

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: Ballymacarbry - Baile Mhic Cairbre	Ref: 534
County: Waterford	Mark: 366
Category: A	Date(s): 30/06/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	44	46
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	47
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	47	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	45	46
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	24	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	68	69
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	39	40
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	44	45
TOTAL MARK	550	356	366

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.

45The community spirit is quite outstanding in Ballymacarbry as it appears everyone gets involved some where along the line on the various projects & the To Do List – the meitheal is alive & thriving. One gathers from the provided list of residential areas, businesses & local community groups that all 138 residents are active within the community. It is heartening to hear you are receiving significant support from Waterford City & County Council's various departments as the need arises. The recent appointment of a Community Employment Scheme worker is significant, as you have shouldered, through volunteers, the maintenance of the village for close to 3 years. You have the spectrum of communication channels covered from the traditional to social media platforms. The close relationship with the youth through the two schools & sporting & youth organizations ensures the next generation get to connect in with your activities in a fun & engaging way. Congratulations to your President, Pat Power, on receiving the Aged Volunteer of the Year Award at the Waterford PPN Award ceremony, well deserved. This was a perfect occasion to celebrate in conjunction with your ruby anniversary of Tidy Towns involvement.

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

The village of Ballymacarbry is surprising linear with lovely examples of vernacular architecture with some buildings retaining their original form & fabric. The striking façade of the renovated O'Maoloid's pub (now Nire View) is certainly eye catching. Is it planned to continue the pub business from the premises or are some of the five buildings intended for residential use? Doocey's Bar and accompanying terrace is immaculately presented. The scale of the Community Centre was quite a surprise. While some efforts have been made to soften all the hard surfacing with the planted bank out front, it is a significant area of grey. It was a pity that the recent guidance from the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan on how car parks can be managed to help biodiversity was not available at the time of its construction. <https://pollinators.ie/how-car-parks-can-help-pollinators/> We understand why previous adjudicators suggested painting the exterior of the centre & equally, we understand this is a huge financial undertaking for a small community. The presentation of the Garda Station is excellent especially as you have indicated it is no longer occupied. Are there plans for its sale or is it to be repurposed? The Post Office was busy during the visit & it is heartening to see it still open & operating. St Patrick's Hall is a fine public building & although not presently in use, it is maintained well. The first hurdle of planning permission has been passed & therefore, whilst presently delayed, there are concrete plans for the building's refurbishment, which is positive. There are many communities who would be delighted with that level of progress.

We look forward to the completion of the car salesroom. It certainly will be a unique business premises as it is transformed from a former creamery with recycled & natural materials used in the conversion. The mural alongside

with the positive message is inspiring & adds a great splash of colour to what was previously a muted gable end. The murals that bookend Doocey's Garage allows the business premises to recede into the background such as their level of detail & interest. The area under the dancers unfortunately detracted from the mural due to the weeds & litter strewn about.

The entrance opposite into Pinewood Healthcare & the GAA grounds is very well maintained.

The dedicated seating close to the pedestrian crossing is a lovely memorial. Are there any plans for additional pedestrian crossings within the village environs?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The Picnic area is a gem nested as it is in the centre of the village & availing of the riverside location. The cobblestone & crazy paving pathways, mown paths, natural picnic areas, woodlands & flowering shrub perimeters create an oasis & allow one to appreciate the River Nire. Unfortunately, like many other locations in Waterford, the invasive plant, Japanese Knotweed is very evident on the riverside. Please do ensure this is reported to the local council environment department and logged on the invasive species database.

<https://www.waterfordcouncil.ie/departments/environment/related/japanese-knotweed.htm>

<https://invasives.ie/home/sighting-records/> The perennial shrubs at the roadside picnic area were blooming during the visit however bindweed is threatening to envelop the red roses. The planted boundary stonewall is a good example of how to accommodate both native plants & showy perennials. The Waterford Sustainable Living moss art installation is holding its own despite all the construction activity.

The landscaped boundaries of the car park opposite Doocey's Bar are one of the best examples of the use of perennial planting – excellent use of colours, textures & heights. The highlight for your adjudicator was the wooden wildlife sculptures in a natural backdrop – real artistry with the rocks, fallen trees, ferns & oat grass. The badger emerging from a sett is superb in its lifelike form.

The landscaping of the linear green area from the sculpture park through to the area across from the entrance to Cluain Cairbre is excellent with the beech hedging backdrop, groves of trees & planted areas. The clover filled grass was a delight to see. The bed of pink roses opposite provided a stunning display on adjudication day. Given the demands both from the point of view of watering & time, is there a need for all the containers on the green stretch – they seem surplus to requirements as there is, as outlined, so much planting in this space? We have experienced one of the warmest Junes on record & with the impact of climate change, we all need to be cognizant of water usage & use it prudently even if it is harvested rainwater. Equally at the entrance to the Community Centre, the container here could be removed & the plants placed in a mounded area unless there is another reason for its placement.

The Irish Water site redevelopment is superb. The amalgamation of the three beds into one has allowed you to construct a spectacular display & the decorative beehive adds a lovely whimsical note. On adjudication day, the oat grasses, verbena, echinacea, salvia & so many more perennials were putting on a stunning show. The orchard was showing promise although the material suppressing the weeds had come loose & needed to be reattached. The planted bed in front of the wall was blooming with thriving nepeta & oxeye daisies. Your work at this site is remarkable. Thank you for your photos of the site from other months during the year.

