

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: Claremorris - Clár Chlainne Mhuiris	Ref: 514
County: Mayo	Mark: 310
Category: D	Date(s): 03/07/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	42	44
Streetscape & Public Places	80	40	42
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	41	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	35	36
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	18	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	29	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	36	38
TOTAL MARK	550	296	310

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.

Welcome to the Super Valu Tidy Towns Competition for 2023. We thank you for your entry, and wish you all the best in all your future work. Good luck.

Claremorris - Clár Chlainne Mhuiris, a mid - sized town with a population of 3687 people – has entered the competition for many years and has a committee of 7 members with support of another 20 volunteers.

- In terms of voluntary commitment, you have WhatsApp Group chats daily. Monthly meetings are held pre-March and weekly meetings from March onwards.
 - Support is received from a wide range of local and national agencies and businesses, including Claremorris Chamber of Commerce, Claremorris Clár IRD, Cúram Claremorris, Family Resource Centre Claremorris, Claremorris Men's Shed, Claremorris District & Lions Club, Claremorris Historical Society, Kavanagh's Supervalu Claremorris, Keans Arro Hardware and Garden Centre, Aurivo Homeland Co Op, The Shamrock Bar, Jeremiah Higgins, Flynn's Pharmacy, ForteWayne Castlebar, and a number of interested local councillors and officials from Mayo County Council.
 - You communicate with the public mainly via your Facebook channel which has a solid 1607 followers.
 - You engage with all local Primary Schools and Secondary Schools for various projects.
- Your TY's and Secondary School pupils have planted trees with the Lions Club and they are involved in a Biodiversity Awareness Art Project to be completed this year.
- You confirm that the Claremorris community has benefited from entering the Tidy Towns Competition over the years, as it encourages residents to work together to achieve specified goals which helps to make Claremorris a more inclusive and better place to work, live, raise a family.

The coloured map provided with your Entry Form showing the main features of the town was of very good quality. However, for future years it would be desirable, where space is available, to include a legend on the map with a key to the projects completed over the last 12 months. This makes it easier for the adjudicator to navigate around the town with the map and see the various projects on site and significantly aids the assessment process.

The quality of the application form was very good. The use of Bold Text and the inclusion of photographs under each category section, added to the clarity of the document. The 3–5-year Tidy Towns plan was very comprehensive, including future projects under each of the categories and allocated timelines and responsibilities. The adjudicator's assessment is based on a recent site visit and the contents of the application form, which is suitably concise at 26 pages long. The text inserted on the form is also quite easy to read. The use of bullet points, bold large font headings helped to distinguish the text added to the form, from the text already on the form. Well

done on all the above.

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

- Claremorris has very many attractive shop fronts both traditional and modern. Businesses and residents continuously maintain and upkeep their properties to encourage business and footfall and to add to the aesthetics of the town. Considerable progress is being made by Mayo County Council in relation to tackling dereliction and vacancy issues. Improvements are ongoing in relation to public spaces in the town, including new active travel measures, installation of LED Street lights, new public seating, footpaths, and biodiversity mural etc.
- The adjudicator called to Claremorris on a day in early July. We commenced our visit at the civic space in the centre of the town known as The Square. The attractive seating areas, visitor information signage, tree planting and sculpture feature enhanced this area. The overall standard of presentation of residential and commercial premises in the town centre was excellent. We especially admired the presentation of, Wardes Public House, St Colman's Credit Union, R.J. Byrne's Bar, l'Armoire fashions, Bláthanna Florists, Gilligan's Bar, the Old Arch Bar and Bistro and Araby Coffee House. This list is not exhaustive. The covered in area to the rear of The Square providing shelter for visitors during inclement weather looked very well. However, the space under the canopy appears quite dark even on a bright day – one wonders is lighting being considered for this area, both for daytime and night-time use?
- The central part of the town is pedestrian friendly and the adjudicator noted the quality of the traffic calming scheme, including high quality granite paving and limestone kerbing and the general interconnectedness of pedestrian zones within the town. Outside of the post office on the Ballyhaunis Road, the colourful and vibrant 'heart of the west' bottle top collection feature including attractive planter and painted junction boxes were greatly admired. 'The Food Store' opposite is beautifully presented and also enhances the streetscape in this area.
- The town is well serviced with extensive off-street car parking areas. The carpark located between D'Alton Street and the Ballyhaunis Road was presented to a very good standard, with attractive boundary landscaping and tree planting. The e-car charge point here was positively noted. Leisure and recreational activities are well catered for in the town and the adjudicator noted that the proximity of the modern style leisure centre, tennis and handball clubs - no doubt there are synergies to be gained in the proximity of the clubs in this locality.
- At the town library, the presentation of the garden and paved area together with information signage was impressive. As it was a Monday, the library was closed and sadly we were unable to access the graveyard. The nearby Church and grounds of St Colman's was also neat and well presented.
- Along Mount Street the colourful residential properties and well-designed Garda Station enhanced the streetscape here. The planting on the Patrick Cassidy Road was also noted for positive comment. James Street is an attractive and vibrant part of the town, with appropriate tree planting and some outdoor seating areas. The outdoor seating areas installed on parking bays on the street could be improved by the introduction of green elements, such as perimeter hedging etc. There may be guidelines available, as to how these can be best designed and presented.
- On James Street the colourful bottle top mural fronting the railway bridge and floral displays provide a wonderful splash of colour. The old railway line at the bottom of James Street, at the junction with the Ballindine Road including metal pedestrian overbridge, has the potential to be developed into a greenway or walking route from the town centre to Clare Lough and 'Land of the Giants' area. The dramatic and colourful peacock mural on the gable wall at Kilcolman Road / Dalton St. junction significantly improved the vista towards the town here.
- The newly revamped Kavanagh's Supervalu premises was beautifully landscaped and the car parking area was presented to an excellent standard. The nearby Bring Centre located in the adjacent public car park was also in a pristine condition.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

