

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Keadue - Céideah** Ref: **745**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **373**
Category: **A** Date(s): **25/06/2023**
27/07/2023

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2022 | Mark Awarded 2023 |
|---|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80 | 52 | 52 |
| Streetscape & Public Places | 80 | 51 | 52 |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping | 80 | 51 | 53 |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality | 55 | 40 | 43 |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less | 55 | 25 | 26 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 66 | 67 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 55 | 34 | 35 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 55 | 44 | 45 |
| TOTAL MARK | 550 | 363 | 373 |

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.

Your entry outlined the organisations, businesses and community groups with whom you work collaboratively. We saw pictures of your formal Memorial Gardens as a field decades ago and knowing that you came up with this idea really makes one appreciate the efforts that you've put into developing your village. Planning is important to ensure you are strategic and give the community opportunities to provide ideas. You provided a plan and already a lot of the actions have been completed. Was it updated this year as we were unsure when each action was completed?

Well done on maintaining an up-to-date social media presence on-line. Is there a notice board in the village for the community? Maybe one at the playground or at the entrance to the Heritage Park would be a useful position. A suggestion box also would be a good idea - even in a small community.

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

Premises in the centre of the village all looked very well from the Church to the School and your displays in the former shop were admired. We like how you've taken the theme of the harp into all of your landscaping. This includes the two bog oak sculptures and the box hedging sculpture - all to commemorate one of your famous ancestors and your ongoing Harp Festival.

We were attracted to Roddy's Bar, and they should be commended for the window displays, window boxes and outdoor seating provided at these premises which were very nicely maintained. It was good to be able to see the heritage plaques that you've put up around the town including the former courthouse, and post office.

The church entrance looked lovely with the shrubs bordering the steps and Irish flags at the top. A good job was completed with the recent repair of the steps. A lot of grass is being mown during adjudication around the Church and we wondered whether some of it could be mulched to reduce the amount of grass clippings that are placed along the hedge line? Better still, could you replicate the activities completed here last year? You included photos of defined areas of the longer grass as part of pollinator-friendly mowing. Scoul Cill Rónain was nicely presented with flags lane and window boxes of different pollinator friendly flowers in place. We visited the sweat house and saw some lovely artwork in stone on display here - what lovely views there are from here.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

We were delighted to read that following the recommendation of last year's adjudicator that you now have Tree Wardens in place to look after newly planted trees. During our visit we noticed a few straps that still could have been loosened such as that supporting the silver birch in front of the school. Maybe they can be directed here also please to keep a watchful eye on older trees?

The village pump and hanging baskets with their self-watering arrangements also looked great and should reduce the maintenance required. Do you still use recycled Enviro compost here? Do you grow-on cuttings for the planters? Pictures of volunteers hand-weeding in the village is commended.

Your playground area and tennis courts, the sensory garden and the sheltered space here and the outdoor gym is a lovely new development in the village and was busy during adjudication. Even the planting dividing the road from the car park looked lovely as it contained a lot of roses honeysuckle and other attractive shrubs.

We are not sure how easy it would be for the school pupils to explore your orchard but hopefully some in the community enjoy its harvest.

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

As well as the Memorial Gardens in the centre of Keadue you have created the lovely, looped walk at Knockranny, and this is your highlighted project for this year. It was simply lovely to visit and even on a very wet day people were enjoying it walking, fishing, contemplating at the circle of friends memorial or learning about the wildlife as shown on the notice board. You have created a very nice amenity for locals and visitors alike and you should be very proud of your efforts here. Also here your seven oak trees planted to remember the 1916 rising are growing well. A lovely project would be to have the acorns from here planted for saplings by junior infants and for them to receive them in sixth class.

You have allowed some smaller areas of grass to grow long in a nod to be All Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP). There are lots of wonderful resources at www.pollinators.ie

Do the residents of the village follow your example, and join in with initiatives such as 'No Mow May' also?

The uncut wildlife area at the back of the formal garden is lovely to see and perhaps a children's wildlife scavenger hunt could be developed for this area. Here also you've allowed a section of the grass to grow. We suspect it is being cut on a three-week cycle at most and we wonder if you could extend this mowing cycle?

Despite some discrete areas where you are not mowing the grass, it still feels as if most of the grass areas are being cut back very tightly. Can you please A. Extend the mowing time for grass that is allowed to grow longer to maybe a six-week cycle; and B. Consider many more areas where you can integrate AIPP activities and recommendations? For example, you could expand pollinator planting on approach roads and have ox-eyed daisies and more perennials or even to have some mosses / ferns on stone walls around the village.

