

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clonoulty - Cluain An Ulaigh** Ref: **2223**
County: **Tipperary(South)** Mark: **273**
Category: **B** Date(s): **08/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	41	42
Streetscape & Public Places	80	36	37
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	38	39
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	18	18
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	9	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	35
TOTAL MARK	550	263	273

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.

Thank you Clonoulty for your entry form, which was nicely laid out, contained concise information and was easy for the adjudicator to navigate. The accompanying photos helped give us a taste of the work you do over the year. You have a strong Tidy Towns committee of 4 members and receive assistance from other volunteers on a regular basis, so well done in this. This year you will have been in the competition for 6 years, which is young in the tidy town's family! How fantastic to hear that feedback from results and the adjudicators report earns you more volunteers every year and helps you focus on topics that bring value to the community. We are delighted to hear that the villages appearance has improved significantly over your time in the competition. We would encourage you to look to the Tidy Towns Handbook to develop a brief 3-5 plan for the village. This can help you plan works for all categories and gain you additional points. Look to the Tidy Towns website for lots of help and resources.

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

Your village has a lovely mix of buildings and in spite of being dissected by a busy road retains a real sense of place and community. Once again St John The Baptist church and its grounds were looking very well with its stone boundary such a prominent feature in the village. The sliver painted external stairs is a lovely piece of ironwork. The bright red and purple planting to the niches in the stone wall were delightful. The graveyard was well presented, and it was lovely to see the latter part of the graveyard being left as long flowering meadow to increase its value for wildlife while the front part was immaculately maintained. The green timber planters here were admired as were they in a number of locations spread out along the village's streets. Both the shop and post office were well presented and busy on adjudication day as was your butcher's shop. The community hall was looking well with muted colour tones following its recent painting and seems to be a real hub for the community. The old, thatched cottage was enlivened by window boxes. Brennans green frontage brought a pop of colour to the street. The school was neat and well presented with its quirky tennis themed gate. Do you know if there is a need for bicycle racks in the village, either for school children, mass goers or passing tourists on cycling tours? How great to see the old church in use again by your funeral directors. Best of luck with your plans to restore a holy well in the village. We hope to see progress on this in the coming years.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

This year you focus has been on wildflowers and landscape projects which also benefit biodiversity. Well done in your investment in tree planting on the approach from Holycross and with your fruit trees in the

biodiversity area. This will ensure a long term landscape structure for the village. The new daffodil displays you have invested in the biodiversity garden will add so much to the village setting in the Spring. You have several green areas in the village to maintain. The open space by the junction at Simons Pub is a nice space and the rail engine makes a feature in this area. Could the post and mesh fence behind this be planted with a native hedge to improve its setting? You have a number of picnic benches across the village, some of which are hard to access due to a lack of footpaths or crossing. Are all used in their present locations.? Consider planting a band to the road edge by the blue picnic table near the thatched cottage to create a buffer and an enhanced setting for this roadside resting spot. It could be planted with a mix to match the lovely bed by the junction towards Goolds Cross . This functions to separate the path from the road and was also full of insects on the day of the visit so benefits biodiversity too.

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

This category is all about villages demonstrating an understanding of the habitats that surround you so we would advise you to take all opportunities to get sound advice when considering works around Clonoulty. Your County Biodiversity officer would be a great person to talk to with regard to preparing a simple habitat survey of the village and surroundings. A crucial output of this approach would be a Habitat Map. A Habitat Map should indicate the location and extent of the habitats in your area. And not all habitats are obvious for example keep in mind that your lovely stone walls can be mini habitats with ferns and lichen often present. In fact, when stone is bare, weathering should be encouraged, perhaps by adding a little soil to gaps in the stones or even splattering the face with manure. On the day of the visit the verges on the approach to the village from Holycross did not seem to be managed for wildflowers. With grass kept neat and mown which as we now know is not beneficial for our local pollinators and insects. Look to the excellent All Ireland Pollinator Plans advice for communities which has step by step advice as to how to maximise the value of our grass verges. We know this is a concept you in the committee understand and indeed a look at the graveyard management shows how neatness and wildness can co-exist. Perhaps information can be spread to your residents who may have always mown the grass outside their homes but may be open to changing their approach.

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

As a community you seem to have made a concerted effort to address the issue of rainwater harvesting and we note you plan to restore the local holy well too. This is a great way to inform the wider village of the importance of water conservation and maybe encourage more residents to install their own water butts. The Biodiversity Garden is a great resource for the community and the innovative ways you have used this to inform and educate has earned you additional marks. From the vegetable tables made from old cable reels to the peas and beans bed made from donated sleepers and the bee and insect water park made from old child's toy – great work. Can you build on this success by promoting composting as this is another very practical way to address this category. Build on your success in this category.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The standard here was good with very little litter evident in the village core area so well done to all involved in this. Thank you to all your volunteers and indeed the local school who help to keep Clonoulty litter free. You say that weeding is one of your regular tasks? How do you carry out this? Try to remove weeds by hoeing to avoid excessive use of chemical weed killers in your lovely rural setting. We noted that some landowners around the village margins are using chemicals to weeds to the front of their properties and this should be discouraged. The black litter bin by the graveyard was clean and empty as was the red bin by the post office. However, the bin by the seating area at the junction opposite Simons was full and attracting crows. The Mutt bin was noted and thankfully no dog fouling was noted on our walk around the village.

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

There are a range of residential types in town and once again they were presented to a high standard on adjudication day. Garden boundaries and hedges which have such an impact on the village were well looked after so well done to all residents for the efforts put into their upkeep. Thank you to the residents of Kilnamanagh Court estate where several of the tidy village members reside for their work in litter picking and weeding. The name stone was very neat and legible and would be even more eye-catching if say surrounded by a bed of groundcover roses of a simple form to benefit pollinators of long flowering geraniums? The grass here is very tired and dried out and planting may be a better option in this dry spot. Chalk marks were seen in the parking areas so it seems the estate kids enjoy outdoor play which is great to see. Consider letting some grass areas grow where the kids can enjoy wildflowers while still have room for ball playing or active play in this lovely housing enclave.

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

We would encourage you to concentrate some of your planting at the welcome to Clonoulty signs. While the signs themselves are nicely maintained, given the speed of passing traffic, a bright burst of colour through plants here would draw attention to these roadside welcome signs. Look after the old streetscape items on village roads as they are often forgotten elements of our rural cultural heritage. A lovely example of an old wall mounted post box was seen. Talk to your heritage officer about the best approach to take if restoring these valuable heritage objects. Ensure all road signs are legible and cut back an overhanging vegetation. Have you considered doing a walking audit of the village as on our walk about the village we felt that the provision of footpaths is unbalanced with key circulation sections missing. Talk to your active travel team in Tipperary Co Co about getting gaps in footpath provision filled which would improve walkability from for example the school to the shop. The road markings at the pedestrian crossing are in need of repainting and perhaps a planter placed here might highlight it and so improve its

visibly for passing cars.

Concluding Remarks:

As a first time visitor I was impressed with the work your group has carried out in Clonoulty / Cluain Ultaigh. We thank all of the volunteers and locals involved in the works which make up this year's submission and continued good luck for all your future work in 2024 and beyond.