

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Garryowen - Garraí Eoin** Ref: **2113**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **234**
Category: **D** Date(s): **03/08/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	34
Streetscape & Public Places	80	33
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	33
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	20
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	25
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	25
TOTAL MARK	550	234

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valú 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 are most welcome as a new entrant to the Tidy Towns Competition and we hope you benefit from your involvement into the future. Your committee is well supported by volunteers, local community groups, businesses and agencies. The involvement with Garryowen youth is imperative for the future of the locality. It is fantastic to see you use your social media platform to raise awareness of issues, events and provide support to community members. A highly visible presence on social media provides you with a wide reach for requests for assistance, showcasing of projects and delivering messages under the various categories of tidy towns involvement. Well done on teaming up with University of Limerick students on the creation of a mural at the historic Market Fields Stadium and it was even more poignant that a Garryowen resident was one of those students involved in its creation.

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

Derelict or vacant properties are a thorn in the side of many a Tidy Towns group. Some communities have completed an audit of these buildings and then liaised on a regular basis with Limerick City and County Council on potential solutions for the list of homes compiled. This strategy has been successful for a number of groups in Limerick. You are clearly ahead of the curve as you have been lobbying for several years. There is no doubt your perseverance is paying off as we note there are 7 sites in Garryowen on the Derelict Sites Register. Limerick City & County Council are one of the more proactive councils in their approach on this issue and are actively compulsorily acquiring derelict properties.

Markets Field Stadium mural is a wonderful addition to the area and compliments the stunning mural on the side of St John's Brass and Reed Band building's gable. The message conveyed in the most recent mural is so important for everyone. Perhaps you now have the opportunity for more murals e.g. the boundary walls of the ESB substation, the wall by the steps close to Reidy Court and the utility boxes dotted around the estate. There may be further capacity to work with CWELL. Another option would be to propose a project similar to Dublin Canvas or Draw Out Limerick to Limerick City and County Council. It is a more cost effective way than addressing graffiti and brightens up an area. <https://www.dublincanvas.com/about> <https://drawout.ie/new/>

St Patrick's Well is a green oasis tucked in as it is between two roads. The tree-lined approach presents a lovely vista. Well done on the remedial works you have undertaken here. Is it hoped, in time, to improve the footpaths here, as it would be difficult for anyone with mobility issues to reach the shrine? The Saint Patrick's Donkey mural is whimsical and a lovely story to accompany it whether there is truth in it or not. It would be great to erect a plaque or information board with the accompanying story to put the mural in context. There may be potential funding through the Going for Gold competition.

The Marian Shrine occupies a prominent position and the statue, paving, walls & railings were well presented on

adjudication day.

The bronze statue of Patrick Sarsfield on the limestone pedestal in the front lawn of St John's Cathedral's presbytery is certainly tucked in under the large horse chestnut tree. We noticed one of the interior sides of the surrounding wall is crumbling and the surface area has significant damage. Are there plans to address these issues by either the local council or St Patrick's Cathedral?

The Gothic revival St John's Cathedral is a stunning architectural gem in your streetscape and its entry in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage makes for interesting reading as did the Cathedral's website.

Geraldine's AFC club house and grounds are very well maintained. The railings surrounding the grounds offer a soft perimeter boundary.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

We would be interested to hear the outcome of the URBACT Health & Green Space project that commenced in May 2020 and ran until August 2022. As members of the linkage group, let us know what impact it will have on Garryowen in the short to medium term. You included a mockup of Lawrence Park that we assumed was part of this project however as there was no reference in the text we were unsure.

The size and number of your green spaces is remarkable and the lower green area is lovely with its tree-lined perimeter. The upper green would benefit greatly from tree planting. There are a number of volunteer led organisations specifically focused on working with communities to create mini forests and increase tree planting. A few of these are Pocket Forests www.pocketforests.ie - they are focused on working in urban areas; Easy Treesie www.easytreesie.com - they work with children in communities and Trees on the Land www.treesontheland.com - work with communities & monitor the trees for 5 years. In conjunction with National Tree Week, Limerick City & County Council distribute free saplings to interested communities. We note last year they planted 20 trees in Garryowen. Some communities have used National Tree Week to put in place a plan to plant a tree for and with every child over the course of a number of years. Most of the volunteer organizations listed above provide funding and work in partnership with the community.

