

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: Cheekpoint and Faithlegg - Rinne na Sige	Ref: 951
County: Waterford	Mark: 302
Category: B	Date(s): 19/07/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	53	55
Streetscape & Public Places	80	35	38
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	39	42
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	30	32
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	13	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	35
TOTAL MARK	550	287	302

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.

It is hard to envisage a harder working & more engaged group than the Cheekpoint & Faithlegg Development Group (CFDG) & the sub-group of the Tidy Towns. As a very young sub-group, less than 4 months old, you have hit the ground running with your 3 Year Plan & action plans for the next four seasons. What a great name for a Tidy Towns volunteer, "Local Champion" & who wouldn't want the title with such energy & enthusiasm to buoy them in their activities. You are incredibly fortunate to have local residents with specialist expertise to assist & guide you on your projects – worth its weight in gold! All of this, of course, would not be possible without the support of CFDG, the local business community, agencies & most importantly the community itself. The level of engagement by so many local community organisations is remarkable & testament to your ability to get your message across in an inclusive & clear manner. It would seem that if you could bottle the enthusiasm & engagement of the 31st Waterford Scouts there would be little undone on your To Do List! You take a holistic approach to community involvement not just requesting assistance instead warmly receiving new residents with welcome packs, creating a support structure for those suffering from a bereavement; organizing charity fundraisers & get togethers & very importantly, involving the next generation in community work & activities. It is clear that you are making Cheekpoint & Faithlegg a place residents want to live, work & play.

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

Faithlegg House Hotel entrance gateway & gate lodge contribute significantly to the visual charm of the street scene. St Nicholas Churches, old & new, set back from the road in their own grounds with the stone boundary walls & attractive cut stone piers creates a wonderful panorama. Both buildings demonstrate a high quality local stone masonry & craftsmanship & the attendant graveyard has some fine examples of artistic markers.

Faithlegg National School occupies a sizeable site & the building is presented to a very high standard with the yellow entrance doors providing a charming pop of colour. The front gardens, in particular, the corner seating area with the circular flowerbed, are attractively landscaped. It is wonderful to see both maturing & newly planted trees on site. The pencil bollards marking the pedestrian route are a whimsical yet practical installation.

Faithlegg Walls Project is indeed a long-term project & your adjudicator is making the assumption this is planned to extend into Cheekpoint, as it was noted there are stretches where hedgerows are obscuring significant sections of the stonewalls. We look forward to a brief synopsis of the plan being drawn up by yourselves & your local Heritage Officer with input from others. The standard of the walls across from & along side Faithlegg Church set the benchmark for this project. Well done to yourselves & homeowners on works commenced to date.

Cheekpoint village is a hidden gem with its enchanting residential terraces, narrow laneways, coastal roads &

panoramic views. The wide variety of vernacular architecture provides the visitor with lots of interesting sights. The new pontoon with berths & accompanying facilities is clearly the result of years of perseverance, hard work & a strong community spirit. Congratulations to all on getting phase 1 of the project completed. The blue shipping container & fenced area around it we assume has to do with ongoing works as it does detract from the area. We look forward to seeing the realization of the phase of plans for the harbour in the future.

Cheekpoint Stores is a one of a kind business premises & your adjudicator has yet to see its match. The mural by Waterford Walls on the gable end of the building is enchanting & the area alongside a great example of how a space can be carved out for several purposes - outdoor seating, showcase for Men's Sheds crafts and planting. Is McAlpin's Suir Inn still operating as a business as it was not open during the visit?

