

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre:	Gouldavoher - Gabhal an Dá Bhóthar	Ref:	2190
County:	Limerick	Mark:	257
Category:	D	Date(s):	03/08/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	33	34
Streetscape & Public Places	80	32	32
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	39	40
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	27	28
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45	46
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	29	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	26	27
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 a sizeable committee and a good volunteer base upon whom you can call. It is heartening to hear that the community is supportive of the work your group undertakes and is available to assist on various projects. It would appear you are at the centre of the community as you deal with planning issues that could potentially impact Gouldavoher. Having the support of two local businesses and the local council is imperative in order to finance and complete projects in addition to ongoing maintenance. You make reference to your ongoing work with a local national school however do not mention the name of the school – is it St Nessan's National School or Limerick City East Educate Together? We noted you use traditional communication channels in addition to social media platforms. Unfortunately the social media link referenced is a closed to those not invited and thus we were unable to see the posts for your group. In this case, it would be good to include in your submission one of your newsletters to provide some context for the information disseminated to the community.

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

Gouldavoher is fortunate to have numerous greens throughout the estate and it was especially lovely to see seating at Belvoir Lawn and at the memorial garden. Are there plans to install more seating throughout the estate? As the estate is quite sizeable it would be a good idea to have a map installed at the entrance showing the various road names, greens, allotment, pedestrian entrances and exits etc.

The pathways in general are maintained to a good standard. However the pedestrian access from Fr. Russell Road with the handrail on the right hand side is not accessible for those with mobility issues as the surface is very uneven. It is imperative today that we look at how accessible our estates are and ensure all our residents are catered for from cradle to later years.

In light of a very inclement July, weed growth has been vigorous. Therefore, it is essential to ensure gaps between roads and kerbing, joins on footpaths and around street furniture are addressed as soil gets washed in providing ideal growing conditions for weeds. The best approach is to conduct an audit of each road highlighting where problems exist and then engaging with the local engineer at the council to put in place a plan to deal with the issue.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The linear green on entering Gouldavoher Estate is a very attractive space with the mature lime trees. One can never underestimate the value of trees. It is heartening to see newer trees added in the past few years e.g. at the entrance to Racefield.

The tree canopy of the estate is impressive however there are points to be addressed with regard to the maintenance of the trees. We noted at High Meadows the birch trees had stakes alongside that were redundant, elsewhere ties on the maturing plants need to be loosened, grass and weed growth underneath young and maturing trees should be removed as they compete for nutrients as the trees root system is still quite shallow and finally, suckers on mature trees need to be removed. If you do not feel you have the confidence or expertise within the estate to undertake the work, do liaise with your Local Environmental Officer at the local council for advice. The landscaping on the linear green running parallel to Fr. Russell Road presents a wonderful vista for both passing motorist and pedestrian & well done on planting in the ground here. A few of the flower/shrub beds would benefit from pruning and removal of perennial weeds before they become invasive and move difficult to eradicate. We note your colourful containers on green areas and like last year's adjudicator wondered why you continue to plant in containers when you have the space for ground planting. The drought like conditions we experienced in June create a lot of work for you to water each and every container and we are all aware that volunteers' time is scarce and limited. Also quite a number of the containers under the signs for the various roads have reached the end of their useful life and rather than expend more funds either remove them entirely or plant in a mounded area under the pole. Perhaps this is an area you might review as a group. Once you have established flowerbeds, it is important to maintain them and we noticed quite a number of the cotoneaster shrubs were under threat from sycamore saplings, bindweed & scutch grass.

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

It was wonderful to see on entering the estate the large area left for wildlife and plant life with signage to indicate the reasoning. The swallows were swooping over the area in numbers feeding on the insect life. Similarly, the long meadows at High Meadows were also attracting plenty of bird life. Now that you have these areas in situ it is time to conduct surveys and become citizen scientists. With the population of your estate, there must be quite a cohort of Transition Year students who can assist you in this work. The National Biodiversity Data Centre is a treasure trove of resources – from online training on identification of species like garden butterflies and bumblebees to demonstrating how to conduct nature surveys. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/training-resources/> The Flower Timed Insect (FIT) count is a great one to start with and is a fun and engaging 10 minute activity for families with an app available also. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/surveys/fit-counts/> With the extensive tree and hedgerow canopies within the estate, Gouldavoher must be a haven for birds. The Irish Garden Bird survey that runs annually in November/December is a good start and every household can get involved. <https://birdwatchireland.ie/our-work/surveys-research/research-surveys/irish-garden-bird-survey/> Have you considered having a Local Biodiversity Action plan carried out for the estate? There is funding available from the Local Biodiversity Action Fund and your local Biodiversity Officer or Heritage Officer would be the best point of contact on how to apply locally. This tailored plan would then be your guide on undertaking projects in a number of nature related areas e.g. habitat restoration, biodiversity awareness raising, etc. Birdwatch Ireland's Limerick branch are a very active volunteer led group and work with communities on walks & talks. They would be worth engaging with and they will assist you in determining whether your bird boxes are occupied or not & if occupied, by which species & if not, why.

