

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: Dungarvan - Dún Garbhán	Ref: 230
County: Waterford	Mark: 360
Category: E	Date(s): 08/06/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	53
Streetscape & Public Places	80	47	49
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	49	51
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	37	38
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	65
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	47	48
TOTAL MARK	550	348	360

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 quite remarkable what can be achieved with a small core group who has the ability to call on a willing collection of every expanding volunteer numbers. It seems unlikely based on the provided list that there is a group in Dungarvan with whom you are not engaged on some level - that takes work & perseverance. Not every group on initial contact is amenable to active participation! Your reach across age profiles, genders, nationalities, sports, abilities etc is commendable. You must have a magnetic draw for visiting TidyTowners! The engaging tone of your social media posts & Tidy Towns notes in the local papers is bound to attract positive attention as you deliver your messages with both humour & directness. The launch of your new website is a great resource for showcasing your mission & as more is added behind each "front cover" it will be a fantastic opportunity to both look back at what has been achieved & look forward to new projects. Well done on taking on the task of reviving Dungarvan's St Patrick's Day Parade, competing in it, assisting others to compete, fundraising & holding a separate themed best dressed commercial window competition - what a gift to the whole community & significant work involved in getting such an undertaking over the finish line. The variety & number of activities you as a group have been involved in over the 12 months is astonishing.

Your close working relationships with Waterford County Council, the local Chamber of Commerce & Town Centre Management Group have paid dividends & that mutual respect will stand you in good stead for the future, as communication is key. Congratulations on winning the PPN's Environmental & Conservation Award. Local businesses, education, media, sporting, community, youth & activity groups are to be lauded for supporting your activities in a variety of ways - financially, physically & the all important sustenance after a litter pick.

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

The historical streetscape of Dungarvan presents a wonderful opportunity for the visitor to follow a Heritage Walking Trail commencing at Grattan Square & taking in the Castle, St Mary's x 2, Church Street, Old Market House Arts Centre to reference just a few notable buildings.

The design of the one-acre Grattan Square has certainly rebalanced the sharing of the space between pedestrians, cyclists & motorists. It is regrettable more trees were not incorporated into the design in place of the numerous containers to soften all the hard surfacing & reduce the number of car parking spaces. Although it must be said that the uniform colour adopted for the outdoor dining canopies combined with the containers assists in providing a vibrant colour palette. The same can be said of the dining areas on Davitt's Quay.

Businesses, in general, are very well presented & some show real artistic flair in their shop fronts. It is quite amazing how a shop window competition focuses the minds & engenders a competitive spirit as in your St Patrick's Day

event. Additionally, the Shop Front Improvement Scheme has proven its success.

It is heartening to see plans afoot for the vacant buildings on Davitt's Quay adjoining the council offices. Is the building between The Old Bank Hotel & 360 Stay in use as its appearance is somewhat down at heel when contrasted with its smart neighbours? The large substation located close by would be an ideal candidate for your potential street art series.

The Courthouse concourse was a hive of activity on adjudication day - railings were being sanded & prepared for painting, weeding of the beds was taking place - once all these tasks are completed, its presentation will be much improved. The Post Office building alongside may have to freshen up their side & rear external appearance to match the upgrades to the Courthouse.

The Sports Centre has tremendous potential & the mural is a fantastic addition - well done to all involved. Perhaps this might be the beginning of a street art trail. The one at The Moorings really brightens up that unloved space. Similarly the murals at The Lookout add interest & break up a utilitarian boundary. Great idea to varnish them to protect the images from the elements.

The amount of seating throughout the town is remarkable & was in demand on a warm & sunny day. The new stone seating overlooking the bay backing onto St Mary's cemetery is perfectly located & your adjudicator enjoyed their picnic while seated there.

Well done on finding a home for Tidy Towns operations & demonstrations. It is amazing how many of these unused spaces exist in urban centres. A little imagination & a lot of perseverance pay dividends in the end.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Dungarvan residents are spoiled for choice with the number of green spaces available for use. Walton Park has an astonishing range of facilities present & is clearly in demand judging from the level of activity on a weekday. The standard of landscaping of the beds here with pollinator friendly perennials was excellent. It would be great to share with other communities the stages involved, perhaps an article cum interview for the Tidy Towns newsletter. The large green spaces here could accommodate long meadows with mazes cut through for both walks & play. It was wonderful to see the long meadows close to Cunnigar Pitch & Putt Club, another location for a maze perhaps.