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

It was good to read that you have completed phase 2 of the refurbishment of St Ronan's Hall making it more energy efficient. And it was 'waste not – want not' as you succeeded in recycling and reusing the floorboards. It will be great once the new doors are added here also.

Low energy lights bulbs were noticed in lights at the Heritage Park. Have you considered the tone of light bulb's used to help reduce light pollution and ensure only paths are lit (and not the skies!). Some communities are looking towards reducing light pollution.

The wee-library was still in place and fresh books appeared to be here so many are using it we believe.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You included some lovely pictures of families, pupils and wider member of the community all helping out with litter activities in Keadue. Thank you for this. The bottle banks were very clean, and no litter was in the area this is great to see. The phone number that you are to ring when the banks are full is no longer working, so maybe you can display an updated number and replace that part of the sign?

Beside the dog waste sign at the entrance to your formal gardens, sadly there were three dog deposits here, possibly from the same animal. You're not losing marks for this, and we sympathise with a difficult situation.

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

Homes in Keadue looked lovely and are of a high standard, even the Garda station had some lovely window boxes in place which we suspect your volunteers may have had a hand in. It was noticed that there are a number of empty properties, Are there any plans especially at a time of housing shortage for these? It was good to see some homes in the village now have PV and solar panels and you should promote schemes and grants on this where possible.

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

Arriving into Keadue there is a feeling of coming into somewhere special and this is due to the hard work that you

have put into your approach roads and your hand-painted welcome signs and welcome planting. Many of the signs were under planted with shrubs lots of which are pollinator friendly. Do be careful however because we've noticed Montbretia (Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora). This plant is actually invasive, and the Transport Infrastructure of Ireland (TII) do not like to see it growing at the sides of roads because of problems it has with the spread of this plant. Consider it is like mint and needs to be contained. TII advise that due to its ability to regenerate and spread via underground corms or rhizome material, biosecurity measures must be followed to prevent its spread and it can take some years to eradicate.

Arriving in from the Boyle Road there are two lovely beds of carpet roses - do they take a lot of management to dead-head? Brightly coloured annuals have been planted under the road signs at the Boyle junction. It might be worth doing a long-term cost analysis of the value of money of this versus planting pollinator friendly shrubs.

Concluding Remarks:

Keadue volunteers are very dedicated and carry out many activities including hand-weeding, painting community signs, and providing meals with fresh herbs through social services. The care and attention to detail in Keadue is unfaltering. We loved the woodland walks you have developed where you have embraced the natural landscape and biodiversity. Congratulations on sustained efforts over nearly five decades in this competition.

Second Round Adjudication:

Keadue was a pleasure to visit and complete second round adjudication. Keadue are commended on continued participation in the competition for forty-six years. This participation has helped to create a better community spirit which involves all members of the community. It has also helped to enhance the village with the many projects completed, making it the beautiful village that it is today. The community work closely together and get good support from all agencies and businesses. The school, though small, gives good input into the work. The O'Carolan heritage park which is situated in the village centre is superbly maintained. There has been a notable amount of work completed that has greatly enhanced this excellent park. St Ronan's hall which is the focal point of the community for recreational activities is currently being revamped, making it more accessible and attractive. The well maintained Church and grounds towers over the village on its elevated site. The building and surroundings are very maintained to a high standard. The school and surroundings is bright and welcoming. The sports field is home to a number of facilities. The children's playground is situated here and is bright and colourful. The murals in this area were admired. There is also a seating area in an attractive gazebo surrounded by splendid planting where the visitor can sit and relax. The Bottle Bank which is well presented was noted here. The planting of a variety of vegetables at the allotments are maturing well.

Knockranny woods provides the community with a pleasant spot for walks and picnics. The information boards and seating, together with good maintenance, makes this amenity well worth a visit. Landscaping throughout the village is of a high standard. The hard landscaping noted at different locations complements the pollinator friendly planting of the village. Various planted containers which include window boxes and hanging baskets, brought colour and interest to the streetscape of the village. The village was generally neat and tidy. The houses along approach roads and throughout the village are presented to a high standard. The entrance signs on approach roads gives a very good first impression to those entering the village. The footpaths are good. Green areas are well maintained. Verges are neat while maintaining a corridor for wildlife. The village of Keadue has completed many projects that have enhanced the village while still retaining its natural beauty. Keep up the excellent work.