- Your flagship project this year under this category includes the implementation of Phase 2 of the St John's Church of Ireland Graveyard Restoration Project, for which funding has been approved by the Heritage Council. This funding will ensure the protection of this important area for biodiversity, together with the completion of a final graveyard map and signage.
- We called to McMahon Park and noted the wonderful facilities provided for the public here, including a MUGA, children's playground with extensive car parking. The sleek design of the water fountain was also admired. We took the opportunity to experience the Clare Lough loop Walk, which is enhanced by clear information signage and attractive landscaping along the river. The parkland provided here is adorned with natural stone sculpture features, native woodland planting, wonderful views across the lake and abundance of wildlife and is a superb amenity for the town of Claremorris. The neatly clipped footpath edges together with extensive areas of wetland and wildflower meadows were outstanding. The park pavilion is an attractive timber structure providing shelter for visitors, but would benefit from further painting and maintenance, to preserve the future longevity of the structure.

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

- Your committee has been very active under this category this year with a total of 11 projects ranging from plans for a tree planting scheme including 20 native trees at Claremount funded by Pobal, to the painting of biodiversity murals on 5 ESB junction boxes in the town.
- We look forward to the biodiversity-themed mural planned for the gable of the Supervalu premises, facing Claremorris Town Hall Theatre.
- The pollinator friendly planting provided at The Square around the existing trees is a positive step and the support of Mayo Co. Co. together with St Colman's Credit Union is acknowledged.

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

- A superlative awareness raising project carried out under this category and completed in September 2023 was the 'plastic caps project' which involved the creation of a colorful artistic mural on the wall parapet of the railway bridge. It was very pleasing to read that you received much positive comment on the feature. The adjudicator looks forward to the completion of the 'giant heart' plastic caps project.
- Another very interesting project under this category was the provision of a water station installed at the Claremorris town playground, to help raise awareness about the over consumption of single use plastic bottles in Ireland.
- The adjudicator called to the Lidl premises. This development is very noteworthy and is to be commended for its emphasis on overall sustainability, with innovative features such as the ISO 50001-certified energy management system, electric vehicle charging points, solar panel system, reverse vending machine, and excellent car park landscaping with bug hotels.
- You might in the future consider installing a community composter in the town. These are useful and provide a quantity of mulch to use on your planted areas, which will ensure rapid establishment of the plantings and avoids the use of harmful peat based products.
- Other areas worthy of consideration by Claremorris Tidy Towns for the future under this category, which is in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals, include the development of small electric microgeneration schemes for Wind, Solar and Hydro in partnership with the Local Authority - these may also attract suitable SEAI or Leader funding.
- You might look at the provision of additional public e-car charge points and additional bicycle parking facilities and off-road cycle tracks in the town, and where there are deficiencies, suggest suitable locations where these could be provided in the short term.
- The Committee might also consider in the future initiating membership of the Sustainable Energy Communities programme run by the SEAI which includes engaging in learning networks, preparation of energy masterplans and local energy action plans etc. The following are useful links in this regard.
<https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/sustainable-energy-communities/><https://www.codema.ie/sec>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

- Your Spring Clean this year was well attended and you were able to welcome your new Ukrainian friends who took part. Other very commendable projects undertaken this year included an Anti - Dog Fouling Initiative, practical ongoing support from Clár IRD, the installation of new PEL bins, completion of Sunday sweeps and Tidy Tuesdays and designation of area 'litter champions'.
- On the day of adjudication, the town area was found to be largely tidy and litter free - well done.

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

- The adjudicator called to several residential estates in the town including the Mayfield Lake housing scheme, Cúirt na Ciarraidhe, Bóthair an Cnoic, Elm Park, Orchard Court, Elmwood, Claremont Manor, Boherduff, and Luí na Gréine. The general standard of maintenance and presentation of these housing estates was very good. Tidy Estates competitions are a useful way to ensure a consistent standard of presentation between individual estates in the town can be achieved. This may be an initiative to consider for the future in Claremorris.

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

- It is noted that you mention several projects under this category this year and you are wished well with their completion.
- The following approach roads were visited; on the Knock Road approach to the town the attractive stone walls, field boundaries and cycle track were appreciated as were the good road surface, markings, and signage. Hedge planting might be considered along this road to screen some roadside fencing, which is prominent on this approach. The N60 ring road is enhanced by the beautifully landscaped 'Seamus O' Malley' roundabout with its colourful berberis plantings. The frontage along the McWilliam Park Hotel and the wonderfully landscaped and maintained road margins were also admired along this stretch of road. The Convent Road is very well presented with its graveyard boundary walls, attractive stone walls and private residences and gardens. On the Patrick Cassidy Road, additional tree planting could be considered for the train station area. On the Ballyhaunis Road approach the modular homes which are nearing completion are very well designed and have attractive landscaping and planting facing the road. Overall, the approach roads and environs in the town of Claremorris, are presented to a very high standard – well done to all concerned the maintenance of these areas.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a great pleasure to visit Claremorris this year. Your committee is very active and making great strides to improve your town and community. The traditional colourful streetscape and character of the town has been retained and is being enhanced, with the support of local businesses and property owners and Mayo County Council. We hope you find the comments in the report helpful and wish you well with your future activities.