

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballingarry - Baile an Gharraí** Ref: **962**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **253**
Category: **B** Date(s):

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	32	34
Streetscape & Public Places	80	31	33
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	31	33
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	28	29
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	42	44
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	27	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	27	29
TOTAL MARK	550	239	253

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 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 Supervalu Tidy Towns 2023. Thank you for participating again in Tidy Towns. Tidy Towns is good for your community and good for the country.

You have a Committee of 6 and 2 other volunteers also. However, you have many others who are involved in Sport of many kinds, Resident's Associations, individuals who work to improve their Community, your school and Tús. So, there is a wide grouping of individuals and committees who help the Ballingarry Tidy Towns.

You had "an extended break of over 20 years" and in 2019 you reformed again under the auspices of the Ballingarry Development Association. Well done on that. This has allowed you to source finance for schemes and restoration projects, organising Heritage Week events, historical talks, and tours. The outcome of this is an improved appearance of the town and a generation of Community Spirit. Well done on that. We should also congratulate you on the well-presented document that you prepared for your adjudicator. Clear and with very good pictures.

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

We commenced our tour at the very impressive Church of the Immaculate Conception. Not only that, but it has some beautiful golden coloured trees on the grounds, and they do not detract from the Church. The car park opposite the Church is presented very well. The adjoining graveyard is well maintained and the boundary wall to the road is built of good stone and even if covered with ivy it still looks good. It might be a good idea to keep some of the wall clear of ivy as the stonework is excellent and it should be seen. There are some fine houses on the way down to the village. Further down from the Church there is a new graveyard, St. Mary's, and with a wonderful entrance feature into it.

The old Protestant Church is now a factory! Such is life, but at least it has survived, and long may it and the graves survive too. This is part of our Heritage. There are good headstones and mausoleums also. Around the corner is a medieval graveyard and it is inspiring to see the conservation work that has been undertaken on the Monckton Vault. We hope that similar work on other features in the graveyard will continue. And we should also congratulate both Ballingarry Tidy Towns and the Heritage Council for working on it and providing the finance to do so. And Limerick City and Council recognised the work that has been undertaken also.

What a great idea to plant the perimeter wall with flowering plants – and to provide a seat for your Adjudicator to sit on! Thank you Ballingarry!

So many towns and villages throughout the country have suffered with dereliction but in Ballingarry it is inspiring to see that you are making efforts to rebuild some of the street fabric. A vibrant town is so important to any village, town, or city. And it is great to see the repainting of houses also and in good vibrant colours.

We almost missed Ballingarry Castle! It is very hidden, but we noticed it from afar – what a tall structure! When we inspected it closely there was a very dilapidated entrance to the Castle. The Castle and the stone in it are magnificent and we do hope that finance will be secured to make the Castle fit for purpose again – and the derelict entrance to it also. It should be one of the great features of Ballingarry.

The Shrine is a simple, but well-built feature and it is all the more attractive with the background trees. The Old Library has been improved simply and attractively. Well done on the “Reimagining the Mall” project. It certainly looks a lot better than the previous work. We would hope that the stream will have some life in it, and it may be a good idea to discuss with your biodiversity expert.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Arriving in Ballingarry from the A18 some new trees have been planted and it is a great idea. However, the trees are immediately under the overhead wires, and they will inevitably cause future problems. The best way to deal with this is to remove the trees and replant them – if possible – into the adjacent hedgerow.

Your Ballingarry Community Park and Playground is a great facility and well planted. Well done on the work of the Doonbeirne Estates Green Spaces and the Beechwood Drive residents. The Beechwood Drive community have a great future idea for a woodland walk along the stream and again it would be good to have a Biodiversity expert to advise on what planting might be appropriate.

Sport and Recreation is so important in today's world. Whether it be walking or taking part in GAA or Soccer or Rugby or Cycling you have two great facilities in Ballingarry. The GAA and the Soccer grounds. And the wonderful thing with both of these is the working together for the same result. Hopefully, you will be successful in the Slí na Sláinte proposal. This is an idea for everyone. Well done, Ballingarry!

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

Ballingarry Castle features again! This time in terms of ecology and wildlife. And there will be a challenge here in protecting the fabric of the Castle as well as the surrounding hedges and wild areas and in particular the issue of Bats. It is good to hear that local farmers have an interest in the Owl Nesting Sites. This is a great idea and hopefully it will result in both sightings and nesting pairs. Not alone that but you have one of the oldest rookeries in Ireland. Additionally, you have won an award from the JP McManus Benevolent Fund in the Bee Friendly Pollinator Category.

Nature and Biodiversity is crucial for our future and in Ballingarry you are working on it.

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

With Sustainability you need to walk before you run! It takes time to understand and to know what to do. And you have started! Simple things like using old coffee grounds from the SPAR shop in the public planting, to composting waste and feed leftovers from the Mustard Seed Restaurant.

You are buying plants locally for your public displays and you also have received local donations for Daffodils.

You have a leaf composting facility in the Park and you have one in the Old Graveyard and which will be used in your public planting schemes. No Glyphosates in Ballingarry Tidy Towns! No Woven Plastic for weed suppressing! You have Water Conservation methods, and you reuse the woodchip from the local Tree Surgeon. Yes, things can change!

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Yes, TLC is ever present and what a great idea this has been! It is remarkable that you estimated that you located over 7 tonnes of rubbish. But you are also continuing to collect litter on a regular basis and that is the way to deal with it. You are working on getting Recycling Bins from LCCC and hopefully you will receive them soon.

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

It is the small things that can change people's perspectives. The Mall project is one such. Making the Mall attractive but also keeping it attractive and fresh. The plants that have been planted will bring interest and joy to everyone and most people will know by now that it is not a static project – it is an everyday one. That is how improvements can transform areas and perspectives. Undertaking painting where it is needed, planting trees and flowers, renovating derelict areas – all of these and more, are what makes Residential Streets and Housing Areas attractive and fit to live in.

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

Your Roads Engineer had the right idea! “Work from the inside out”. Make the town a friendly and accessible place to be and, as you say, make space for the buggies, the wheelchairs, and the elderly. A town or village that is comfortable to be in, to shop in, to be able to stop and talk on the street – this is what makes a town or village. The Approach Roads also need to invite the visitor with well-presented and safe entrances to any town or village. Traffic Calming is an important issue today. Can you cross the street safely?

In terms of signage and branding, you have some great ideas, and it is good that you have been offered the services of a professional Ballingarry person who lives in Dublin, to undertake this work for free. We await what happens next!

You have a wonderful idea to have tree planting on all the Approach Roads. But first you need to have a Tree expert to advise you on the species of tree that is appropriate, work with your local Engineer on where the trees should be located and without compromising them if or when new developments take place. And do not plant too closely!

Concluding Remarks:

Ballingarry has so much potential and with your Tidy Towns and the many other groups, you will make your town a place to stay in and to thrive in.