Geraldine's AFC have a sizeable perimeter with plenty of space for further tree planting & native/edible hedges.

What are the plans for the area presently left unattended at the rear of the playing fields?

Well done on planting perennials at the Marian Shrine. Some more infill perennials would reduce the need for weeding as they grew and expanded.

Unfortunately, the containers at Patrick Sarsfield statue were no longer planted with shrubs or flowers and looked forlorn.

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

You are to be commended for thinking strategically and successfully sourcing funding to engage an ecologist to create a local biodiversity plan. You will receive practical clear ideas for projects to enhance areas within Garryowen for wildlife and lots of details on wildlife and biodiversity projects including the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) with ideas to help local bees and butterflies. As with every plan, this is your starting point and will be a marathon rather than a race. It is best if you draw up a 5 Year Plan and take projects on in bite sized pieces in order to ensure successful completion. There are now many funding streams for projects in this area. Your local Biodiversity Officer or Local Environmental Officer at the local council is your first port of call.

This year Limerick City and County Council organized a free Sustainable Gardening Course, which would tie in nicely with gaining practical skills in advance of your biodiversity plan. The best course of action is to make contact with your Local Environmental Awareness Officer who will keep you updated on any relevant upcoming courses or materials available. Garryowen CDP's new gardening club should also be involved in any initiatives as the more community overlap that occurs the better.

DC for Bees "Orchards in the Community" are looking for communities to plant orchards in order to provide an early food source for our struggling bee population. They plan to plant the orchards again this year in November with interested communities. It would be worthwhile putting your community down on the list and hopefully they will still have spare capacity. <https://www.hostinireland.com/orchardsinthecommunity>

There are many surveys that you can encourage the community to undertake and will prove both fun and engaging for children & families. The Irish Garden Bird Survey takes place annually in November/December.

<https://birdwatchireland.ie/our-work/surveys-research/research-surveys/irish-garden-bird-survey/> The Flower Timed Insect (FIT) Count is a short, 10 minute survey that is appealing to children. The National Biodiversity Data Centre is a fantastic resource & well worth using some of their surveys. It is important to note your findings and include in next year's report. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/> You have an active social media platform on which to promote these activities.

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

The Garryowen Decarbonising Together Project is an excellent initiative encouraging open discussions during the walks and workshops. We watched with interest the online short film. The variety of responses, level of interest and verbalized difficulties offer an opportunity for further engagement. It would be worth making contact with Limerick Clare Energy Agency who provides energy efficiency and renewable energy advice and training for community groups. We saw on Garryowen's CDP's social media page that they held an Information evening on Saving Energy At Home last month. We would expect to see you share these type of events on your platform and reference the level of interest and any known results in next year's submission. Also local libraries have Energy Saving Kits available for community members to take out for a specific period of time in order to carry out energy audits at home. They are very popular and in many libraries there is a waiting list.

[https://www.limerick.](https://www.limerick.ie/council/newsroom/news/you-can-now-borrow-home-energy-savings-kits-from-libraries-across-limerick?)

[ie/council/newsroom/news/you-can-now-borrow-home-energy-savings-kits-from-libraries-across-limerick?](https://www.limerick.ie/council/newsroom/news/you-can-now-borrow-home-energy-savings-kits-from-libraries-across-limerick?)

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Limerick City and County Council mark October, National Reuse Month and this presents you with a fantastic opportunity to get the community involved. There are some great videos on My Waste to get you thinking and planning. <https://www.mywaste.ie/reuse-month/>

It is obvious from the planters at the Patrick Sarsfield statue that Garryowen Youth Committee are skilled in woodcraft and perhaps some of their work involves using recycled materials. Do include these initiatives in this section and it would be great to see accompanying photos.

