

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cloontuskert - Cluain Tuaiscirt** Ref: **289**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **361**
Category: **A** Date(s): **06/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	49	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	44	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	49	50
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	37	40
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	26	28
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	71	71
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	41	41
TOTAL MARK	550	353	361

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.

Many do not realise the behind the scenes work that goes on with a TidyTowns Group. Cloontuskert is no different with a lot of paperwork etc ongoing, so you are applauded for your efforts. We applaud all volunteers who step-up and help their community. It was good to read of strategies to help with some the difficulties in your community.

Planning and strategy are important to your work so we were delighted to read of the launch of Cloontuskert's Master Plan in April after several years in its development. The use of VR is a great tool to help with understanding of the proposed ideas.

Throughout your entry form you mention various volunteers who have greatly helped in your work such as the Social Inclusion & Community Volunteer of the year in Ireland; the three main grass cutters; and your new fantastic CE scheme worker. Your entry form is very substantial providing every detail but please see if you can trim it somewhat for 2024 so we can focus on the core work areas and ensure we don't miss something very important! There is a lot of points of information included that could be removed now as they are out-dated.

Entering the National TidyTowns competition means you are eligible for specific DRCD funding and other supports. You have used such grants to get equipment as needed to maintain the communal areas of Cloontuskert. This has also enabled you to leverage more grants for other works and machines including the new weed-extractor!

Your social media channels are active, and you have a lot of followers. It is great to share details of your efforts, and local achievements such as the graduation of students from your National School. Throughout your submission there are so many actions completed by the youth of the village. We rarely see this in such details in a TidyTowns entry form, so you are strongly applauded for this.

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

The public information board and pictures on The Old School give a great insight into the creation of the village to service the workers for the then newly formed state agency, Bord na Mona. Pollinator-friendly planting here is nicely maintained by your volunteers.

How is your weed-hex machine going? It is great you were able to get this machine for your community that

removes weeds without the use of chemicals.

The school looked well with colourful entrance railings and the water butt was working here – ideal for watering any raised beds the school may decide to create.

Street lighting is to be enhanced. Did you know that some County Council are advocating policies to reduce light pollution and ensure light is directed where needed the most? You should ask them to research this to ensure all light upgrades are appropriate. Finally - great news – we were delighted to see that you have your own Post Box for the village now.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your adjudicator had never seen a public easel before. What a lovely idea to sit by your biodiversity garden and paint. Landscaping at the welcome stone looked lovely as did the freshly painted village pump. The wall at the new graveyard just looks beautiful with and beautiful purple flowers growing on it and many nice shrubs in this area.

We liked the maturing trees including cherries and beech that provided a nice shade on a hot sunny day. We loved the simplicity of the mown path cut through the Old Football field to allow you to walk over to the newly planted cherry and wood tree.

The grotto looked lovely so the volunteers who manage this should be applauded. Overall a lot of volunteers have helped improve separate areas across Cloontuskert.

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

This is a strong submission with over 1000 trees planted by the youth volunteers this year as part of the Reforest Nation! They were planted over one weekend. It is recommended that they continue to keep a watchful eye on the growing trees providing water in Summer when they are growing etc. Many more trees were planted throughout 22-23. You are also advancing the opportunity to establish a Neighbourhood Forest.

It was just a delight to see how much you have packed into your community including two orchards, a repair café, a polytunnel filled with strawberries and much more, a handy community notice board, the rainwater harvesting tanks and a herb garden. There was also a lovely, enclosed children's play area with the library, and you were proudly flying your green flag community award which was well earned.

Sadly your nuttury was too tempting for the local cattle! At least everything eaten would have been organic as you have a strong no-chemicals policy.

There were lovely fruit trees and planted all around the back road aptly called 'Fruit Lane'. They've been watered and stays are not too tight which is important for growing trees. Do you plan to harvest these and share across the community?

Well done for your participation in the 'One Change for Biodiversity' initiative and the creation of your wildlife patch on the R371.

We note you are advocating a management plan for Invasive Species including Japanese Knotweed. It is hoped that Roscommon County Council would have a Biodiversity Officer to support this proposal.

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

One of the flagship projects for the last 12 months is the Community Fridge - a space for the community to reduce food waste and socialise together. This helps advance the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 11 - Sustainable Communities. It would be worth collating details of the amount of food saved through the initiative if possible. Well done on getting this completed.

Are you on a bus route? We assume you would be, being on the Main Road but we didn't see a bus stop or bus times displayed anywhere. This could be something to put in the window of the closed shop if permitted.

Quite a number of homes had rainwater butts installed and we also liked the fact that you have watering cans to borrow at either entrance to the graveyard.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

This year you have arranged to have the Street Sweeper visit the village once a month. Do you get notice of this, and do you have to remove cars in advance or brush pavement debris onto the road? It is good to read of the good relationship you have with the Council with regard to litter control and provision of litter bags. The bags collected during the Spring Clean are much lower than previous as your Tus worker helps now with littering. Have you any litter black spots? Are there specific times when littering occurs? Have you a litter plan in place?

Watch out for redundant poles with missing signs, maybe they could be removed?

Donated paint is used by volunteers to spruce up benches, walls and planters. There were lovely pops of bright colour in and around Cloontuskert.

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

And well done to the grass-cutting volunteers who are saving the community money, and applying hard graft to manage most of your communal areas. This forms an important element of the architectural design of Cloontuskert. Every home look well - indeed none could be singled out as all were of a very high standard.

Don't forget to remove items from your entry form that have been completed for a long time such as the road surfacing in 2019.

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

Arriving into Cloontuskert there is a bilingual stone sign next to a wrought-iron field gate this makes for a lovely arrival. Across the road the Tidy Town's welcome sign is under planted with some perennials which is a good sustainable choice. The speed limit warning signs was flashing red quite a lot during our adjudication. Traffic passes through at an alarming rate considering this is meant to be a 50 kilometre an hour zone. It is suggested that your Council Area Engineer and you, work through the DMURS manual for ideas – this is a handbook with designs for any roads with a 50-kilometre limit. It includes design concepts such as pedestrian islands, and insets for pedestrian safety which can result in traffic to slow to the required speed. <https://www.dmurs.ie/>

Concluding Remarks:

2023 marks the 70th year since Cloontuskert was built and residents moved in. Your entry was substantial as the breath of your work and activities is excellent. You have embraced the newer categories of the competition with great work on sustainability and biodiversity and are highly commended for the way in which young people drive your work. Focus on the projects that make the most impact, and are enjoyable – such as your St Patrick's Day parade with scooters, trikes and even roller blades!