

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballyduff Upper - An Baile Dubh Uachtarach** Ref: **1072**  
County: **Waterford** Mark: **312**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **07/06/2023**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2023</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	40	42
Streetscape & Public Places	80	39	41
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	44	45
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	23	24
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	15	16
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	62	63
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	37	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	41	43
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>312</b>

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

A 17 strong committee is a fantastic representation from the community. There are centres with multiples of your population who would be most envious of that level of commitment. Your ability to call on so many other volunteers within the community is testament to a strong community spirit. Well done to the next generation for getting stuck in on larger annual jobs & giving up hours on a Saturday to assist. Your future looks bright. The power of a thank you can never be underestimated & an annual community event with this as the purpose is a great idea. We all now have a greater appreciation of the value of meeting up. Getting together with other local community organisations reduces the workload & increases the impact as you did for the Santa Secret Village, the Darkness into Light Walk, Village Clean-ups, etc.

You are well supported & once again the envy of other centres having the assistance of 2 Community Employment workers. Their contribution to your work can never be underestimated as they break the back of many a workload/To Do List. Ongoing engagement with Waterford County Council is essential to keep your requests to the fore & make the agency aware of tasks that need attention. A good working relationship is key.

You are certainly engaging with the next generation early with your involvement in the playschool & national school. Education through hands on activities that are fun & engaging is a win-win for all. Well done to St Michael's National School on achieving their 7th Green flag. We will be interested to hear next year the results of your outdoor biodiversity pilot project.

It is wonderful to hear that your involvement in the competition to date has been a positive experience for the whole community. Your strategy to divide & conquer on each of the 8 categories makes the workload manageable & provides greater interest for people who have expertise in specific areas.

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

There is not a village or town in the country who has not been impacted by the blight of vacant or derelict buildings. It is always positive news when these premises are utilised for a new purpose. Increasingly old commercial buildings are being converted into residences that bring life back into village & town centres. On adjudication day, it was clear the impact the presentation of these buildings have on Ballyduff Upper. However, there are some stunning examples of vernacular architecture both residential & commercial. Next year's adjudicator can hopefully look forward to visiting The Blackwater Distillery's new guest welcome area & witnessing the transformed old house across from the Distillery & the old store next to the Medical Centre.

Well done to Ballyduff Community Centre on the completion of the conversion of the old storehouse into a Community building. They certainly have packed in a lot– gym, multipurpose area for activities, retail unit & outdoor seating area. Fund raising & grant applications take significant time, resources & energy. On adjudication day, there was plenty of activity & work was ongoing. The safe access to the building via the new pedestrian crossing is good

timing. What an achievement & what a community amenity to have within your midst.

Who would ever have thought that we Irish would take to outdoor dining! Certainly, this June it has come into its own & it is fantastic that you can assist An Sibin & An Siopa Beag with the maintenance of their outside seating areas. The space presents a great pop of colour on the street in addition to the mural on the gable end of the garage.

You have completed significant work at St Michael's Cemetery & it was looking pristine on adjudication day. There is a significant amount of work involved in the upkeep of all the metal work & the cobblelock. The natural seat & the "reflection area" seats present visitors will lovely spots to sit a while. The commemorative stone outside the boundary wall was most interesting.

In time it might be an idea to erect heritage signs at some of the buildings & locations e.g. Carnegie Free Library, Old Store House/Community Centre; Church, River Action Restaurant, old National School to name but a few.

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

The Fairy Glen is a gem. While aimed primarily at children, adults also derive such joy when we see how magical the experience is through the eyes of children. The revamped recycled seating is such a visual delight & well done on saving wildflower seeds here for use elsewhere. The stone boundaries to the walkways are very much in keeping with the ethos.

You are very fortunate to have a horticulturist on your committee & his focus on nurturing native Irish wildflowers for green areas is admirable. Each passing year will reap dividends when they come into bloom & later spread their seeds. He made this adjudicator's day as at Clancy's Turn the area there was home to a baker's dozen of Common Spotted orchids. With the variety of wildflowers & grasses there, it would be best to remove the existing posters, posts & flowerbeds as they detract from the overall vista. Your adjudicator would suggest adding one of the All-Ireland Pollinator applicable posters at the rear of the space ensuring it is laminated well to avoid deterioration or a wooden sign to fulfil the same purpose.

The Green Area is a wonderful communal space to have available. The herb garden is a very practical resource. Would small wooden/ceramic name placeholders & an information board for the details regarding function & application be more visually appealing? The raised bed alongside the pathway down to the Green Area has great potential for possibly an edible hedge.

Well done on engaging with Waterford County Council & seeking their expertise on how the existing picnic site at Mocollop Walking Trail could be developed. Your plans to work with Coillte & the County Council to create & fund a 5 km looped walk through the forestry & beyond is great news for all. The addition of wheelchair accessible picnic seating is so important for inclusivity. Once again, next year's adjudicator will be delighted to see this plan come to fruition.

The community car park is impressive thanks to kind benefactors & the stonewalls are striking. It is a significant area of hard surfacing. There is an interesting guide "How Car Parks can help Pollinators" in the new All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

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

At St Michael's Cemetery, the back wall, to the right-hand side of the gate, offers you a fantastic opportunity to add climbing roses or a creeper – great for biodiversity, as are your wild hedges there that on adjudication day were bursting with elderflowers, oxeye daisies & dog rose. It was a joy to see some graves planted with perennials rather than use containers.

Unfortunately for your adjudicator, the boxes on the railings were not yet planted with the proposed pollinator friendly perennials nor were the large 3-tier planter or the trough planters on the wall heading out towards the Red Bridge. Please do ensure you send in photos of these in bloom next year, as those included in this year's submission were poor pollinators – begonias & petunias. There was a good mix of nectar rich perennials with some annuals in the tubs at the church. You might consider whether you need the containers on the church gate piers, they seem lost against such a large backdrop. The addition of trailing bacopa might be an option for inclusion in the tall planters by the church door.

