

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Croghan - Cruachán** Ref: **308**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **333**
Category: **A** Date(s): **26/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	43	43
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	47
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	46	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	28	28
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	72	74
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	39
TOTAL MARK	550	325	333

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.

We are delighted that you have re-entered for your 18th year in this competition. Thanks for the lovely hand-drawn map which had everything clearly marked, and also for the photographs showing some of the projects advanced this year.

Communication is important and you do share details of your work with the community through different ways. We did find a Facebook page, but it seemed to be a little out of date perhaps you use different website or social media to share your news? You do have a good number of volunteers on your committee we would encourage you to share details of your projects so that people can appreciate all your efforts. It was good to read about the great work being carried out by Croghan National School, especially with regards to litter and biodiversity, and also by the local GAA club Shannon Gaels. Have you a long-term plan? What are your main aims for the village for the next few years? Can you work together with the school and GAA to advance ideas of mutual benefit for the community? We suspect this is happening already as there is an obvious pride in your work and across the Croghan community. This can be a simple document based around the eight adjudication categories.

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

This year saw a lot of changes to the streetscape of Croghan thanks to the Village Enhancement Grant received. On adjudication day this was reviewed and there is great continuity of high-quality pavement in the village.

There was a clear understanding in your entry form of the built heritage in your community. This includes St. Michael's Church (which recently had a wheelchair ramp installed) and also the Church of Ireland. The Community Centre has recently had new doors fitted that should help improve energy efficiency of the building. You are encouraged to take note of the energy usage and compare that with previous years, especially if you are successful in your window upgrade application. Have you considered submitting a community grant to the SEAI? Are there any plans for the old school building on Elphin Road? Croghan Bar was also freshly painted and looked lovely, even on a very wet Summer's day!

What are the pods in the grounds of the former Connacht Gold premises as they are intriguing? Indeed we read that they are made out of old aircrafts! They should have a sign up here. Perhaps provide details for this under sustainability for next year's entry?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Fairy trails, a zip line and community playing pitches are some of the many amenities in your little village. There are many lovely mature trees in the center of Croghan and you plan to add more native trees and hedging. Have you thought about collecting some of the seeds or acorns from mature trees and growing them on? They could be potted up and left for a few years to grow. Perhaps such saplings could be given to the National School childr.en on their graduation day?

It was lovely to hear about you planting Spring bulbs including daffodils and tulips. Crocuses are also good for pollinators.

The Croghan Hill garden is a beautiful area with mature trees that your volunteers manage. Elsewhere agriculture machinery and the hand-water pump are nicely maintained.

Homes and businesses and buildings all had planters and hanging baskets and window boxes. The resources pages of www.pollinators.ie have some lovely bookmarks and leaflets you can download and share with others to know of plants that work well in Irish gardens that benefit wildlife also.

Finally the entrance to the Shannon Gaels GAA looked very nice with flags proudly flying, and a nicely maintained landscape bed at its entrance. We like how stone walls have been built here to mirror the many traditional stone walls around the centre of Croghan.

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

It was good to read that you avoid using pesticides in your village and also have plenty of wildlife in the community including red squirrel bats and barn owls. Maybe you could raise awareness of the different wildlife species by running a children's poster competition and displaying the different pictures in the village? Sadly the polytunnel at the school is no more. It's nice to see bug hotels in place - have you had many residents?

The stone walls around the Pound reflect the many walls around Croghan. They are an important habitat, and some lovely ferns were growing on walls here and elsewhere. It looked like some weedkiller had been sprayed by heritage gates near the WWTP. You have noticed giant hogweed near the Church of Ireland. As a first – please issue erect notices or warning tape as the sap can badly burn skin. Ensure anyone strimming or working nearby has no exposed skin. Also any road maintenance vehicles also must know so they do not spread the seeds etc. There is information available at <https://invasivespeciesireland.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Giant-Hogweed-BPM.pdf> whilst this website is not longer updated the information is valid.

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

You collect fallen leaves to create mulch for landscaping schemes in the bungalows near the school. This is a very easy and great way to add nourishment to shrubs. Perhaps you could position a few more cages for leaf moulds around the village? We wondered if you have grown any of the flowers yourselves? Sadly you don't have a brown bin collection system for Croghan as yet so maybe share details about home composting might be a consideration and run a competition in conjunction with the Council to win a home composter.

It was good to see the rain-water tanks collecting rain from the roof of the farm buildings on the road up to the school.

The TidyTowns handbook has a chapter just on actions to promote sustainability that may have some ideas of interest to your committee. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/competition/handbook/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The biggest litter project is roadside litter, presumably dumped from passing vehicles. Well done on your many volunteers going out twice weekly or even daily in some cases picking up litter in your community. Perhaps one or two of your volunteers could be recommended for a community award to Roscommon County Council for their endeavours? .

Watch out for flags becoming tattered that need to be replaced. There are no public bins in the village as you all live close enough to bring litter back to your own homes. This seems to be working well.

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

There is a very high standard of homes on the Main Street of Croghan with lovely paint schemes and hanging baskets or planters. The residential estates were of a high quality. The green space in front of Cois na Habhann has been taken over by residents and could be a good area to allow parts of the lawn to grow longer by changing the mowing regime. Maybe residents took part in 'NoMow May'? Some pictures of this would be great for next year's entry please.

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

The pavement and footpaths have been completed to a high standard, thanks to your grant. There is good continuity of pavement throughout the village.

The blue bilingual name sign on the Elphin approach road looked good on adjudication, nicely under-planted with attractive flowers. And we liked the new welcome signs installed by the Council. Further along a wishing-well structure also was freshly painted but the roof was a little low making it difficult to see top of this welcome sign. The new trees planted on the Elphin Road looked well.

The R370 crossroads has a lovely name stop and makes for a nice welcome also as you approach Croghan.

Concluding Remarks:

It was lovely to explore Croghan and appreciate the built and natural heritage of the village. Homes and business were all presented to a very high standard and are now nicely set off by the new improvement works completed. Well done on your work over the last 12 months.