are well thought through. The work on rare plant monitoring is important and takes us on from pollinator and bee friendly plantings, well done. Your work with an ecologist on the pollinator plan is commended and engagement with the school on a school biodiversity plan is important for development of awareness on the values of biodiversity in all our lives.

The hedgehog survey was an excellent piece of work. I was delighted to see the material presented in the report. If possible, could this be presented as a map of where the hedgehogs were found? Monitoring of all the activities done relating to biodiversity is important to let us see if the effects of our actions are positive or not.

It would be good to see some data gathered on the use of bat boxes/roosting sites and bird boxes in the coming years.

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

The work you are doing or have planned in this category will bring benefits to the community in the years to come. Many villages and towns are struggling to be active in this area, so it is good to see you becoming involved in such a range of activities.

Your composting display was clear and informative, it is obviously well tended, keep up the good work on this as it is good way to demonstrate the value of composting and recycling to the community at large.

Joining the Sustainable Energy Community network and preparing to develop an Energy Master Plan are welcomed. The Smart Village Training project is one that will see growing returns in the coming years. For those not fully engaged with smart technology I hope you will continue to support with other forms of media to interpret places. The planned electric charging point is also welcomed.

If you have some data on uptake of energy conservation actions by households and businesses in the community it would be good to see it, again this type of monitoring allows us to understand just what is being achieved with all this work. But I expect this data was used in your award-winning entry for the Community Climate Challenge, congratulations of your first-place award.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On the day of my visit there was no litter to be seen. The ongoing work of volunteers, residents and businesses is reflected in the high standard of cleanliness throughout the village.

There was one black spot on my visit. The public toilets present are, on the outside tidy. The gent's section was in a very poor condition. Litter, broken seats etc leave a poor impression on visitors. If there is an unwillingness to maintain this facility, then you might consider how to repurpose the building.

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

The whole village Houses are generally very well maintained and the gardens and public places around your small estates are well maintained.

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

All approaches to Inistioge welcome the visitor, the signage, display of agricultural equipment and planting are appropriate and well maintained.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done on the continuing work in all categories of this competition. Your dedication and the engagement of the community is reflected in the overall quality of the village environment. Keep up your good work.

Second Round Adjudication:

This was the second round adjudicators first visit to your lovely village in several years and we are delighted to say that it certainly lived up to the memory of a picturesque and well-tended rural riverside gem. Once again, the colour and standard of maintenance of your green spaces was second to none. The focus you are putting on longer term and more biodiversity friendly planting was admired although not all tiered planters were a mix of annuals and pollinator friendly plants yet. Your new Biodiversity focussed planting plan will no doubt inform future displays. It is obvious that many residents have a really excellent knowledge of plants which allows maximum summer impact in your varied private garden areas. The secret to the richness of the planting in Inistioge is also the fact that so many of your residents' gardens directly address the streets so, as the first-round adjudicator rightly says, they continue to amaze and make such a contribution to the overall aesthetic of the village. In Inistioge, you are correct to say that small is indeed beautiful as it relates to your small scale creative gardens. We visited St Colmcille's and St Mary's Graveyard with the pollinator plan signage clearly placed to inform visitors of the changed landscape management.

It is such a lovely spot with butterflies in abundance. The fantastic Riverside Park by the arched stone bridge is a delight and the mauve wallflower planting was full of bees and butterflies as we walked past. Picnics were being enjoyed at the tables by overseas visitor families, which was lovely to see. Is there any way a path can be provided over the road here to create a safe link between the village and the river. Talk to your area engineers or active travel team in Kilkenny County Council to see if a footpath audit could be carried out to allow for improved pedestrian safety and accessibility generally in the village. Inistioge has a great history in the tidy towns and we are so glad to hear that taking part in the competition has been such a source of pride for the community. Once again, the level of tidiness around the village was high. The car park is a new resource and it's great to have a place to relieve the pressure of car parking which tends to clutter the village core. We scanned and listened with interest to the Audio Point. We are delighted to endorse the comments from the first-round adjudicator and indeed left your village with a feeling of having visited a very friendly community that shows great care and respect for their historic home place. Well done to all involved in this year's entry and you should all take great pride in the hard work done by the community over the past year, which resulted in the really excellent presentation of Inistioge for this year's visits.