

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Emly - Imleach Iubhair** Ref: **641**
County: **Tipperary(South)** Mark: **371**
Category: **B** Date(s): **09/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	55	56
Streetscape & Public Places	80	46	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	46	47
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	42	43
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	22	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	70	72
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	42	43
TOTAL MARK	550	358	371

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2023. Welcome Emly to the 2023 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Thank you for your comprehensive entry form with accompanying photos, which we note has managed to grow in length by 9 pages since last years, with a page count this year of 53. We would advise you to omit details on individual projects out of the community section and include them under the relevant competition categories (e.g., Sustainable gardening) to streamline your application and ensure no information on individual projects gets overlooked. Your committee of 26 have been hard at work this year and continue their monthly meetings. It is fantastic to see that you received support from local business and agencies including Local Sports Clubs –the local GAA, Tennis Club and St Ailbhes National School. As part of this year's focus on inclusivity, your committee commissioned an online survey seeking feedback from your community. We hope you got a healthy amount of feedback and that new ideas have emerged which, as you say, can inform your action plan which will be compiled over the summer months to address items/issues that were highlighted. We look forward to seeing the results of this potentially included in your villages 3-year plan and added to your lists of projects which you have aligned with the sustainable development goals. Consider putting a timescale against each project so you can have the pleasure of ticking them off as completed and to see how your projects are progressing. Aim for a mid-plan review to assess which projects are no longer feasible and those that have been successful. You also submitted a charming hand drawn map, with clear keys and this was a great help in our stroll around your lovely rural village. Your flagship project this year was your heritage week festival. These events can generate so much community spirit but for a voluntary group such as yours, we understand the long hours and work that goes into running such a varied and eclectic weekend event. This is a great achievement and can only strengthen your communities' bonds. As there are many projects listed in this year's entry, not all will be mentioned in this report, but rest assured all have been considered during the judging process.

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

This was this adjudicator first visit to Emly and we very much enjoyed our time in your pleasant village with its array of architectural gems and variety of open spaces. The cluster of well-presented homes in the village core along with key commercial premises lent a well-kept air around Emly. The frontage of the Ford Bar was admired, and the reuse of paint made for colourful facades A fine cake and coffee were enjoyed in your new Seasons Café by this adjudicator which was very much appreciated. This is a busy hub in the village and beautifully finished with the reclaimed wooden seating and spacious accessible bathroom. The Guinness taps reused as hooks was a clever touch. . . The upgraded footpath from Glencourt Housing estate will, we hope, encourage more active travel in the village. The retention of the tree at the buildout was nicely done. The National School was again well presented, however at the end of the school day the number of cars parked on the paths here and at the GAA made for perilous journeys for children walking. Have you talked with the safe routes to school group in Tipperary Co Co to

see if the school can be assessed for works to improve safety at its frontage. The yellow gates to the GAA ground need a fresh lick of paint even though the entry suggested this had been done already. Maybe it was mid job on the day of the visit? Some self-seeded sycamores to the GAA wall planting here could be removed before the roots cause structural issues. We recognise the problems that vacant properties can bring to a village and look forward to new residents in the Central Garage and it getting a new lease of life.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The 1.5km Emly walkway is a big project for you and we look forward to seeing it progress over the next few years. Using native trees and hedgerows plants will also help it function as a green corridor for local biodiversity. The new paths around the church were very accessible (again harking back to your theme of inclusivity) with the contrast in edging colours good for those with poor vision. The LED lighting is also a great addition. The cemetery was having its grass cut on the day of the visit with fantastic views from the cemetery boundary. There was a friendly donkey alongside the cemetery which was a delight to see. The cross and boundary wall with its historic styles will be sensitively treated we are sure during your proposed conservation works. The four seasons garden was a lovely and cool oasis on a warm summers' afternoon. The new covid memorial Yew Tree is a poignant reminder of the times which we have all just lived through. The blue flowers here were striking. As were the pink roses at the entrance to the gardens with their lovely scent heavy in the air. We noted the mint in the window boxes at St Albies's co-op dairy building as part of your initiative to include at least one herb plant in every window box. The working water pump water feature at St Albies Drive was admired. Some of your street trees could benefit from some canopy shaping and removing the suckers and shoots at the base to direct growth up into the canopies. Open spaces to housing areas will be covered in the residential category.

