

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Annacotty - Áthnacoite** Ref: **1955**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **290**
Category: **C** Date(s): **03/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	41	42
Streetscape & Public Places	80	37	37
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	36	36
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	34	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	17	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	32	33
TOTAL MARK	550	286	290

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 have a good core group on your committee & given the size of Annacotty it is fantastic you have a further 20 to call upon for various activities. There is no doubt that the Team Limerick Cleanup has a wide appeal & is very effective in garnering support for local groups in their community annual cleanup endeavour. While it is not possible to win every year, it is always worth entering the Limerick Going for Gold competition. It would be interesting for your adjudicator to read a brief synopsis of the relevant year's entry.

It is fantastic to see your involvement with the Gaelscoil students in the preparation of summer hanging baskets for the bridge. Well done on assisting the students at Castletroy College promote their Household Electrical Waste collection day. The existence of University of Limerick on your doorstep is a valuable resource & you might let us know next year how you work with them.

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

The Creamery & the Mill certainly occupy prominent positions in Annacotty. It is good to see they are in commercial use & not standing vacant or derelict. As a visitor, it was interesting to read the history of the creamery & see the photos of when it was in use for that specific purpose. Your plans to erect an information board at the Mill & at the bridge will add interest & captivate an audience. Are you intending to update the Creamery information board so that all three have a similar design? These projects appear to have been in the planning for quite some time.

The occupation of previously vacant commercial units impacts negatively on a streetscape so it is wonderful for Annacotty to be able to place a "No Vacancy" sign on the door for a second year in a row. It was noted during the visit that the local Centra shop is currently for sale. The hope locally must be that it would be purchased as a going concern to continue to provide a local service. Perhaps the new owner might consider some softening to the hard surface area directly in front. The house next door to Centra appears vacant. You might provide details on its status in next year's report as last year's adjudicator also made reference. Some of the business premises were presented well although some could do with a little more care & attention to their facades. The repurposed telephone box housing the defibrillator was well presented in green & cream colour combination. The Post Box outside the boundary wall of Mr Price is well overdue a similar care package. Perhaps An Post might be prevailed upon to replace same – always worth asking. The Jackie Power statue has a real position of pride in Annacotty & is a wonderful piece of sculpture. The cobblelock at the front was presented well although the area to the back would benefit from a power wash. It is heartening to see that the derelict cottage on Mulcair Drive is to be compulsorily acquired by Limerick City & County Council. It will be good to see, in time, the property being brought back into use. The celebration of Christmas in a community is a wonderful shared experience & the central location of the Christmas tree is important. After all the work involved it was great you received such positive feedback.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

On adjudication day, the hanging baskets were not yet hung on their brackets at the bridge. This may have been due to the unseasonably hot weather & the water demands that would necessitate their survival. Few of the containers were planted on adjudication day although begonias were noted in the planter by the river heading towards Mulcair Drive. Last year's adjudicator provided advice on planting containers, which would prove helpful for your future plans. The Equatorial Sundial & surrounding area was in demand on adjudication day. It was great to see it in use by local youth & clearly is an attractive venue. The area opposite has a tree that requires removal & it would appear there was seating here previously. Are there plans to reinstate it? On adjudication day, it would have been a pleasure to sit & watch the many swifts attend to their broods under the bridge.

Unfortunately for your adjudicator, our visit is in June so we cannot see your bulb planting efforts in bloom. A montage of photos showing the spring colour would be a helpful inclusion or a link if featured in your social media feed.

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

Annacotty is fortunate to have the Mulkear River within the Lower Shannon SAC.

As a community situated alongside the Mulcair River it is heartening to see you engage with LAWPRO & other Tidy Towns groups to celebrate World Water & take action on the SDGs 14 & 15. Have you decided to take any actions out of the talk & event held in Castleconnell? What was the update after the Annacotty Weir public information evening held in August 2022 – mitigation of problems to fish passage at Annacotty Weir? Do let us know in next year's report.

Many schools take the opportunity to use local rivers & their catchment areas as learning tools within the current curriculum. Next year you might update us on any school activity in this sphere.

The numbers of swift nesting under the bridge was impressive. Swift Conservation Ireland is a fantastic source of information on this bird of conservation concern in Ireland. Have you held any talks, educational events etc in relation to your summer visitors? <https://www.swiftconservation.ie/>

It was noted on adjudication day that shoals of fish could be seen from the bridge. We look forward to hearing next year about the planned Lamprey Festival in 2023. The mural under the bridge is a wonderful artistic display of your natural bounty.

