

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rahara - Rath Aradh** Ref: **2278**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **256**
Category: **A** Date(s): **03/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	38	41
Streetscape & Public Places	80	34	36
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	32	35
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	22	25
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	16	18
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	20	21
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	28	28
TOTAL MARK	550	240	256

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 lovely entry form and we appreciated the suggested route which we followed. There were many lovely pictures of your activities over the last 12 months. Your entry was very strong in the community liaison and participation. It seemed that everyone joined in your activities or got involved in some way. You have had great support from the local authority, neighbouring communities, funding bodies and every group in the Parish. You are pulling everyone's ideas together to develop a plan building on the great potential of Rahara. We loved the fact that you had a physical suggestion box at the Christmas party. You could follow this up by having another one on-line, or an online survey to vote on the ideas submitted. You could also have a competition to design a logo for your group. Perhaps a community notice board could be erected by the bottle banks to share good news?

Tea & chats, Walking Clubs, Darkness into Light – some of the many initiatives you have advanced locally. Your entry was full of energy and no doubt you will advance Rahara building on the strengths of your community. Finally, we loved the tone of your lovely Christmas newsletter, warm and inviting..

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

Arriving at the Old Church beside the school was delightful. You have modestly and appropriately enhanced this building without impacting on its integrity. The Christmas light festival here would have been lovely. How lovely to read that you have made this a central community space for all to enjoy. Thanks to the Parish Council for permitting you to enhance this area and adopt pollinator-friendly mowing practices here too.

Flags were flying proudly at the school and boundary walls here looked well. We read that the school was to be painted but we visited very early in the season so no doubt it will look great upon completion. The gardens and appearance of the school looked lovely. Well done to the teachers and pupils here.

We really liked the new information boards near the football pitch. One explains all about the Rahara's Sporting Heritage and who knew that there was an All-Ireland championship for tug of war? It was interesting to read about the church also and the different sculptures including the warning stone...Sheela na Gig. It was good to see your understanding of your local heritage and have shared this with the community.

Clover Park is a great amenity for the village and the entrance gates here nicely displayed the name Rahara FC. This club has provided you with a lot of support. The wire field boundary fence along this lane is in need of repair -

maybe it could be replaced with a nice native hedge.

You have a strong understanding of the built heritage of Rahara. As well as details shared on the information boards, in Heritage Week August 2022 you linked up with Rahara Old Church and Heritage Committee to hold a talk by Roscommon County Council Heritage Officer about the recent completed conservation works of this site. Details of this and other old built heritage in the parish can be seen on the map viewer at www.archaeology.ie

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Lovely pollinator-friendly plants have been put into flower beds at junctions in Rahara. It was great to read that most of these plants were home-grown in a volunteer's polytunnel.

Tiered planters at the entrance to the Church were admired and the landscaping in the grounds was lovely. As mentioned, you have also done a lovely job at the old Church. Here lupins and other flowers that have been put in and nicely tended. We noted the insect box here. The placement of window boxes on top of the Church works so well. They would not damage the walls, and can be easily removed. Have you thought about using your own compost in the future?

Nearby the village pump looked lovely and you've a lovely planter here. You have chosen some pollinator-friendly plants in your landscaping schemes. You could encourage the community to follow your example – there are great free downloads at www.pollinators.ie/resources that include flyers and bookmarks listing plants great for pollinators.

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

The wildlife information signs and colourful murals really looked well at the school. They also have compost bins - all part of your wonderful biodiversity garden. You have advanced a lot of activities to promote biodiversity. No weed killer is used, you allow dandelions to grow in the Spring providing food for pollinators emerging from hibernation and native plants such as toadflax have been encouraged to grow on the walls of the Old Church. Tiered mowing of grass and seed collection are more activities. Have you considered having a short "Gardening for Biodiversity" talk for the community?

Maybe a raised bed of herbs could be the next addition in the village for the community to help themselves?