Were the new nest boxes in the Fairy Glen occupied during the year? Do provide us with an update next year. The beds either side of the Red Bridge were bursting with catmint blooms.

It is worth doing an audit of your trees & ensuring that stakes & ties are removed where there are no longer required.

You have a great opportunity to build on the discovery of the Irish Black Bee. There is an excellent online course in bumblebee identification on [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie) it might be ideal for the school to consider. Who knows which one of Ballyduff Upper's next generation will be, in time, a renowned apiologist?

It will be fascinating to discover & potentially film an otter living locally in the Blackwater with the erection of the otter holt. There is presently a National Otter Survey taking place, last survey was 2010 – 11. If you have any sightings or other evidence, do submit your records on the National Biodiversity Data Centre website. We look forward to updates next year.

You are in an enviable location for nature & have wonderful opportunities to log sightings on the National Biodiversity Data Centre. <https://records.biodiversityireland.ie/> The centre is a valuable resource for communities & Ballyduff Upper residents could become useful citizen scientists. The Flower Timed Insect (FIT) Count is a fun & engaging way for families to monitor nature & track changes.

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

The Free Library is a lovely facility to continue in the village & a perfect location for footfall. The GAA are setting a great example by installing solar lights. Sometimes one needs to see it in action before one is convinced of its effectiveness. You are very progressive with all your projects on the collection & reuse of materials – scrap metal,

shredded paper, batteries, uniform & sports gear swaps, etc. These meet a myriad of needs – source of funding, saving on household expenditure, redirecting from landfill & ease of collection for those unable/unwilling to bring items to locations elsewhere. It is good practice to focus on the first 3 Rs – Refuse, Reduce & Reuse. Well done on gardening environmentally – nothing goes to waste. You have an amazing resource in Len – it seems he can turn his hand to most projects & what better way to pass on some of these skills than by showing the next generation what can be done with what we consider waste. This would be a lovely inclusion, with pictures, in the Tidy Towns newsletter & a source of learning for other centres.

The location of the bicycle rack at the car park at the Green Area seems like an excellent central location. However, on adjudication day, it was inaccessible due to cars parked there. ChangeX is a platform that has lots of proven ideas from other communities in this area & more importantly, they have access to funding.

<https://www.changex.org/> The Tidy Towns handbook is a fantastic resource & a wealth of knowledge for this category. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Sustainability-Doing-More-with-less.pdf>

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

The Community Information board located at the church is a great way to locate all posters in one place & not on poles. The Bottle Bank at the GAA pitch is bookended with stunning murals & was clean & tidy when visited. The dog-fouling stencil is so versatile & well done on utilizing it where a problem exists – safe way of addressing the problem owner. The Picker Pal programme is a wonderful initiative & well done to the National School for taking the time to run it successfully & to parents & children for getting onboard. It is heartening to hear that you are noticing a significant reduction in litter collected during the An Taisce Spring Clean. Have you heard of the Pure Mile project – it encourages people living in rural areas to adopt a mile of road & keep it litter free. [www.pureproject.ie](http://www.pureproject.ie) It might even reduce further your litter bounty in 2024. Sometimes we tend not to notice unused poles, other unwanted street furniture & redundant work cones so it is worthwhile doing an annual audit & making contact with Waterford County Council for their removal.

The council is to be complimented on the road markings in Ballyduff Upper, clear & well finished. The colourful seats are wonderful & well done to the volunteer for completing an excellent job.

The village was free of litter on adjudication day, a delight to see. Well done to all.

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

Marion Terrace residents must be delighted with the council's resurfacing of the roadway. The green area in front is a fantastic amenity for the children. Would they consider additional planting against the high wall e.g. as suggested elsewhere, an edible hedge or perhaps climbing roses or other climbers?

Cois Abhann have a nice linear green space running alongside the main road. While not large enough for a football play area, there is space for further trees. Pocket Forests are an Irish NGO making small native woodlands in small spaces the size of a car parking space. It may be of interest to the residents. [www.pocketforests.ie](http://www.pocketforests.ie)

The acquisition of four previously vacant properties will certainly provide a facelift to the buildings & once in use will transform the facades & bring more life to the area. It would be hoped that the various grant streams would encourage more people to follow suit. Please do continue to keep us updated.

It was a joy to see the pride so many residents take in their abodes & you have some green-fingered gardeners judging by the beautiful front gardens.

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

The old farm machinery painted black & red at the far side of the Red Bridge is a perfect location particularly as it is positioned across in front of the old creamery & across from a working farm with lovely vernacular farm buildings. The renovation of the Old Barracks close by will enhance this approach to the village & create significant interest. What a visual delight is the approach road from Lismore – one is welcomed with a riot of red poppies & red roses. The red bicycle's basket needs red trailing geraniums – one can never have enough vibrant red. Unfortunately, the large sign for the Social Dance was obscuring the Welcome sign as were some of the poppies in the upper bed – lower growing varieties might work better in that bed. The stonewalls on the approach road add to the character of the village approach.

The various traffic-calming measures carried out by Waterford County Council have a dramatic effect on the speed of passing motorists & certainly ensure the pedestrian feels safer.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Your adjudicator enjoyed their visit to Ballyduff Upper. As a community, you have progressed a lot of projects in the past year & put in significant work the results of which are evident throughout the village. The revival of vacant buildings will add additional life & provide a general uplift when completed. Where you can, engage with other local Tidy Towns groups as sharing ideas is the lifeblood of the movement. We look forward to seeing your rolling 3-year plan with completed marked against actions.