

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Gorthaganny - Gort an Gaimimh** Ref: **316**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **304**
Category: **A** Date(s): **13/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	41	42
Streetscape & Public Places	80	41	42
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	37	39
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	38	41
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	16	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60	62
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	27	27
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	31	32
TOTAL MARK	550	291	304

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, Gorthaganny Community Development Company, for your submission this year. You have a large committee who help out and you meet every week from April to September. You also have a long list of groups and organisations with whom you work well including the National School, the RSS and the Pastoral Committee. All of your efforts are to advance your community. With the recent discussions with the Council's Biodiversity Officer, perhaps you could have a suggestion board/box/on-line survey to gather ideas from the community? These could be collated into a long-term community plan to help you with your actions from this competition. Plans are useful once adopted as they can attract funding, and help focus and direct your work.

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

The main project on which you have worked for the past 12 months is the renovation and promotion of the Marion Hall as a hub to facilitate remote working. It's also used for many other activities such as Summer Camps for local children – what a great amenity to have the Gorthaganny and we discuss it under the 'sustainability category' of this competition.

The Church of St Mary was freshly painted and looked well on adjudication day. We liked the planters at the entrance to the church, and also at the graveyard which were very attractive. Further up the road the pump station is a nicely designed building also.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have put a lot of effort into this category of the competition. For example, you have planted native trees in the grounds of the school and a wildflower bed has been planted at the lake. We were delighted to learn about (and see) the heptagon house that the National School has, in which the pupils grow their own produce and promote teachings of biodiversity. Recently members of your community have acquired beehives to promote pollination of flowers and fruit trees in Gorthaganny.

Fair play to the volunteer who was rushing to finish mowing the grounds of the church just as a large heavy rain shower was coming in.

We saw the sign for Erritt Lodge, with its smart limestone wall at the top of the road, and presumed it was an entrance to a private house. We were then delighted to discover that this was where you have all your lovely lakeside amenities. Once we drove down and parked up, we particularly liked your nice sign explaining that there's no charge for using the facility, but all donations would be appreciated. The bollards around the car park are quite difficult to differentiate...perhaps these should be painted or perhaps you have another idea to nicely mark out this area without having to always paint? During adjudication people were enjoying swimming in the lake, walking the paths and having a picnic. It's a very popular spot and you continue to enhance and develop this as funding permits. Good luck with the enhancement works proposed for the changing rooms and jetty. They will be put to good use.

Finally, we were delighted to come across the monument to Lieutenant General Dermot Early. We know lots of young people who have benefitted from his GAA Youth Leadership Training Program and even attended recent graduations at NUI Galway, so we applaud his efforts - he leaves a wonderful legacy. Well done to your community to celebrate his life so nicely.

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

You are in a beautiful part of Ireland with mature trees and native hedge surrounding you. During adjudication we enjoyed listening to birds singing and it's not a wonder that you have many walking trails developed in this area. And we'd like to highlight that we were enjoying all this long before we found your lakeside amenities. It took a little while to work out that the concrete structure was an artificial bat building. It was lovely to read about the different trees and mammals and birds that people should look for as they walk along the loop walk.

Your living bog project is ongoing and your support of this is applauded. It helps to promote understanding of the importance of this unique habitat.

Native apple trees have been planted and you have embraced the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan to provide bee-friendly flowers and shrubs in your community. We like the fact that you had signage up promoting this so that others in your community can understand more. The website www.pollinators.ie is somewhere where residents of Gorthaganny can get lists of flowers and shrubs that and suggested actions that they can replicate in their own gardens to benefit wildlife.

As mentioned, the unusual bat boxes were noted at the carpark at the lake, and it suggested maybe the painting is redone here to make it more obvious what the structure is for. Are there residents here and do you ever organize any bat walks during Biodiversity Week?

Horse tail is a very old plant which grows in places where herbicide has been regularly used. It was noticed growing in the car parking area near the crossroads. Deep rhizomes make it difficult to control and hoeing helps spread it. One easier way to control it (if you need it controlled) is to cover it to prevent photosynthesis.

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

We were delighted to read about the efforts you put into increase the sustainability of Marion Hall for such as installation of solar panels and the provision of an EV car charger. The promotion of this facility as a homeworking hub greatly reduces carbon emissions from commuters. The new roof on the hall looked very well. We wondered about you trying details of the carbon saved by asking users of Marian Hall to tally the miles that they would normally be travelling that they have saved by using your facility.

As mentioned, it was great to see the poly tunnel and all the produce growing around the greenhouse at the school. Nearby we saw composting bins and compost in production which is very sustainable.

The water butt is positioned where the school children can easily service the greenhouse, but it's not connected to a water source. One suggestion is to have a second water butts connected to one of the downpipes at the school itself. Adult volunteers could occasionally transfer water from one to other.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done to all your volunteers who not only do regular little picks but also get on board for your Annual Spring Clean. Your volunteers carry out daily litter picks around walk at Errit lake.

Reading your entry form implies that litter levels are sadly increasing. What are the main forms of litter and are there any specific actions that you can adopt to try and mitigate littering? We suggest you remove the old, faded RSS sign from the gates of the graveyard. Also the sign at the bottle banks is outdated and could be removed as well. This could be a nice place to position a community notice board.

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

It was lovely to read that you encouraged the residents to adopt pollinator friendly activities. It's important to highlight they do not need to buy wildflower seed mixes. By simply allowing grass to grow long and cut it on longer mowing cycles or joining in initiatives such as 'No Mow May' can really help wildlife.

Homes all looked really well, and we encourage you to promote energy saving initiatives such as details of how to apply for grants for roof insulation. Your work at Marion Hall should inspire also.

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

The Old Forge makes for a lovely welcome as you were arrived into Gorthaganny from the west. There is ample parking provided from the crossroads to the church with nice raised intermittent kerbs with shrubs such as Saint John's wort. Perhaps you could extend the native hedging from the crossroads and plant more behind the crash barrier here? Or if the soil is not deep enough, maybe scatter some poppy seeds or encourage some ox eye daisies to grow here.

At the crossroads there is a lot of laurel hedging planted which is not great for wildlife and we wonder if it could be occasionally interspersed with some native plants such as hawthorn or blackthorn. Near the graveyard we saw some crocosmia have been planted at the edge of the road and care is just to be taken as this is an invasive plant. Transport Infrastructure Ireland ban it along the edges of the roads they manage.

Do keep up the discussions about provision of safe routes between amenities- ideally off-road. You have lovely stone bilingual name signs stones as you enter different townlands that help provide a strong sense of place.

Concluding Remarks:

We are delighted that you have been involved with this initiative for 19 years. Your work through this competition has helped structure your community efforts and has helped create a strong sense of identity thanks to the walks, facilities and natural amenities you have advanced for all. It was lovely to visit Gorthaganny and thank you for inviting us.