The biodiversity and wildflower area marked on your map near the soccer pitch was somewhat overgrown. They are hard to manage and take a lot of effort so maybe cut your losses here? The road onto the lough was explored and goodness even on a day when the radio was talking about water shortages the water levels here were very high. We were sorry to read of the devastation caused by the sustained flooding at Lough Funshinagh – the Turlough that has not vanished. So it was nice to read that one of those impacted was asked to turn on the Christmas Lights for the community.

Have you organised any guided wildlife walks? There would be plenty of bats around the Old Graveyard and the Lough, and a summer evening bat walks are generally popular as people are keen to learn about our protected mammals. Or you could organise a bat-box making workshop so people could put up these in their own homes replicating your work at the graveyard. . Are there any records of swifts in the area because the school tower might be a good place to erect swift nest boxes. Check out www.swiftconservationireland.ie for details.

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

Tomatoes and other vegetables have been grown by the school pupils helping to teach messages of sustainability, food miles and Grow-it-Yourself. They are not the only green-fingered members of your community. Mulching, seed collecting and growing of cuttings are some of the activities by members of your community to support and reduce the running costs of Rahara TidyTowns.

We note that some planting has been put into re-painted car tyres. This is quite common, but we would advocate that these are properly recycled as they continue to leach chemicals and microplastics. Maybe after a year or so when they are deteriorating, they can be decommissioned. LED streetlights and solar powered 'slow-down' signs are in place in the village.

You could have a mini library positioned by the Church for book swapping, or this could be an ideal place to have a seed sharing library or a small book library a locals for free?

The crisp packet recycling scheme would have been great to raise awareness of recycling whilst it operated. What is the bus service like for the community?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We absolutely loved the picture of the Christmas lights – they would have given so much pleasure to passers-by and also those who helped erect them. We would also like to thank you for taking them down at the end of the season. We have seen a number of other villages places where the metal frames have remained in place all year which detracts from the area outside of the festive season.

Litter-wise, Rahara had just a few bits of all cigarette butts along the road edge.

Parallel parking is now possible along the roadside thanks to recent works. You plan to add some natural edging

plants to here. Avoid plants such as crocosmia which is one of those listed as invasive and problematic along roadsides by Transport Infrastructure Ireland .

Do watch that flags and bunting don't get forgotten because they can quickly look tatty. There were a couple of modern field gates that could be enhanced as opposed to changing them. A fresh coat of paint or some outdoor artwork could be added to enhance these.

We liked the entrants to the children's anti-litter poster competition. Thanks to them and all your volunteer litter-pickers.

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

It was good to see new houses being built and most homes presented very nicely. A few freshly painted buildings shone brightly during adjudication. You could circulate details of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant as this could be of interest to the couple of empty property owners in Rahara. Have many residents availed of the energy up-grade grants to install solar or PV panels for example? Perhaps they can be encouraged to follow your example and adopt actions from the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. A native fruit tree in very garden could help form a nice network for pollinators to enjoy.

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

Road and welcome signs looked clean thanks to your volunteers giving them a good scrub! . The Rahara road-side name sign could be relocated back towards the football pitch as the village has expanded since erected.

Arriving from Curraghboy you see the concrete block wall of the boundary for the football pitch. We wonder if this wall be enhanced by maybe allowing some ivy or honeysuckle or other climbing plants to grow along the wall.

Thanks also for the warning as despite the traffic signs, goodness some cars do go quite fast through the village. Have you discussed the application of designs in the DMURS with the local area engineer? This Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets would apply to Rahara as it applies to anywhere where the speed limit is 50 kph. This could include a pedestrian crossing between the school and Church for example. Look at Loughglynn and some of the new improvements there.

Concluding Remarks:

Your TidyTowns activities have not only helped raised awareness about biodiversity and sustainability, more importantly they have helped to bond and strengthen your community. There is an energy and positivity from your submission and we warmly applaud your work.