

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Southill - Cnoc Theas** Ref: **2220**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **261**
Category: **C** Date(s):

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	35	36
Streetscape & Public Places	80	31	32
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	32	33
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	21	22
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	28	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	31	31
TOTAL MARK	550	255	261

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.

Thank you for your very accessible Southill map and presentation which was very clear and understandable.

Southill has been involved in Tidy Towns since 2012 and in that time, you were fortunate enough to secure second overall winner and highest improvement in tidiness and litter score in 2014. Not alone that but you also won the endeavour award and received the Judges Award in 2017. Well done!

You have 10 people on your committee, and a further 5 Volunteers. That is a good cohort when you have only recently become involved in Tidy Towns. It is also good that both your Tidy Towns group and the Southill Residents Association work closely together. You also have a very wide group of organizations that you can consult with – including the Local Authority, Limerick Regeneration, Southill Hub, The Gaff, Southill Family Resource Centre, Southill Hub, Southside Women's Group, Men's Shed, Women's Shed, Roxboro Garda Station, Our lady Queen of Peace School and the Le Céile National school. Additionally, you have support from the private sector - Maldron Hotel, Fitzgerald Waste, and the Rigid Box factory. Collaboration is very important in Tidy Towns. Working together will result in getting more done and it will also generate much more ideas from the group members.

Communication is so important, and you have two monthly newsletters, a Facebook page and community text. We note that you do not exclude the Elderly and you use leaflet drops for them. It is all about selling a message and doing this will eventually work to your benefit.

Having National Schools representatives on your Tidy Towns group is crucially important – children can appreciate what is being done and they also communicate the message to their parents. Tidy Towns is a life lesson. You undertake environmental projects with the After School's Clubs in the area and having one of the Leaders as part of your Tidy Towns Group spreads the message further.

Starting a Wildflower project with the Our Lady Queen of peace school and the Le Céile National school further solidifies the idea that all this work is just normal and even at times fun and exciting! Even Tait House Junior TLC Group pick up the habit of keeping it litter free. That is the way that things should be.

Your one specific project that you wish to mention is the small Wildflower Beds that have been positioned around the area. This is a great idea; it can be an adventure for children and the adults; and it makes your area brighter too. A good choice and Wildflowers are constantly in the news now.

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

Your Southill area has had some change over the past few years and a 41% decrease in population compared to an 11% increase in Limerick City tells a tale. However, it is good to see that your estates are included in the Limerick

City Regeneration areas. Refurbishment of houses and new housing developments have commenced and hopefully this will be a positive change for your community.

Change is happening in your community. The Le Chéile school has replaced the Holy Family School, and which will be made available for community enterprise use. Tait House facilitates community enterprise and is part of a grouping of the Holy Family Church and Southill Health Centre. All change and for the better we would hope. The new housing second phase of the Churchfield Housing development is also good news.

There would seem to be signs of regeneration and it is good to see that the Galvone Road Industrial Estate is now "coming back to life". Employment is crucially important in any community.

It is so inspiring to see that a new Play Space has been given the "green light". It is very important to have plans in place to keep it safe and to repair any damage almost immediately. Dereliction leads to dereliction. The Play Space plans look very good.

The Regeneration office are helping to repair the wall near O'Malley Park – all these small positive additions make a place better and lead to positivity in the community. The best way to deal with disrepair is to repair it immediately and to get the support of the community also. What has happened in Southill – demolition and vandalism of housing has created a scar in the Southill area. There is a very large area of empty space now. Some of this is probably meant to be allocated for new housing developments. We have already seen new housing and apartment construction. Much of the open space is probably allocated for more housing construction. There is a problem with the positioning of some of the existing housing. Much of the housing is built in a way where they are adjoining small areas of open space. Many of these open spaces then become problems for the residents – for example litter, and teenagers congregating in the spaces. No housing should be constructed with blank walls facing onto open spaces. We noted the effort to enhance these small areas with flowers and new "timber kerbing". While this looks attractive it will still not deal in the long term with the real issue described above.

The Holy Family Church, The Southill Hub and adjoining apartment block and new housing, for example Churchfield Phase 2, would seem to be a good direction for Southill to be moving in.

You mentioned the wall at the exit of O'Malley Park, and which has fallen into disrepair. We noted the work that has been undertaken here and it looks very good. In some ways a wall can be quite blank and perhaps some intervention with a hedge or ivy planting might, in the future, help to make it more attractive. Lastly, your Grotto in O'Malley Park has had an upgrade and you used the paint from the Relove Paint project. Features like these are so important and, in this case, the Grotto is a place of remembrance.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You say that there are a variety of green spaces throughout Southill. This is good but the important thing with Green Spaces is to manage them effectively. Remove the litter, keep the grass cut – except where you have created Wildflower areas - and plant trees as far as is possible - and only with the participation of the local community and the City Council. That makes it more resilient. You are proposing a new Play Area in front of the Holy Family Parish Church. This is a positive move. Again, immediate, and continual maintenance is crucial. Dereliction leads to dereliction. And the local community must be involved to make it work.