Gibbons Town Park has a nostalgic feel with the bandstand, memorial seating, rose beds etc. it is a lovely space to sit & look out to the water. The landscaped bank to the front has some plants that need replacing & gaps that could be filled to create a more unified vista.

Moresby Park has been transformed & thank you for including the before & after photos as they demonstrate the level of work required to make it happen. It truly is an excellent example of what can be achieved in a space many may have discounted. The revamped Moresby Buoy is akin to an art installation, wonderful to have a piece of history take centre stage. There is a lot packed into this relatively small space & it will only improve as the planting scheme matures. Well done on an excellent project.

The landscaped area at Richard A Walsh Street dramatically softens an area that is not the most attractive. Some shrubs do need attention however overall it is thriving - virtual oasis on this side of the street. The council's green spaces are well maintained although there is still space for more tree planting & more pollinator friendly perennials. There is no doubt, as you referenced in your report, the significant work of the town's Presentation Team in the Environmental Department of the council. Their planting & maintenance work is evident throughout the town from the colourful containers at the lifeboat memorial to the parks to the planted beds in front of the Castle. Unfortunately, on adjudication day the multiple hanging baskets on poles were not yet planted. They are to be applauded for the work they do in the town.

440 trees & shrubs planted in the first quarter of 2023 is no mean feat. With the plans for more tree planting, it would be great to see clusters of trees planted rather than linear lines. Do please ensure an annual audit is carried out on the health of existing trees as in several locations some are not thriving. Check out Pocket Forests <https://www.pocketforests.ie/> & Easy Treesie <https://easytreesie.com/> who both are seeking communities to create mini forests. Dungarvan certainly has the green areas & the space e.g. N25 approach road, Walton Park, near Sea Park & existing solo tree planting to reference just a few.

Dungarvan Community Hospital is to be congratulated on the landscaping of their new car parks. It is remarkable how softening such a landscape transforms an area & well done on pollinator friendly perennial planting. The colourful Ard School na nDeise, although limited in space, have ensured space has been assigned for nature along their road frontage & side entrance. The difference it makes is remarkable. It would be hoped that space for trees & nature has been incorporated into the CBS Secondary School extension plans. We will look forward to seeing the completed project in due course.

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

Fr. Twomey's Neighbourhood was a revelation. What a green lung to have in a town & quite literally, a forest. It was wonderful to hear the bird & insect life while walking through. Well done on securing funding to conduct a biodiversity baseline survey. We will look forward with interest to the results & the plans for its future in next year's submission. The Neighbourhood is an incredible amenity for learning & it would be hoped that the schools avail of the opportunity to conduct surveys. The National Biodiversity Data Centre is an incredible resource & it would be worthwhile conducting some of their surveys & submitting your results online.

Dungarvan is fortunate that the Harbour is designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) with 3 estuaries, sand banks, mudflats & salt marshes. Do any of your members work with the NPW <https://www.npws.ie/> or Birdwatch Ireland <https://birdwatchireland.ie/> on any of their surveys? It appears that during winter the SAC supports a variety of species - Light-bellied Brent Geese; Golden Plover; Dunlin; Redshank & many more. It would be interesting for the community to know whether the populations are stable, increasing or decreasing, as some of your work will be contributing positively in this area.

You reference nesting boxes - have you a baseline on record since they were installed in order to gauge their effectiveness? Bat Conservation Ireland <https://www.batconservationireland.org/irish-bats> & Swift Conservation

Ireland <https://www.swiftconservation.ie/> are volunteer led organizations that run excellent walks & talks. It would be interesting to know if the 9 locations for swifts identified in 2019 are still active. The bee conservation boxes & information boards were in evidence behind the Council offices, interesting project.

