Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre:	**Knockcarron - Cnoc Carainn**	Ref:	**2057**
County:	**Limerick**	Mark:	**214**
Category:	**A**	Date(s):	**03/08/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	35
Streetscape & Public Places	80	35
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	35
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	12
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	20
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	20
TOTAL MARK	**550**	**214**

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....
Knockcarron is welcome to the competition for your first time, and we hope you enjoy the experience. Your committee of 5 members have another 35 volunteers who help as needed. Your community hall is your hub from where many activities are organised, and we saw the examples provided. Limerick City and County Council provide support for your work as does Ballyhoura Development, Team Limerick Clean up and the Fox's Den. Already you are using WhatsApp and Facebook as well as Instagram, so well done on being up to speed on the digital media platforms. Your specific project for this year is the community centre and you keep it and the surrounding area clean and tidy. Many thanks for the map of Kilcarron with project locations marked for our attention.
We advise committees to prepare a multi-year plan of proposed improvements to help them develop projects and programme their implementation over the years. The plan will also help you in making a case for funding from various bodies. In that regard, it is important to establish contact with the Environmental Officer of Limerick City and County Council who will be very pleased to assist you with information, ideas and on ways to fund projects.
To help us assess the effort and nature of work involved each year, we ask you to tell us about improvement works done over the last year. We will then visit these sites and comment upon them in our report - which becomes feedback for your team and guidance for similar projects. These comments form the basis of the marks awarded after the visit. We liked the way you included pictures within the text of the application form. It is a great way of illustrating the work you have done.
We recommend that you read the revised handbook which has guidance and project ideas on all eight criteria. It is available at the following link. https://www.tidytowns.ie/competition/handbook/

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

Our visit to Knockcarron revealed that you have a community centre, the Fox's Den pub, some monuments, and private houses. There is no school, church, shops, or housing estates which we usually find in most villages. The old school is a lovely cruciform shaped stone building with red brick surrounds on windows and doors and slated roofs. It was built in 1873 with a random rubble wall including a porch to the front and what appears to be an extension to the rear has a rendered finish as does one of the gable walls. The building is in good condition and is now used as a community centre, with the former playground being used as a car park. The rendered gable wall is very suitable for a mural that would reflect the folklore or history of the area. The site is enclosed with a rubble stone wall with rounded coping. A sign inside the grounds is a very useful source of information on Knockcarron. We suggest that a few trees planted inside the wall would add enhancement as would painting the access gate – although a new gate with a more interesting design would look better.

Beside the entrance to the community centre car park, there is a memorial by Oglaigh na hÉireann to the men of the East and Mid Limerick Flying Columns who fought and died in the battle at nearby Lackelly on May 2nd, 1921. Beside that is a sign with information on Mary (Mai) Moloney (1894-1967) who lived in Lackelly and gave refuge to Republican leaders during the War of Independence. There is also a map of the environs of Knockcarron and a small sign with details of the rescue of Sean Hogan at Knocklong. This is a very interesting part of Knockcarron and while there is much text to read, we feel that visitors would take the time to read it and perhaps also take a picture with their phones for reading later. The monument and signs are lacking in unity and the site is a little restricted. A kerb defines the space, but mown grass is not very suitable as a surface in this case. Landscaping is essentially the hedge. There is a holly tree near the Sean Hogan sign, but there is also a specimen of New Zealand cabbage tree (Cordyline australis) which is not appropriate here. What is needed is a redesign of this entire feature, including the sign at the front of the community centre. Several options should be considered. The first one would be to move the monument and signs to inside the wall of the former playground and to line them up together in a corner. Then hard surface the site outside the wall to facilitate car parking for passers by who would park and visit the monument etc. Alternatively, allow visitors to drive into the car park. If you don't like that option, then make a larger space outside the wall, and surface it in gravel, provide some seating and rearrange the monument and signs. Another option is to align the monument and signs in front of the rendered gable wall of the community centre, where they would be more visible. The option of moving everything across the road to the green space is not ideal because it is on a bend - it would not be very visible, and parking would be a problem. We suggest you form a think tank on this project and seek assistance from a landscape architect.

Nearby is the Fox's Den, your local pub and we noted the small car park tucked into a space on the opposite side of the road – it is well hidden but of course all local people know of its existence. The building is well painted and has hanging baskets on the façade. We also noted the old village pump, which is well protected within a 'U' shaped enclosure of stone walls.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The only open space in Knockcarron is the curved green space almost opposite the community centre. Because of its small size and location on a bend, it has little value for community use – it is essentially a roadside margin, the purpose of which is to provide sightlines for traffic. We suggest that a line of birch trees planted in the centre would add enhancement and help frame the approach to the community centre. Rather than mowing all through summertime, you could mow less frequently and encourage wildflowers to develop and add some colour. Well done to the local volunteer for taking care of the window boxes at the community centre – they looked very well, as did the hanging basket at the Fox's Den.

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

You have the right idea by only cutting a part of the roadside margin to facilitate pedestrians and leaving the rest for wildlife to establish. We went up the road to the quarry and saw how you are maintaining access there – well done. It is great to learn that the 'No Mow May' message was heard and practiced in Knockcarron.

You have a rich natural area surrounding your community and it is important to promote an awareness of its many traits and to map these habitats. Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital to achieve under this category. In this regard researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages. Habitats of value include specimen trees, hedgerows, treelines, streams, woodlands, and wetlands. Try to list the plants and animals to be found there and recognise their significance (native, protected, or alien invasive?). This information can be fun to gather and can involve the schools or other interested parties. Raise awareness through holding events such as hedgerow walks or bat walks. Contact the Irish Wildlife Trust for more information.

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

Under this heading, you have told us about residents harvesting rainwater for use on vegetable gardens. This is where you make good use of Facebook, by promoting sustainability and encouraging people to shop locally to protect local business. We wish you luck with Ballyhoura Development in your quest to become a sustainable energy community.

Under this criterion, there are several more projects that if undertaken could gain more marks. Therefore, we suggest you consult the handbook on the following link for more ideas on projects under this criterion. https://www.tidytowns.ie/competition/handbook/
For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please look at http://localprevention. ie/tidy-towns/

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done for taking part in Team Limerick Clean-up - 35 volunteers picked a trailer of rubbish
Your committee members do regular litter picks, and you are surprised at the volume of rubbish collected. Unfortunately, there are still too many people who don't care enough about the environment.

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

Residents in Knockcarron take great pride in their homes and gardens. Many have hedges on their boundaries, and several have floral containers close to their houses. We were most impressed with the planting of Hollyhocks outside one garden wall

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

We noted the horseshoe shaped signs ton the approaches to Knockcarron. While flowers were planted around them, some have grown so tall that they obscure the sign, which you do not want. The horseshoes in most cases needed painting.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done on your participation. We hope you find our comments and suggestions helpful for future projects.