Derelict properties & abandoned sites are an eye sore for any community. Therefore, it is heartening to see the site of The Moorings recently served with a notice to enter it on the Derelict Site Register. Your continued engagement with the local council is paying dividends. It would be hoped this will propel the owner into action & either decide to develop the site or place up for sale. There were construction works underway on a property on Russiaside during the visit, another positive indicator. We noted the derelict site & damaged entrance close to the recycling bay. Do continue to provide us with brief updates on an annual basis.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Dobbyn's Field with its Park & playground is a jewel in Cheekpoint's crown. It was heartening to see how many people were using the amenities – families picnicking, children playing & using the various play structures & groups of teenagers congregating at the new seating. The well maintained natural playground is situated ideally within the Park & great use is made of the existing terrain. We noted the colourful new resident, Harry, the planted tyre caterpillar created by the Venture Scouts. The pots on the piers seem surplus to requirements given the flourishing hebe & acers at the entrance. The area to the right inside the gate appeared to be left as a biodiversity area & perhaps the poster relating to same had been moved from there to the area on the left under the trees. The use of dog fouling stencils on the footpaths here would be a good alternative to the posters on redundant poles. There is noticeable evidence of ash dieback disease on many of the mature trees located in the Park's perimeter & a plan to deal with their inevitable demise should be put in place soon as there is no remedy currently available for the disease.

The Village Green is a great amenity for all & it is fantastic to see its use in June for the Community Fun Day on social media. The creation of the handcrafted yarn decorations, still on display on adjudication day, is akin to an art exhibition. The perennial plants spilling out of the blue boat bookends beautifully the commencement of the Village Green. The creation of another mural facing the Green appears to be in progress & the initial sketches look captivating. A coordinated approach to seating on the Green would create a cohesive schema rather than several different styles. The Grotto bookends the other end of the Green & is well presented although some additional perennial colour would enhance the space. Has consideration been given to placing art sketches on the substations located close by? Some communities, following granted permission, have painted wildlife scenes & flowers on these utility boxes.

The graveled area at The Mount with the colourful planted containers & bench makes great use of what could otherwise be another parking bay & hard surfacing.

You have maximized the area at Power's Hill/Strand Road with the revamped buoy & matching seating. There is little need for much more landscaping here with the backdrop of the garden behind & the estuary views.

There is no dispute on the colour that annuals provide however a greater focus on choosing nectar rich perennials fulfilling the same function would be more beneficial. A recent publication from the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) offers some salient advice. <https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Top-Ten-pollinator-plants-Guide-WEB.pdf>

Cheekpoint Stores have an ideal opportunity to showcase such a move given their perfect location & colourful façade. Their showy blooms of hydrangea on the corner are an excellent example.

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

The Snowhill Meadows Rewilding Project is a significant undertaking albeit with the assistance of local expertise. The new accessible footpaths offer safe access to all in addition to the installation of the pedestrian crossing. The latter was not in operation on adjudication day. The reseeded green, long wild meadow areas & pathways mown through were looking resplendent during the visit. The stonewall perimeter completes the entrance & links it to the existing entrance at the far side. Your plans for fruit bushes, further tree planting & sustainable wildflower planting will enhance the space. We look forward to seeing these developments over time.

At the seating area at Power's Hill/Strand Road your adjudicator enjoyed their lunch whilst observing the feeding activities of black-headed gulls, oystercatchers & kittiwakes – a most relaxing experience. In view of the numbers of birds at this quieter location, would the information board on local birdlife is better positioned here or indeed an additional one located here?

We noted your warning signs for red squirrels on the approach roads. You reference surveys conducted & we wonder what they were & their findings aside from the Biodiversity Plan. The National Biodiversity Data Centre is the place to log sightings & there are numerous surveys there to undertake. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/monitoring/> The National Otter Survey is presently taking place & as you mentioned otter sightings in your report it would be an ideal opportunity to participate in this study. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/surveys/national-otter-survey/> We look forward to hearing, in brief synopsis, the occupancy rates of your newly installed wildlife boxes at the various locations indicated.

The outcome of the surveys currently underway in advance of Waterford Port Authority's planning process for the port extension will add greatly to your local biodiversity knowledge. This closer collaboration should ensure the Habitat Directive is adhered to & guidelines followed.

Following on from the tree survey undertaken by Faithlegg House Hotel, are they intending to seek a Tree

Protection Order (TPO) for the Cork tree?

