

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Shrule - Sruthair** Ref: **1516**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **282**
Category: **B** Date(s): **07/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	34	35
Streetscape & Public Places	80	37	39
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	36	38
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	36	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	17	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	42	43
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	32	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	36	38
TOTAL MARK	550	270	282

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.

Shrule - Sruthair, a mid-sized village with a population of 432 people – re-entered the competition in 2017 after many years and has a main committee of 4 members with support of another 12-15 volunteers.

- The Shrule Village Enhancement Group has regular monthly meetings from January every year, in conjunction with regular weekly street litter pick-ups. The Shrule area has an enthusiastic group of volunteers from the village and parish, along with community involvement from the local housing estates.
- Support is received from Mayo County Council, LEADER, Local Businesses, local GAA, Heritage Officer and the local LAWPRO office.
- You communicate with the public via your local parish newsletter, local newspapers (i.e. Western People, Mayo News), Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp Group and community notices.
- The Shrule Village Enhancement Group has liaised closely with a local Montessori school. In addition, the local national school; St. Joseph's, contribute to the maintenance of the village, while also retaining their Green Flag status for waste, water, transport, energy and biodiversity. You have plans to establish a Junior Tidy Towns group in the future.
- It is very pleasing to read that your participation in the competition has brought a new lease of life to Shrule village and community and that people's pride of place has increased and local participation and support continues to grow.

The coloured map and aerial photograph provided with your Entry Form, showing the main features of the village and location of projects completed, were of excellent quality. It was a great idea to mark on the map the sections of road located inside the speed limit boundaries in an orange colour.

The quality of the application form was very good. The photos highlighting the various projects carried out under each category added greatly to the document. The 3-year Shrule Village Enhancement/Tidy Towns Action List plan (2023 to 2025) is comprehensive. Perhaps consider subdividing the plan in accordance with the 8 competition category headings. The target dates and assigned responsibilities have been noted.

The adjudicator's assessment is based on a recent site visit and the contents of the application form, which is reasonably concise at 34 pages long (including photographs) - well done. The reference to the relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals has been positively noted. The text inserted on the form is also quite easy to read. Consider the use of bullet points to replace the longer paragraphs, as this will add greater clarity and make the entry form easier to read and navigate.

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

- The adjudicator is pleased to note that efforts to enhance and maintain the built environment in Shrule Village are continuing and derelict buildings are being enhanced, where possible. It is noted that these refurbishment works e.g., the painting of the old crane/weighbridge building have given the village a much-needed facelift and lease of life.
- The adjudicator called to Shrule on a blustery sunny day in early July. Entering the village from the Galway side, we were especially impressed with the welcoming presentation of the area around the Black River bridge, with attractive floral displays and scenic view towards Shrule Castle and the old Mill. The adjudicator positively noted the restoration of a stone residence facing the car park which when finished will further enhance the village streetscape. The newly painted weighbridge was also noted. The main car park area was enhanced by floral displays and good tarmacadam surface and markings. The addition of tree planting on the paved islands in the car park would be beneficial to further enhance this part of the village.
- On a walkabout of the central village core, the TJ Gibbons licenced premises was beautifully presented with a freshly painted façade and hanging baskets. The vibrantly coloured mosaic created by using a recycled pallet and bottle tops added an attractive focal point here. There are opportunities to provide additional tree planting on the wide footpaths in this part of the village.
- Attractive window boxes and planters were provided throughout the village which significantly enhanced the streetscape. Highlights included, Hair by Kevin, Cradocks Bar, Headlines, C Page & Co. and The Shawl premises. This list is not exhaustive. The gable wall next to C Page & Co. premises could be enhanced with a suitable mural or painting in a vibrant welcoming colour.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

- The Shrule Village Enhancement Group are heavily involved in the maintenance of open spaces and roadside margins in the village and it is heartening to note that this is done on a regular basis, taking into account the need to protect local biodiversity.
- We called to the site of the Village Green and particularly admired the overall presentation of this area. The information signage provided a wonderful historical context in relation to the heritage features of the village. This included detailed information on traditional village life and the nearby Shrule Castle and Mill. Well done to your committee and volunteers on this great project. It certainly enhances the centre of your village. The path along the Black River was noted and one wonders whether there is an opportunity to develop a walkway along the river starting from the car park in the grounds of the community centre.
- In relation to the site of the nearby of Shrule Castle it is suggested that this could be acquired and incorporated into the adjoining village green, to provide a heritage/folk park for the village. There is potential to create a popular tourist attraction on this site, and there may be tourist grants available. The OPW/Mayo County Council/Bórd Fáilte are best placed to consult on this. Resurfacing of the car park in front of the community centre would also be beneficial.
- The roadside margin through the centre of the village is adorned with attractive floral displays and tree planting. The grass areas are well tended and the standard of maintenance is excellent. Planters provided at road junctions also significantly enhance these areas. At the junction of the Dalgan Road and Main Street there is an opportunity to provide a paved area with a piece of sculpture, wall mural or ornamental planting scheme. The water pump opposite is beautifully presented, and the vibrant colour scheme with floral displays, provide a wonderful focal point.
- We called to the grounds of St Joseph Church and were impressed by the Shrule Labyrinth created by your community as a millennium project. The Church is beautifully presented and freshly painted. The line of mature lime trees along the boundary of the church grounds were very pleasing. St Joseph's NS on the opposite side of the road is a delight. The large colourful mural portraying the values and the ethos of the school is inspiring. There is direct access to the playing pitches which is a terrific asset for the school community and to the other side the tennis court and ball alley area. Is there an opportunity to further develop these amenities? It was noted that the footpath outside the school also needs resurfacing.
- We called to Shrule Cemetery. The standard of maintenance and presentation of the burial ground is excellent. The old Church now in ruins, is an interesting feature of the site. Perhaps a sign could be erected nearby to explain the history of the Church and surrounding area. The stone acorn is a wonderfully thoughtful and imposing piece of sculpture.

