

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Centre: Castleblaney - Baile na Lorgan | Ref: 709 |
| County: Monaghan | Mark: 326 |
| Category: D | Date(s): 11/06/2023 |

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2022 | Mark Awarded 2023 |
|---|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80 | 44 | 45 |
| Streetscape & Public Places | 80 | 48 | 49 |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping | 80 | 39 | 40 |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality | 55 | 40 | 41 |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less | 55 | 26 | 27 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 55 | 56 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 55 | 32 | 32 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 55 | 36 | 36 |
| TOTAL MARK | 550 | 320 | 326 |

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.... Thank you for your entry which included a completed application form, accompanied by a coloured map, indicating and numbering the range of your projects. The documentation, including your substantial list of photographs, was of great assistance to this adjudicator on the occasion of the visit. Your entry form is packed with projects involving community groups across the generations, including your list of seven local Schools, Mens Shed, Monaghan County Council (MCC), Monaghan Tidy Towns Network and your substantial number of volunteers and helpers. You are commended on your close contact with your youth. The school visits are particularly praiseworthy as, hopefully, in the long term this undertaking will encourage younger members to join your committee. It is encouraging to read of your 20 years involvement in the competition and that you now have representatives on the Castleblaney Regeneration Group.

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

The town has a good number of buildings of substantial architectural character. It is very encouraging to note the improvement, preservation works at the strategically located Gate House, at the entrance to Lough Muckno. The 'before' and 'after' photographs are a fine illustration of the substantial conservation works here. Within the Park, Hope Castle itself was being freshened up, washed down and repainted. The improvement works undertaken by the Muckno Community Partnership, in conjunction with Carrickmacross/Castleblaney Municipal District, were being admired and discussed by a number of visitors, on the day of adjudication. The Market Square Regeneration Plan, to include the restoration of the Market House, is a very exciting project. This strategically located building, encloses a very important street vista, when viewed from Main Street, West Street, and Muckno Street. It is to be hoped that the completion of this outstanding renewal conservation will encourage and incentivise others to follow suit and redevelop nearby buildings in the town core. The Big Tom sculpture is very attractively sited, is a high quality intervention and sets a good standard of design for future public realm enhancements. In the upper town, The Old Coach Inn (Watters) was admired for its unfussy but tasteful presentation. This building, presented in a grey colour with dark grey and white highlights, has tasteful and appropriate lettering clearly expressing its function, whilst being restrained in the amount of advertising used. Building presentation here certainly sets a standard for others to emulate. Opposite, a colourful gable mural looks very well. Last year's adjudicator outlined a further list of premises which have made a substantial contribution to the visual enhancement of your streets.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The committee has a large number of projects in green areas dispersed throughout the town. Your photographs

were of great assistance in locating many of these areas. Barney's Green is a gem. The 1916 proclamation is beautifully conceived, and the nearby Ice House and storyboard add huge interest to a stroll along the green laneway. The Dove at Monaghan Road and Mindzenty Park were both visited and maturing rose beds observed. In addition, substantial native trees and hedgerows were viewed in several locations. Well done to your workers and your increasing band of volunteers and helpers!

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

The Lough Muckno and Environs Biodiversity Study will provide the strategic guidelines necessary to protect the area's wildlife and habitats for future generations. The Tidy Towns committee's involvement will raise awareness and provide education on ecological restoration and sustainable tourism in this proposed National Heritage Area. Visits by volunteers to local schools to disseminate information on native trees, seed collection and local wildlife diversity will ensure that such reports will not sit idly on a shelf somewhere but will stimulate understanding of the rich, natural heritage surrounding the community. Well done on your determined efforts to communicate with all your schools. Biodiverse, perennial planting is a feature throughout the town. Examples abound, such as wildflower planting at previously mentioned Monaghan Road and Bree Estate, the Railway Entrance, ongoing maintenance at Barney's Green and Mindzenty Park and the plan to sustainably landscape the renovated car park at St. Mary's Church. The biodiverse planting of 100 water plants along the shore of Lough Muckno was also noted.

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

Again, the schools are very proactive under this category. Gaelscoil Lorgan is to be congratulated on raising awareness by holding Bike Weeks, Walk to School days and organising traffic surveys. Restoration of furniture, bikes and appliances at the Repair Cafe at Iontas Theatre is an extremely productive enterprise. The upgrading of County Council vehicles and machinery to electric power all contribute to the reduction of Castleblayney's carbon footprint, while the freshly grown produce and the new mini orchard at the Community Garden sites maximise self-sufficiency. The Water Blitz at Lough Muckno and its tributaries was held in conjunction with DCU. This feeds into a lake core analysis to determine current pollutant inputs with a view to improving water quality.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The problem of dereliction plagues many Irish towns and cities. You have developed a very pragmatic approach which is obviously producing dividends. Concentrating on 2-3 premises every year and offering support, (sometimes financial), rather than criticism are laudable initiatives. The refurbishing of street furniture, bins and poles throughout the town has created a pristine atmosphere. This is further enhanced by the recent completion of the Enterprise Hub on McGrath's Street, rose bed maintenance at Upper Commons, and the power-washing and repainting of the entrance and walls at the unoccupied Convent of Mercy. Hedgerows are a very strong feature of Monaghan County, worthy of preservation. Well done to the committee on fence repairs and hedgerow planting at Clonbury!

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

You have established strong contact with the residents of many of your estates. Presentation improvements continue at Lakeview, Coill Darach and Blueberry Walk. Castleblayney has a good number of housing areas and most were visited. The standard of presentation was generally good and many individual garden presentations were admired. Perhaps the committee would give some consideration to promoting an annual or bi-annual inter estate competition. In many towns, these competitions promote greater involvement with the Tidy Towns campaign and help improve communications between individual groups. The inner town has some very fine streetscapes, townhouses along York Street being particularly admired.

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

York Street is certainly excellent and sets a good standard for inner town improvements. Further out, in the environs, it would be a well worthwhile objective for your community to reinforce the wonderful native hedgerows that exist in many locations.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure for this adjudicator to visit Castleblayney and to see the partnership commitment of your volunteers and workers involved in a multiplicity of projects throughout the town. Long-term proposals are ambitious and should make a very positive contribution to the redevelopment of the town core.