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

It is good to hear you are continuing with your composting, rainwater harvesting and sustainable management of the allotments. Based on your many examples at the allotments, have many households installed water butts at their residences? The allotments are remarkable and local gardeners were busy digging and harvesting on the day of the visit. One member had quite the crop of potatoes dug while another was harvesting onions. The apple orchard will be providing quite the bounty this year and yours is the first allotment where a fruit cage has been seen in situ. We understand there are 20 active allotment holders. How do new residents find out about the facility, as there were no signposts to the amenity? Do you run any workshops here to assist new gardeners to acquire skills in this area? If there is surplus produce, how is this dealt with?

We noted as we walked around the estate that a number of households have undertaken home energy upgrades. Have you considered holding an Home Energy Saving Information evening? Limerick Clare Energy Agency work with communities to provide energy efficiency and renewable energy advice. www.lcea.ie You could then invite community members who have carried out measures on their homes to attend in order to answer questions from their neighbours. Limerick libraries have Energy Saving Kits available for use by householders for specific time periods in order to track and assess their energy consumption and locate problem areas. These would be worth highlighting on your social media feeds.

Limerick City and County Council has an Active Travel programme and we noted the nearby Dooradoyle Road has upgraded cycle lanes including kerb segregation. Have you as a group engaged in the Active Travel public consultation process?

This sustainability category is an area where involving Gouldavoher's youth would pay dividends for both groups – they get to conduct surveys and add to their skill base and you get feedback on what the community do already and would like to see in the future.

An active social media presence allows you to share events e.g. March 1st – National Stop Food Waste Awareness Day; September – Secondhand Month; October – Reuse Month. You have a great opportunity to highlight the different facets under this category of sustainability.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On adjudication day, the estate was litter free. We assume when you refer to local and national cleanups you are referring to your involvement in team Limerick Cleanup and An Taisce's National Spring Clean. In next year's submission, do let us know whether the amount of litter collected is increasing, decreasing or remaining the same,

year on year.

A good strategy is to conduct an annual audit of street furniture and once completed, it requires minimal effort to review each following year. Items to be considered include redundant poles, obscured or faded signage, cleanliness of signage, blocked gulleys, discarded safety equipment etc. Similar to other estates, many householders are replacing their lawns with hard surfacing thus reducing the amount of soakage when it rains. Therefore it is imperative that gulleys are free of debris at all times and channels are not blocked preventing rainwater run off. Unfortunately many of the gulleys throughout the estate were obstructed.

On some roads, potholes were forming and once again a chat with your local engineer is the best strategy in order for them to add to work lists for attention.

Much of your signage needed cleaning in order to present it to its best.

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

As an estate, you are very fortunate that you are not dealing with dereliction or vacant homes. Having walked every road in the estate, it was clearly evident that the vast majority of home owners take great pride in their homes, gardens and boundaries. The front garden competition you hold annually is an excellent idea and we assume those interested residents also enter the relevant section in the Going for Gold annual competition.

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

The Fr Russell approach road with its linear green, mature trees and raised flowerbeds presents a welcoming panorama for any visitor.

The entrance to the estate with the raised signage flanked by rose bushes and the perennial bed on the opposite side create an excellent first impression. Once again the addition of more trees in recent years to the existing tree canopy is heartening. We would recommend that the roses are pruned and receive a rose feed to improve their health & longevity. Unfortunately, the weed strewn kerbside just a little further on into the estate took some of the shine of our initial impression.

Concluding Remarks:

We enjoyed our visit to Gouldavoher on a rare sunny day walking the various roads and especially visiting the allotments. You have received a lot of advice last year and this year and we would hope that you could undertake some of the proposed projects as providing us with the same information hinders us from increasing your marks significantly in the various categories. As suggested last year, the map provided gives no context to your location and it would be best to include Fr Russell Road on the map so your adjudicator can get their bearings. We wish you the best for your entry in the Going for Gold competition and in your future endeavours.