We note that Giant Hogweed, an invasive species is now on your riverbanks & could be clearly seen while visiting. Are there management plans in place to deal with it?

You have a fantastic opportunity to make use of the National Biodiversity Data Centre through the Citizen Science Portal, online educational courses, spotter sheets, recording sheets etc. Many communities have used it through their social media feeds to engage the community & make relevant information more freely available.

<https://biodiversityireland.ie/>

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

While recycling is the last R in the Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle mantra, it is positive that you are highlighting to all local residents the Household Electrical Waste collection day in March last at Castletroy College. The E-Mining@School pilot, which culminated in this collection day, is a fantastic project for familiarizing students with the circular economy. 11 tonnes of WEEE collected is impressive. However, as was highlighted last year the focus needs to be moved to the first 3 Rs rather than the last one. The Tidy Towns handbook has a wealth of ideas from which to choose. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Sustainability-Doing-More-with-less.pdf>

There are lots of specific days/weeks that could be highlighted by you to encourage the community to focus on this area – National Food Waste Recycling Week in June <https://www.mywaste.ie/national-food-waste-recycling-week/> World Refill Day in June <https://www.refill.org.uk/world-refill-day-2023-save-the-date/> to mention just two.

Community Resources Network Ireland <https://crni.ie/> is another amazing resource for ideas on reuse & repair. This is an area where a little work gains a lot of reward. It would be surprising to find that the community is not receptive especially in a cost of living crisis & thus you will be pushing an open door when highlighting this topic.

On the topic of smarter transport, how much use is made of Limerick's Smarter Travel bicycles parked in front of Mr. Price? Has an assessment been conducted by the Smarter Travel team?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

What a delight to see so many young members of the community out in force for the TLC8 in early April. Your future in volunteer participation looks bright. Unfortunately on adjudication day, there was a lot of litter throughout the area. A large number of empty pizza boxes were strewn about outside Apache Pizza, the bin at the side of Mr. Price's boundary wall was full with additional litter dumped behind the bin, the car park at the Mill Bar had litter alongside the boundaries also litter in the Health Centre front garden & along footpaths & roads. Quite a number of the gully drains were blocked with debris. There are a lot of dog fouling signs to be seen which add significant clutter to the panorama. Have you considered using anti-dog fouling stencils on the footpaths as an alternative where the problem is a persistent one?

While normally street furniture would be discussed under the category streetscape, the standard of Annacotty's is impacting on the visitor's first impression. Bollards damaged & off kilter, poles needing painting, redundant poles, faded road markings etc. No doubt you have raised these issues with Limerick County Council. We would be very interested to hear what response you have received from the council on this issue next year.

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

Having spent quite some time walking around Annacotty, there are a significant number of housing estates. Does

each estate have an active local residents association? Many of the estates have very large green spaces primarily devoid of trees. Have you heard of Pocket Forests? Their focus is on growing small native woodlands in urban areas. It might be worth letting the residents associations know about the initiative as the issue of cost can inhibit this discussion. <https://www.pocketforests.ie/> Even if this is not something that some of them want, perhaps look at alternatives like edible hedges. We have seen some housing estates leave the green areas grow into meadows & cut paths through them to add interest & play areas for children. There is so much residential estates can do for nature & it would be worth sharing the National Biodiversity Data Centre's publication "Local Communities actions to help pollinators". https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Local-Communities_actions-to-help-pollinators-July-2021-WEB-JB.pdf

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

The approach from Limerick is very well maintained & the old plough in its vibrant colours is eye catching. The sign here is easily seen on approach. It seems strange that the footpath disappears for a stretch & then reappears – quite dangerous for any pedestrian. The new stonewall & new planting scheme across the other side of the main road appears finished to a high standard. It would be hoped the new planting survives the very hot weather. The approach road from Dublin has a wonderful vista with the trees lining the Dublin Road & then the wildflower meadow on the bank as one enters the village. The meadow was resplendent in the sunshine.

Concluding Remarks:

Annacotty is fortunate to have both reminders of its historic industrial heritage in its buildings & have a riverside location. You truly have a bounty of nature on your doorstep. There is tremendous potential within your community & we wish you the best for your future plans.