The Graveyard committee is to be commended for the manual weeding of the gravel area outside the boundary walls as on adjudication day it was clear hoeing was done to curtail weed growth.

The Minaun has a most enjoyable looped walking route & the views were excellent in great weather. The mixed woodlands of birch, oak & pine & cleared upland offer superb views & are a haven for wildlife.

As you have an active social media platform, you have an ideal opportunity to share nature & biodiversity news. There are so many sources from which to share topics e.g. National Biodiversity Data Centre; Birdwatch Ireland; Irish Wildlife Trust; Coastwatch to mention just a few.

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

It is fantastic to see that as a community you have embraced the ethos of sustainability & sought invaluable assistance from your Local Environmental Awareness Officer (LLAO). The LLAO is a resource who should be referred to at all points on your journey in this area. The creation of an SEC previously & its accompanying Master Plan is a work of perseverance however it will pay dividends in the future for the whole community as you outlined in your submission. The arrival of both fast broadband & smart meters in the village is a boon – greater options for working from home, control of household energy usage & establishing micro businesses. There is no doubt that the stratospheric rise in energy bills coupled with grant incentives has increased the rate of solar, PV & EV installations nationally & good to see a similar take up in Cheekpoint & Faithlegg. It might be worth considering asking the South East Energy Agency www.southeastenergy.ie to hold an Information Evening on these new technologies & perhaps early adoptees in the community could attend to offer personal insights. An invitation to other local Tidy Towns groups would ensure a sizeable audience & a collective focus.

As an ongoing participant in Waterford County Council's Active Travel Scheme, the village is becoming a more walkable & accessible locality for non-motorised residents. The impact this is already having for local school children that now have the opportunity to walk or cycle to school & for swim lessons is great to hear. We would be interested to hear how many children get to school under their own steam rather than driven. The footpaths combined with bike racks provide families with bikes options for sustainable transport. You reference the limited nature of the Local Link bus service – is this due to demand or supply? The community is to be commended for organizing school bus transport & informal car-pooling schemes.

The National School's annual Pumpkin Project is an excellent example of a fun, engaging & useful sustainable project – from hot chocolate prepared on surplus local goat milk in a compostable cup to pumpkin seed grow receptacle to final resting place in composter. It is heartening to hear about the many initiatives the school is involved in, many though in the last category, recycling. However, their caretaker, Jimmy, is providing them with wonderful opportunity to learn life skills & have fun with growing their own food – from early potato growing competitions to fresh fruits and vegetables. He really is a Community Hero.

It takes work to ensure events do not create waste food & packaging thus well done on organizing a low carbon, no waste, local Senior Citizens Christmas party. You are leading by example.

The availability of local exercise classes, sporting opportunities for all ages & genders & a weekend Community Café at Park Rangers reduces your collective carbon footprint as no need to travel outside the village. The facility there is quite astonishing.

Tidy Towns across the country are deeply indebted to the skill set of Men's Sheds & you too are beneficiaries. Their ability to construct wonderful creations from unused or discarded materials is astonishing – Viking boats, borrow book libraries & nest boxes!

Your plans for the "Litter or Lost?" with a focus on repurposing lost items sounds interesting & could be the start of adapting items for other purposes e.g., WestSails creates bags from recycled sails; Trashie Treasures makes jewellery from beach trash & ocean plastic waste.

The Refill Ireland Project to be adopted by Cheekpoint & Faithlegg should drastically reduce the use of plastic water bottles particularly in the summer months when you have increased visitor numbers. It takes a mindset change & some education.

We saw goats in a field close to the village centre & they are great at maintaining green areas sustainably although they do need strict supervision!

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

There is an irresponsible mindset amongst a small cohort of Irish people regarding their outdoor recreational practices & a lack of personal responsibility combined with laziness. It is frustrating to repeat work when you know your time could be better spent elsewhere. The Leave No Trace education programme has resources that might be of assistance to you in your work & in any promotion activities. Home - Leave No Trace Ireland Well done on joining the Clean Coats & Community Cleanup initiatives, these are great campaigns to get a lot of engagement from many for a specified period of time.