This is an area where many residents may already be active e.g. walking instead of using the car for short trips; rainwater harvesting; car pooling for sports, work or social events; home insulation measures; upcycling etc. The Tidy Towns Handbook is a fantastic resource for ideas in this category. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Sustainability-Doing-More-with-less.pdf>

The FAI launched the GreenCode last year. This is a global green accreditation scheme that is accessible to all

clubs and covers areas such as water, waste, energy, procurement and biodiversity. If they are not already involved, do bring it to the club's attention as it is fully funded by SSE Airtricity and would tie in neatly with your work in these categories.

We understand Scoil Eoin Naofa are participants in the Green Schools programme however we could find no further detail on their website. As part of next year's submission you might ask them to include a brief synopsis of their activities, as again it will tie in neatly with yours under sustainability, biodiversity and tidiness.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Judging from the pictures provided you had an army of volunteers out assisting at the Team Limerick Cleanup.

What an amazing show of community spirit and solidarity. It will be interesting to keep a note of the number of bags of rubbish collected each year and monitor if the quantity is decreasing year on year. Many communities have found that when they maintain the area free of litter there is an increased sense of pride and reduced littering. It would be hoped that you are seeing evidence of this on your daily morning litter picks.

Are the local schools involved in the Picker Pal Programme? It would be a positive way to make contact with them and ask for their engagement, as it is a free environmental activity programme tailored to primary schools.

<https://pickerpalsworld.org/>

Your strategy of walking the greens prior to grass cutting certainly reduces the chance of litter being shredded into multiples for collection. However on adjudication day, the landscaping company was obviously there unannounced as the cut grass was awash with shredded litter, not an inviting sight. The steps close to Reidy Court were badly littered with cans, as were the parking bays at Cloughaun Fort with fastgas canisters. Unfortunately, St Patrick's Well had visitors who decided to leave all their unwanted food containers and drinking receptacles for others to clean up.

In time you might consider asking residents to take responsibility for their avenues for monitoring and collecting litter and then hold an annual competition to whet the competitive appetite. It has worked for some urban centres and upped the standard significantly.

It is regrettable that Garryowen residents have to contend with illegal dumping and waste burning. As these events generally occur over cover of darkness it is very difficult to prevent other than reporting them when they occur and ensuring quick removal where possible.

An annual audit of street furniture is a good strategy e.g. redundant poles, obscured signage, obsolete signage, bollards or lighting standards requiring painting etc. You can then decide what needs to be referred to the local council and what can be accomplished locally. Where the local council has been unable to provide personnel, some centres have been provided with paint to complete specific tasks that would otherwise be outstanding for some time.

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

There are some lovely examples of red bricked terraces as in Rossa Villas, curved terraces at Keane St, retrofitted enclaves for older community members at Kilmurry Road and renovated properties throughout the estate.

There is no doubt that many residents maintain their homes & gardens to a high standard and there are skilled gardeners in your midst. It is unfortunate that some residents do not share in this sense of pride. However it would be hoped that the Vacant Home Improvement grants would encourage more people to take on projects.

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

The entrance from Cathedral Place is impressive with the two imposing structure of St John's Cathedral and St John's Hospital followed by the terrace of 3 storey red bricked homes and Scoil Eoin Naofa. The roads here were well kept, as were footpaths and street furniture.

The entrance from Pennywell Road has well maintained properties, gardens and boundaries. It is great to see footpaths here reinstated making accessibility a priority for all residents.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done to you on the work you have carried out to date. Your future plans are exciting and it would be hoped that as these plans are advanced more of the community will come on board. As you are new to this competition you will build on your initial scoring as you complete projects in each of the categories and maintain your existing work.

We have a few suggestions for next year's submission. Firstly, thank you for the map provided. We would think the map we were working from included more areas than simply Garryowen so we would suggest defining the boundaries you are working within to reduce the area displayed. The sites you wished the adjudicator to visit were not marked in on the map just on the outside. As your adjudicator is a visitor and does not know the area, this provided a significant amount of additional time to be allocated to locating the various projects. Please ensure that you mark the projects on the map in next year's submission.

Secondly, if you can change the font style or colour for your answers it will make it easier to read your text.