

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Woodlawn - Plásóg na Coille** Ref: **2095**  
County: **Limerick** Mark: **267**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **03/08/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	37	38
Streetscape & Public Places	80	30	31
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	35	36
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	19	19
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	30	31
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>267</b>

### 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.

It is fantastic to see a large committee and a robust volunteer base in a housing estate as it indicates a strong community spirit and a collective focus. Clearly with social gatherings, regular meetings, estate maintenance and clean ups there are numerous opportunities for existing residents to get involved and new residents to the estate to become acquainted with their neighbours. It would be of interest to your adjudicator to read one of your newsletters in next year's submission.

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

Although you indicate this is not a relevant category for your group, your adjudicator would differ. The entrance to your estate is now dominated by a large and long fence around a previous vacant site for which we note there are plans for development. This is the category in which updates can be provided to let your adjudicator know the current situation.

As an estate now over half a century old, the communal central green areas and mature trees offer a wonderful sense of space and we know from international studies that greenness in our streetscape is linked with better health.

The area is walkable although we noted that some footpaths require remediation work in order to ensure accessibility for all residents irrespective of mobility. In some places, this work has been undertaken and the impact for the pedestrian is noticeable.

### Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Five green spaces within an estate are a great amenity for all residents irrespective of age especially when seating is available. However, for anyone with reduced mobility or requiring wheelchair access it would be difficult to reach either bench on the main green. There is a Community Activities Fund that may be available to provide funding to remedy access.

The Grotto area was receiving attention on adjudication day and is a well presented space. As last year's adjudicator commented, when you have the space to plant in the ground is there a need for all of the containers in situ there? It is an onerous task for your group to maintain and water these especially in the month of June when we experienced a very warm spell although more recently we have had the opposite situation.

The Memorial Rose Garden is such a lovely idea and one that could be adopted by every estate as it occupies such a small space. The recent wet weather has allowed bindweed to attempt a takeover.

The Fruit Garden demonstrates what can be carved out from a wedge of space albeit a large wedge. One would imagine that today in newer estates, another house or two would be constructed in this space. It is a fantastic resource for fresh fruit and berry produce and the sweet apples were not far from being ready for harvesting. There is a project in existence, DC for Bees, who are seeking communities interested in adding mixed fruit tree orchards to their green spaces. Within Woodlawn Park, there are several suitable sites and would be worth considering as funding is provided. <https://www.hostinireland.com/orchards>

Other volunteer led organizations are working with communities to create mini forests (about the size of a car parking space) and again Woodland Park has areas where this is potential. Pocket Forests is focused on urban areas and again, funding is available. [www.pocketforests.ie](http://www.pocketforests.ie) National Tree Week held annually in March offers you an opportunity to celebrate the trees you have and perhaps organize a talk about the trees in the estate, as many people need assistance to recognize the different species. <https://www.treecouncil.ie/national-tree-week>

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

This is an area where you are doing the work and you have ideal green spaces that are secure in which to conduct surveys. Your fruit garden provides an important food source for local pollinators and the local children could get involved in submitting data on bees and hoverflies. The Flower Timed Insect (FIT) count is a fun and engaging 10-minute activity for children. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/surveys/fit-counts/> There are lots of online training resources on this site e.g. Garden Butterfly identification course; How to identify, record & monitor Common Irish Bumblebees to mention just two. You may have a Transition Year student who would be interested in conducting and publicizing these surveys in conjunction with your group. Oftentimes people are interested in the area of biodiversity but unaware of the resources available. This is where, you as a group, have the opportunity to promote and educate.

You have created a green oasis within the estate now keep a keen eye out and become citizen scientists. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) is another fantastic piece of reference material. <https://pollinators.ie/aipp-2021-2025/>

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

We feel you are hiding your talents under the bushes here. During the visit we noted quite a number of houses have undertaken energy reduction measures and the new extension to the estate at Woodlawn Close are all A rated residences. Limerick Clare Energy Agency provides energy efficiency and renewable energy advice to community groups. It might be worthwhile making contact with them to see if you could hold an Information Evening for residents and ensure residents who have had energy upgrade work completed are available to answer questions. For many of us this area seems complex and having people you know on hand who have first hand experience of energy upgrades is both helpful & reassuring <https://www.lcea.ie/>

You provide an excellent example of how rainwater harvesting can be accomplished from the smallest of roofs as seen at The Grotto & at the Fruit Garden. It would be interesting to know how many of your 129 houses have followed suit and installed domestic water butts. We noted too your composting bins at the Fruit Garden. Do you use this compost in your planters and in the flowerbeds?

There are some interesting initiatives undertaken by groups like yours in the area of reducing waste e.g. demonstrations on what to do with apples – juicing, dehydrating, cookery demos, chutneys, jams etc. Many of these skills are no longer part and parcel of the autumn schedule and with your apple harvest you have an ideal opportunity to share these skills. There are several groups focused on reducing household plastic waste and you can share these ideas through your newsletters & on any shared social media platform e.g. Voice Ireland [www.voiceireland.org](http://www.voiceireland.org)

As you are a tight knit community, do you offer a facility to freecycle? – one has items no longer required that are offered first to the community e.g. childrens' toys or books your children no longer use, excess garden produce etc. Some groups have a designated once weekly "Free to Take, Free to Give" table to provide a central point for the facility.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

An annual audit of street furniture is a good strategy and once completed is easy to monitor on an annual basis. Items to consider are redundant poles, obsolete signage, obscured or faded signage, blocked gulleys, seating requiring maintenance etc.

With the exception of litter around the first seating area and by the kerbside there, there was no other litter visible. Unfortunately, with the weather in July, it has been increasingly difficult to keep kerbsides weed free. With the increased numbers of households converting their gardens to hard surface areas, it is imperative to keep gulleys free of debris to allow the torrential rain free channels to traverse.

It would be worthwhile engaging with the local engineer in the council with regard to faded road markings and asking them to put the job on their list to be addressed when next in the area.

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

Woodland Park is fortunate not to have any derelict or vacant homes that have blighted other estates. Residents are to be commended for the high standard of their homes, gardens and boundaries and it is clear there are many talented gardeners residing within the estate. It is good to hear that Woodlawn Close are now members of the residents association.

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

We referenced in an earlier section the site at the entrance to the estate. The approach into the estate is very well

maintained with the Grotto having an immediate positive visual impact.

**Concluding Remarks:**

As a group and as a community you are to be commended for the standard of your estate's presentation. The creation of mature green areas takes many decades of work both in terms of their creation and maintenance. The welcoming of new residents into the association brings in new energy and ideas that cannot fail to brighten the estate's future. Thank you for a most enjoyable visit to Woodlawn Park and Close.

Please note that a map is required every year as each year a new adjudicator visits your estate and it would be onerous to expect over 900 maps to be kept on file.