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

There are a wide range of projects and initiatives listed in this category and they will all combine to improve the area for all biodiversity. We saw the numerous biodiversity areas on our walk about the village such as beside the dairy and the yellow and white signs were also seen at the four seasons garden and beside the dairy/creamery. The focus on fruit trees is interesting and aligns with your herb initiative, bees love herbs such as thyme and mint. As you rightly note the walkway is a great way to create biodiversity corridors through the village with links to the surrounding rural landscape. Your survey and expert advice will we are sure enable you to get the maximum benefit out of this lovely project. We loved the collective effort with other tidy towns groups to exchange seeds and plants and the images suggest an enjoyable time was had by all. Using local resource to keep up your planted areas is admired. And your use of bees wax to generate art is another first for this adjudicator. However, the resources you have invested in enriching Emly for biodiversity are matched by your commitment to monitor their impacts. The bird and bee surveys are a vital part of this. How disappointing to see that the bee numbers are down but this cold spring may have been a factor in this. Keep carrying out surveys over several years to get a true picture of local trends. Fingers crossed numbers will improve. Owl surveys could follow the new owl box.

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

The new café with its focus on sustainability is such an asset for the village. This together with your herbs and fruiting trees demonstrates your focus on the food aspect of sustainable actions. Well done to Callanans for the use of 90% bio-degradable packaging in their shop. Consider holding an Environmental Awareness Day with a focus on food waste, a huge national issue. While holding your plant swaps consider having plant knowledge workshops to enable a knowledge exchange between rural and village residents and between generations. Share experiences of growing, cooking, creating, and storing food. The communal gardens can improve access to residents to fresh food, locally grown which in turn improves health and well-being. Well done to all on the many endeavours listed in your submission in this category and the bottle top art was particularly admired.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your annual litter pick supported by An Taisce is a big event for Emly and how great to hear that you had a fantastic turn out. Your weekly litter collections are so important as they are a very visible element of your work. You also meet informally after the weekly litter pick over a cup of tea which adds a social dimension to this work. We wondered has a survey of bins in the village been carried out following the removal of the bins when the new footpath was being constructed. Do the concrete aggregate bin by the GAA gates and the blue metal bin by the HSE building need emptying regularly? If not, perhaps they are not required and could be removed also and so reduce street clutter? The bottle bank was immaculate as were the streets and public areas such as car parks. A few signs in the graveyard were showing their age but these may be addressed as part of the conservation works. Do you carry out manual removal of weeds. A regular road sweeping can help prevent the build-up of organic matter which weeds then root into, if this is an issue consider discussing with the local area management.

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

You seem to have a great rapport with residential groups in the village and this is such an important part of the work of tidy towns. Meeting with them regularly allows you both input into the plans of action for each housing area. Public open spaces within residential estates are a key part of this category and the mowing regime and meadow at the entrance to Glencourt was looking magnificent on the day of adjudication. We very much enjoyed a stroll through the grass paths. Have all the 1916 Oak trees survived. We forgot to count them distracted as we were by the surrounding wildflowers and clovers. The text to the name sign to the estate here could be repainted, as the lettering was hard to read from the road. We are sure that the Glencourt Community Garden will be a success and builds on the herb theme in the village planters. We hope you had healthy competition for your best window

box/hanging basket, best garden and best estate and we thank the local business for their generous sponsorship of this event. Some lovely window boxes were admired in the townhouses. The use of artificial plants in the village was jarring. They fade to become items of clutter over time. Can you suggest that residents and commercial premises refrain from using artificial and plastic plants?

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

How fantastic that your display of daffodils was so popular on the Tipperary Road, and the addition of more pollinator friendly builds could be considered. Be careful with temporary signage as this can add clutter. The new footpath will we hope to promote active travel in the village. You might consider verge cutting a few more meters ahead of the Emly sign on the approach from the R515. The long verge grass is beautiful to look at and rich for biodiversity however the village sign was not fully visible for arriving drivers, a short distance more of cutting would help this.

Concluding Remarks:

I was very impressed with the work your group has carried out and your villages communal spaces were a delight to visit. You have such a range of projects listed and carried out that we can only imagine the time and effort it takes. As a 35-year participant in the competition, you continue to impress. The visit began on a lovely note with the tone set by Mr Heffernan's poem. I would echo his words and say I hope that you 'keep enjoying the work you get done', stress free! Thank you for your entry Emly Tidy Town Group and we wish you all well in future projects for 2024 , 'good luck to everyone'.