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

This is an area in which you have been very active as is apparent immediately when walking through the village with your move from annuals to perennials. A noted reduction in summer annuals of 75% is significant. Your adjudicator would recommend the submission of an article for the Tidy Towns newsletter on this topic as many communities are finding this transition quite difficult.

It was noticeable the numbers of insects visiting the flowers at the Irish Water site when walking the area. The provision of photos detailing the arrival of butterflies & bees during the year is testament to "Plant it & they will come".

Well done on logging your sightings on the National Biodiversity Data Centre website in addition to participating in the Irish Garden Bird survey.

Good communication with the local Council is imperative especially when some of their actions run counter to best practice from a biodiversity protection point of view. Although it must be noted Waterford City & County Council have committed to the phasing out of the use of glyphosates.

As you have indicated, clear communication with the community is essential in order to explain your tactics - why herbicides are no longer used, the introduction of reduced mowing regimes & the no mow May initiative. It takes time for people to understand however the sight of increased numbers of pollinators is testament to the success of these initiatives. It is heartening to see the return of cowslips & cuckoo flowers.

Your engagement on the 2022 WaterBlitz research project is essential in order to monitor the River Nire & protect it into the future. It is wonderful that you can report excellent water quality at the sample locations as the recent EPA report highlighted that almost 53% of surface waterbodies are at good or high status, a reduction from the 2010-2015 period.

What a charming way to mark World Bee Day with the provision of envelopes of sustainably sourced native wildflower & sunflower seeds.

The sharing of plants & trees between Tidy Towns groups is great to see happening & what a nice legacy from Bulmers in conjunction with Clonmel & Cashel Tidy Towns – native apple trees. We look forward to seeing them in situ at both Cluain Cairbre & the National School. It would seem you will be able to hold an Apple Festival one of these years!

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

You have a fantastic platform to extend the reach of your Sustainable ethos with hosting the Nire Valley Drop

Mountain Biking event. The use of rainwater for bike washing & the segregation of waste are visible actions. Have you considered using the Reverse Vending machine at Dungarvan for your plastic bottles & aluminum cans collected after the event? Perhaps one of the participants is from the town & could transport the items there. The list of sustainable initiatives in situ is impressive – community library, refill location, school book rental scheme, school uniform swaps, school & sports carpooling, rainwater harvesting, composting, diversion of newspapers & coffee grinds for mulching & fertilizer respectively, repurposing of unwanted furniture, sharing of plants & seeds, etc. The publicizing of initiatives like the Trash to Treasure Project & the Repair Café in adjoining localities provides an opportunity for the community to consider alternatives to purchasing new. Having an active social media platform as you do allows you to share pertinent campaigns around sustainability.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You are to be commended on the standard of your roadside kerbing in addition to cobblelock areas. The latter looks lovely on installation however the maintenance involvement in keeping that standard is onerous. Your recipe of washing soda & warm water is remarkably effective.

The numbers of community members required to maintain the village environs free of litter is significant & well done to all involved as the task is relentless. We note your ongoing litter bin free zone & poster free zone.

The Bring Bank area was spotless on adjudication day. Once again you are active on sharing waste disposal days for specific items in adjoining localities.

In general, the village was spotless with some small littering at the picnic area & at Doocey's mural.

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

Cluain Cairbre is a showcase example of how a residential development for older community residents can be designed to create an attractive place to live, sensitive to the local context & urban form of the village. The judicious landscaping schema, provision of seated areas, natural pathways & woodland backdrop present a most beautiful residential area.

Deerpark View has a delightful tree lined entrance & some nice terraced landscaping. The woodland backdrop at the rear of the estate is a lovely background vista. On adjudication day, all green areas had been mowed & there was no evidence of a wildflower patch. An edible hedge inside the wooden railing may be an idea to consider in time. The signage at the entrance with the planting underneath is an attractive installation.

St Martins Place is an estate of well-presented residences & gardens. The residences in the village are, in the main, beautifully maintained & there is no doubting that there are many skilled gardeners in Ballymacarbry.

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

The entrance to Ballymacarbry from Glenanore has well preserved stonewalls & the previously mentioned Nire View refurbishment with the woodland backdrop & the beautifully landscaped car park all combine to enchant the visitor. The Grotto on the Dungarvan side provides a lovely stopping off point on the road & the woodland entrance from there into the village is a sylvan wonderland.

As referenced in an earlier category, the Irish Water planting scheme is a delightful panorama for all passing motorists & the backdrop of the woodlands & pasturelands enhances the landscape.

Concluding Remarks:

Ballymacarbry is to be congratulated on what you, as a community, have achieved to date. The village has so much on offer for residents & visitors alike. Once all the refurbishments have taken place at the commercial properties it will add greatly to the village streetscape. Your plans for biodiversity are reaping significant rewards & as you plan to add more fruit trees & perennials you will be able to provide significant pointers for other communities. One recommendation we would make is to try to reduce the size of your submission. Thank you for an easy to follow village map.

We would like to take the opportunity to offer our collective condolences to the two local families who suffered significant losses this year.