It is positive to hear local businesses are actively involved in the monitoring & collection of litter in their vicinity. As they do offer a take away service, it would be worth discussing the possibility of them joining the Conscious Cup campaign thus offering the potential to reduce disposable cup waste. www.consciouscup.ie

There has been, in many coastal, lake & riverside communities, an increasing focus by Waterways Ireland & local Councils on the removal of derelict vessels. The process takes time however it does reach a successful conclusion thus keep up with your lobbying as the removal of these abandoned boats has a dramatic impact on a harbour's aesthetics & functionality. It was very evident on adjudication day the extent of this issue.

Dog fouling, the bane of many a village & town! The fault lies with irresponsible owners rather than the canines. Some communities have found the use of dog stencils in areas of pervasive fouling has worked well rather than a plethora of posters pasted onto poles & adding clutter to the streetscape. The continued use of the children's posters re dog fouling might be best located in one area. We will be interested to hear your feedback next year on the proposed adoption of the Green Dog Walker scheme.

Your proposed "Litter or Lost" initiative should make people think about what category an item falls into rather than automatically assuming it is destined for landfill. A promotional campaign with visual examples will be required to get the message across. Another initiative we look forward to receiving feedback on in next year's submission.

The Bring Bank has to be one of the best screened recycling amenities your adjudicator has seen, complete with lovely landscaped treatment out front & yarn bombing & not an iota of litter to be seen. Well done.

An annual audit of street furniture is a good strategy to employ. It can be surprising the number of redundant poles, obscured signage, unnecessary signage, discarded safety equipment, street lighting & bollards requiring attention, etc. Once collated, decisions can then be taken on what requires local council involvement & what can be attended to locally. The attention to these removes clutter from the visual landscape e.g. the illegible information board on the Fishing Punts of Cheekpoint is no longer required now the new one has been erected. Also a focus on the removal of silt & resulting vegetation alongside boundary walls & kerbs presents a clean & tidy first impression especially on the street leading down to the harbour area & under the community noticeboard.

All of the community & especially the youth, are to be commended for tackling littering & on adjudication day there was no visible litter.

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

There is a great sense of pride by local residents, in the main, in their abodes, gardens & boundaries. There are some wonderful examples of cottage gardens with blooming swathes of flowers. As a community, you have a wonderful opportunity to repair those boundary stonewalls in various locations.

Snowhill View Estate entrance with the cobblelock & both planted & container shrubs would benefit from added colour. Cobblelock looks lovely when first laid however the maintenance involved is onerous. Some of the footpaths would benefit from repair to allow safe access for all residents irrespective of mobility. The residences at Marian Terrace, The Mount & on the other roads offer a variety of styles both traditional & contemporary that add to the village architectural interest. It was disappointing to note herbicide use on some residential boundaries.

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

All approaches to Cheekpoint village are stunning with the estuary in the distance. The bilingual heritage style signage with the planting underneath presents an excellent first impression. The vibrant hedgerows, hedging & mature trees ensures Cheekpoint remains a green enclave. The availability of safe footpaths from the school is a great facility.

Concluding Remarks:

As a first time visitor to Cheekpoint & Faithlegg on a rare sunny July day, your adjudicator enjoyed their walk about. For a small community, you have achieved a significant body of work over time & your future plans are equally ambitious.

We received a beautifully presented submission with lots of photographic evidence of your work & showing the locality in various seasons. We look forward to the realization of your projects in the future & with the existing community spirit there is no doubting your commitment.

We have a few suggestions for next year's report. There is significant room for editing on your submission & thus we would suggest a reduction in size by 40% to produce a succinct document. Similar to last year's adjudicator, we found your 3 Year Plan confusing as it was difficult to determine what projects had been achieved & when. In the submission, some projects are marked as new when in fact they are future projects & are best labeled with the notation FP e.g. both the 200th anniversary celebration of Faithlegg Church next year & marking the Meagher family tomb. Your map was easy to decipher & follow, thank you.