It is also great to see the number of playing fields. These are crucial for everyone, teenagers and adults and local clubs, and again – maintenance is paramount. Keeping a place clean and tidy provides a positivity in a community. Well done on the flower beds. Yes, they take time and energy, but the display of flowers can be inspiring for the community. You should also prepare a plan for tree planting and the best way to do this is to plant small trees and densely. And as with Wildflowers both children and adults should be involved in the work. During National Tree Week in 2023 it would be great to have an area prepared for both Wildflowers and trees, the planting to be undertaken by the schools and you should also invite your local Councillors. Your local Councillors are always interested in new projects.

We are delighted to see that the boulders have been removed and we would like to see what alternatives have been considered?

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

We are delighted to see your focus on Wildflower Gardens and that good work is being undertaken in local schools to educate the pupils on this relatively new concept. It is inspiring to see that Southill is rich in biodiversity. Yes, it better to start off with a manageable area and to progress from there. When you have "found your feet", so to speak, you can extend your wildflower areas. Start small and get bigger. There is a maintenance issue with any project and you should look at this and understand how to maintain these areas in the longer term. Talk to your Parks Department about this.

One of your Southill members has proposed to use the Tiny Forest concept, an idea that was developed in Japan. It could be very interesting for both the schoolchildren – National School and Secondary School – to become involved in. We would love to see if such a project can be developed in Southill – and perhaps, Southill might be the first to undertake it?

It is inspiring to see new allotments developed in 2022 and in O'Malley Park. This has been created with Southill Family Resource Centre in conjunction with Limerick City and County Council. This is a wonderful idea and will introduce residents to grow food produce and flowers. And the flowers can also be used in the estate.

No doubt, you will progress from flowers to vegetables as the next stage! The development can also be used by the schools, and it would be wonderful for children to see where vegetables "come" from.

The O'Malley Park Grotto has been upgraded by painting the railings and some of the flowers have been planted in the Grotto area also.

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

Limerick City is doing its best for paint recycling. The project was an initiative of Tait House, the Rediscovery Centre

and the Limerick City and County Council. It has, so far, resulted in the recycling of over 1700 litres of paint. Southill has Reloved 276 litres of paint and used those for the following organisations such as Family Resource Centre, Southill Hub, St Marys, Carew Park AFC, CBS Primary school. Some of the paint is being used to decorate ESB and other utility boxes which would otherwise be graffitied. This is Sustainability in action.

For next year, do think about one or two more Sustainability projects. Sustainability is everywhere now, and we can see this in the recent wildfires in Greece, in particular.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Litter and bonfires are a problem, but it is good to see that there is a concerted effort to deal with both. The Team Limerick Clean Up idea is also part of the action in Southill and co-ordinated from Tait House. Litter and dumping are a nationwide issue, unfortunately. Working to control the litter is the only way to ensure that in time there will be a "sea change" in attitudes to this problem and it is part of the Southill focus. That is good to see. In relation to the bonfire issues, it is as you mention, important to remove the material as soon as possible. For the discussion in schools it is so important, and bonfires can be discussed in terms of pollution and Sustainability.

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

Much renewal of housing as well as demolition is taking place and it is obviously unsettling while the work is being undertaken. O'Malley and Keyes Park in particular, have been decimated by demolitions which have created a very disjointed appearance to the wider area. Hopefully, the renewal programme will progress and lead to stabilisation of the wider area.

Collins Avenue divides both sides of the four parks and is the main artery to Limerick City from the Fedamore direction. We have forgotten to note on our visit if there are Pedestrian Crossings on Collins Avenue? If there are, that is good, and it makes the connection from both sides of Southill safe. It also creates connectivity between both areas.

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

Unlike rural towns and villages, Southill is an extension of Limerick City and has several approach roads that emanate from the city; these approach roads do not have green areas to maintain. The roads which do are the Kilmallock Road, Fedamore Road, and the link road from the motorway to Childers Road.

For health and safety reasons the Tidy Towns group do not have a direct role in dealing with the main approaches as the local authority is responsible for these areas, which are generally well kept. As already referred to, the Fedamore approach is via Collins Avenue and the green areas here are maintained by local CE workers. The Roxboro Roundabout and Kilmallock Road Roundabout as well as a small roundabout coming from the motorway are within the Southill area and all maintained to a good standard. If not done already and it probably has been, it would be great to see a mass planting of Daffodil bulbs on the roundabout and this would be a wonderful cheerful feature in early Spring.

Concluding Remarks:

Southill has many problems, but it is inspiring to see that efforts are underway from many bodies – The Southill Residents, Tait House, The Southill Hub, Holy Family Parish and many others that include Private Enterprise, to name but a few. Keep up the good work and good luck to everyone in Southill in making this community a wonderful place to live in.