

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Elton - Eilteán**

Ref: **2096**

County: **Limerick**

Mark: **257**

Category: **A**

Date(s): **07/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	34	34
Streetscape & Public Places	80	32	33
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	32	33
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	24	25
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	13	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	29	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	31	32
TOTAL MARK	550	251	257

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 achieved a great deal in 12 months & a lot more than you have indicated in your submission so well done. We are always delighted to have communities participate & we recognize that when a committee is small the burden of responsibilities is large on too few shoulders. A committee of 4 is significantly smaller than average however being able to call on a further 10 community members is a lifeline. Active community support with feet on the ground keeps Tidy Towns groups motivated to continue existing work & contemplate new projects. It is good to hear you are supported by local businesses. Your engagement with Elton's youth through the Girl Guides offers them the opportunity to learn new skills & contribute positively to the community.

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

A walkable & accessible locality for all residents is imperative thus it is fantastic that the new floodlit walkway from the village to the sports field is in situ. Are there plans for any planting to soften the front of the long grey boundary wall running parallel to the path & road? There are clearly developments afoot at the sports grounds club house & when completed, will enhance both the amenity & surroundings. The old sign here "Elton Sports Field" is most unusual & quite unique. It is a lovely facility with the path alongside the pitch.

The refurbishment of Creeds with the assistance of conservation expertise is a sensible approach & provides a facelift to the building. It is a very attractive commercial premises & enjoys great support from the community judging from the level of activity on adjudication day. Your adjudicator is in complete agreement with the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage that the building lends Elton's streetscape "an air of historic integrity & continuity". The Cosy Kitchen is attractively presented with its hanging baskets & cared for façade.

Like many other villages, Elton is dealing with derelict & vacant buildings. However, it is great to see that the former pub for sale with residential planning attached. Well done on camouflaging its dereliction with a painted exterior, covered windows, installation of milk churns & Limerick GAA colours on the crossed hurleys. Many Tidy Towns groups are completing an audit of derelict & vacant properties & then liaising with the local Council on proposals for returning them to residential or commercial use. The twin pronged Derelict Site levy & the Vacant Home Refurbishment grants are having a positive impact on many villages.

Are there plans, sometime in the future, to reinstate the absent mural? If not, it may prove easier to plant climbers to cover the boundary wall – perhaps honeysuckle or clematis.

You have some lovely traditional buildings & street furniture – village pump surrounded by a lovely curved stonewall & the ruins of The Condensed Milk Co. of Ireland Filling Station. The latter's history is intriguing.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The riverside location for the picnic benches is simply lovely. The benches, with their colourful facelift, provide an inviting space & ideal for young families with the safety of gates. The roses here were blooming on adjudication day & the butterflies displayed on the wall are a whimsical addition.

The bed across from Elton Close had a lovely mix of flowering roses & flowering perennials. It seemed as if someone had helped themselves to the sunflower blooms judging from the cut to the stem! The stone fronted bed at Elton Close's boundary had lovely rose blooms. Your work in the past at the crossroads is paying dividends & the hardy geranium was blooming in blue as was in hypericum in yellow. A little attention here will prevent encroachment by scutch grass. The centre bed had great colour on show.

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

It is great to see you promote the No Mow May campaign & also explain to the community the importance of dandelions in a fun & engaging way. Your commitment to delay grass cutting is commendable. You are also promoting workshops on biodiversity that allows community members to educate themselves. The sharing of information in this area from Biodiversity Ireland <https://biodiversityireland.ie/> Irish Wildlife Trust <https://iwt.ie/> & many others allow the community to play their part. You might also encourage families to partake in wildlife surveys e.g., Irish Garden Bird Survey that takes place annually starting in December. <https://birdwatchireland.ie/our-work/surveys-research/research-surveys/irish-garden-bird-survey/> The Flower Timed Insect (FIT) Count is a fun & engaging activity for families & provides 10 minutes of peace! <https://biodiversityireland.ie/surveys/fit-counts/> Well done on starting the move from annuals to perennials – a lot less planting work for the future, less watering & reduced costs over time. The lavenders at the picnic area are a lovely example & they were thriving on the visit. So too was the nepeta in the butlers sink under the old pump – a lovely contrast of black & white.

Whilst it was not seen on adjudicator day, the issue of invasive species in rivers is worrying. In Elton's case, it is heartening to hear that there is a significant improvement in Year 3 of the Giant Hogweed management programme.

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

Well done to the local business providing the labels with the recipe for green cleaning products, an excellent idea. Many times, people want to be sustainable however do not know where to turn so it is fantastic to see you share Limerick City & County Council's cloth nappy incentive scheme & outline how many nappies an average child uses prior to going nappy free.

Your Community Library has to be one of the most unusual & unique repurposed facilities this adjudicator has seen to date. It would be hoped that the community avails of it to keep titles moving & interesting.

The bike rack outside the picnic area is a great location for the amenity & it would be hoped would encourage families to combine a cycle & picnic.

It is great that you are harvesting rainwater to eliminate your dependence on treated water.

There are lots of ideas in the Tidy Towns Handbook on this particular area. Sustainability-Doing-More-with-less.pdf (tidytowns.ie) ChangeX is a platform for ideas & potential funding. ChangeX: The Best Ideas for Your Community

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your role in keeping the community updated in relation to the Bring Bank amenity & its availability is a good way to deter people from arriving there & leaving behind, outside the receptacles, their recycling. The area & receptacles were spotless on adjudication day.

The TLC8 is a fantastic countywide initiative & a great way to engender engagement within the community. Are you noticing more community members joining each year & is there an increase or decrease in the amount of litter collected, year on year? Your regular litter picks are clearly working as the village was free of litter during the visit. An annual audit of street furniture is a good strategy e.g., redundant poles, obsolete signage, discarded safety equipment, etc. You can then liaise with the local Council on having the items removed or repaired to reduce clutter & present a tidier village.

The availability of a Community Employment worker is a great resource & they can assist greatly in a Tidy Towns To Do list.

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

Sruth an Oir's curved entrance & stonewalls creates a lovely vista. The green areas here were lovely with their short meadows of clover. It would be nice to see the addition of trees on the left-hand side of the entrance.

Elton Close's boundary of trees have matured well. An edible hedge, planted now, would negate the need to replace the timber fencing in time & provide food for wildlife & a noise reduction barrier for residents.

There are a number of volunteer led organisations that work with community groups, residents' associations & school to create mini forests. Check out Trees on the Land <https://www.treesontheland.com/> Easy Treesie <https://easytreesie.com/> Limerick City & County Council participate in the annual National Tree Week & if you are interested will make trees freely available. It would be a good way to interest the residents in the estates & perhaps have the children involved. A suggestion would be to have a community tree-planting event with advice on hand for novice gardeners – a tree for each child.

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

It is always good to hear that road enhancements have improved the life of a village's community as you indicate has happened, because of the footpaths installed on the R515 approach road. The Céad Míle Fáilte sign across from Elton Close is one of the prettiest this adjudicator has seen to date & would be a lovely image for heritage signs leading into the village from all approach roads.

The long approach road L1510 has a gorgeous vista of maintained stonewalls & on long stretches hawthorn hedging with linear tree planting & pastureland for miles.

Concluding Remarks:

Elton is a haven & it would be hoped the community could fully appreciate both its beauty & potential. It is quite transformative when all village properties are occupied as the streetscape is enhanced & there comes a greater pride in the streetscape. Hopefully then the community would take a greater collective interest in the locality & become more actively involvement in its appearance.