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

- Shrule is fortunate to be in an area of rich natural heritage, including the diverse wildlife habitats along the Black River. It is noted that the river not only acts as a location for angling activities but also supports rich biodiversity such as brown trout, salmon, heron, kingfisher, and a variety of plant species. You are managing the river towpath maintenance to encourage pollinators and with the aim of conserving existing wildlife habitats. It is noted that your group are currently considering the feasibility of creating a more structured riverside trail for the locality.
- Your committee has been active in establishing a list of suitable perennials for the planting beds, planters, and pots in the village. It is pleasing to read that approximately 80% of all the bedding plants for the village have been grown locally by the Tidy Towns Group and these plants are perennial pollinator friendly species.
- On a walkabout of the community centre it was noted that the swift boxes have collapsed and it is recommended that these be replaced.

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

- To achieve your goals under this category you have constructed a new herb planter made with recycled materials which has been enhanced with recycled paints, to improve the appearance of the village recycling facility. Well done to Churchfield Residents Association and other Tidy Town members who have created a bottlecap mural using recycled bottle caps and re-used pallets and have grown plants for your village planting schemes.
- The adjudicator is pleased to note that you are investigating the potential to erect bike stands within the village, to encourage passing cyclists to stop in the village. You might also consider possible locations in the area for off- road cycle tracks, which would further enhance sustainable travel for visitors to the area and among the local population who travel to and from the village.
- You might in the future consider installing a community composter in the village. These are useful and provide a quantity of mulch to use on your planted areas, which will ensure rapid establishment of the plantings.
- Other areas worthy of consideration by the Shrle Village Enhancement Group 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 public e-car charge points and additional bicycle parking facilities in the village, and where there are deficiencies, suggest suitable locations where these could be provided in the short term.
- Your Group 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:

- It is noted that the local community and Tidy Towns committee are very passionate and committed to the upkeep and maintenance of Shrle Village. The local community continues to work towards creating a tidy and clean village environment and this is greatly commended.
- You organise weekly litter pick-ups and clean ups during the spring and summer months to keep the village presentable and litter free.
- On the day of adjudication, the village area was found to be tidy and largely litter free - well done. The bring centre in the grounds of the community centre was neat and tidy. A large tyre is located here, which detracts from this area and it is suggested that this be removed.

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

- It is good to note that the existing residential estates in Shrle village i.e., Church Fields, St Colman's Court and St. Ledger' Court are all represented on the Tidy Towns Committee and contribute towards the upkeep of their respective estates, through the purchase and creation of flower displays, and maintenance of flower boxes and baskets.
- The adjudicator called to Church Fields Estate, St Colman's Court, and St. Ledger' Court. The standard of presentation and maintenance of these estates including open space areas, tree planting, boundary walls and name stones is to be applauded.

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

- You are very conscious of the need to continue to maintain the approach roads into Shrle to a very high standard. In this regard, residents living along the approach roads, are well represented on the Tidy Towns Committee. They participate in regular litter pick-ups within the village and along the approach roads and maintain the grassy verges, flowerbeds, and weeds along these roads on a weekly basis.
- The approach from Galway as previously noted was of a high standard with attractive village sign and floral displays at the bridge. The approach to the village from the St Mary's Road is characterised by attractive residences, good road surfaces and markings and well-constructed natural stone walls. On the Dalgan Road the road environs include mature trees and well-tended grass margins. The Shrle community sports fields are visually prominent along this approach and well done to Shrle-Glencorrib GAA club for the excellently presented facilities here, including the freshly painted boundaries and well-appointed name sign.

Concluding Remarks:

The Shrle Village Enhancement Group is deserving of great praise. You are making a difference and your committee are dedicated to improving the community and the overall appearance and environs in the village. The suggested actions in this report are included to assist your group in your future endeavours.