It is great to see you use your social media platform to highlight the regular newsletters from Biodiversity Ireland, the No Mow May campaign & Leave No Trace Ireland's Little Explorers programme. A fun & engaging activity for families is the Flower Timed Insect (FIT) count - excellent way for parents to get 10 minutes of quiet & a little education on the side! <https://biodiversityireland.ie/surveys/fit-counts/> The platform to inform & educate the community about activities in this area cannot be underestimated.

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

Actions speak louder than words in the area of sustainability. Well done to yourselves & West Waterford Festival of Food for walking the walk with the mobile hydration station & reusable/returnable cups at your events. Given the scale of the Food Festival this is no mean feat to encourage participants to rinse & reuse cups & containers. It would be hoped that with forward planning the same feat could be achieved next year for the annual John Treacy Run. The key is to make it both easy & expected as with your refill station at Moresby Park. Your theme of sustainability at the St Patrick's Day parade is a fun way to present the topic. The continuation of the 2Go cup campaign is noteworthy. How many cafes now participate?

Transport within urban centres has to be safe & accessible so well done on continuing to engage with the local council. For transport to outlying areas the Local Link bus service is a lifeline for passengers living in rural areas & it was great to see it at work during the visit. It is great to see bicycle racks in prominent positions however it was noted in some locations cars had parked preventing the use of the facilities e.g. the Moorings & no bikes were sighted parked at any of the racks on adjudication day.

The reverse vending machine at Garveys SuperValu is a win-win for Dungarvan. It appears the public take-up rate has been larger than expected & your group is the beneficiary of the cash back. It would be hoped that the public instead of viewing cans & bottles as disposable they will be viewed as potential fundraisers. The transfer of many of the contents from the bottle cages will also reduce the amount going to landfill. Your litter picks may see a drop in this type of litter, it certainly would be hoped that will be one result of the initiative.

Highlighting initiatives by other groups in this area is heartening to see - Waterford County Council's Food Waste recycling talk (good incentive, a free kitchen caddy); the clothing collection to raise funds for St John's Special School; Earth Hour; SiopaShop's invitation for the public to drop off packaging that they would then use & Council's WEEE Ireland collection.

Abbeyside's beach toy library is an initiative that could be adopted by any seaside community. On adjudication day, a little of the "caring is sharing" had to be adopted by parents such was the demand.

Congratulations to the two Dungarvan students who won the EirGrid Climate Award. It is heartening to see such dedication in this space.

We certainly look forward to hearing about all the climate focused projects you can complete or demonstrate from your new HQ at Davis Street - you have great scope to explore lots of possibilities. With the skills of your resident handyman, it is unlikely that a solution to any problem/project using existing materials will not be found.

Well done to committee member & neighbours for reclaiming waste ground for vegetable plots. It was great too to see some people with their gardens converted for vegetable & fruit growing.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have a very coordinated approach to your litter patrols & well done on working with adjoining communities to cover intersecting areas. The idea of a short, dedicated time weekly for this purpose allows community members to volunteer without onerous demands. People are increasingly time restrained thus any tactic that addresses that problem yet provides a window in which one can assist locally is a win-win. Good working relationships with other groups reduces the workload & encourages a spirit of cooperation as evidenced by your joint operations with the Sailing Club, Beavers/Scouts, Environmental section of the council, youth groups & other community groups including newly arrived residents & even visitors. The weekly write up & photos in the local newspaper do drive home the issue of litter locally in an engaging yet pointed manner.

Well done on keeping local businesses informed of available grants in relation to Shop Front Improvements. It is amazing how businesses can be unaware of these grants & yet the difference they make when availed of is immeasurable. It is also great to see other groups like St Mary's Church of Ireland take progressive action on litter on the pathway through the graveyard with bags on the railings for litter.

Once again, publicizing the local council's initiatives on the collection of hazardous waste, WEEE etc offer an opportunity to the community to safely & responsibly dispose of items.

Now with your new HQ being in a central location, it would be hoped it would make the collection & segregation of waste less labour intensive & more streamlined.

The use of the Big Belly Bins & the dog stencils appears to be working effectively. Unfortunately, the Bring Bank at Walton Park was not clear of litter & bags which is disappointing for a public amenity which is accessible & available for all. Perhaps a direction to other facilities located within Dungarvan may encourage people to bring their recyclables there if the ones at Walton Park are full.

An annual audit of street furniture is a sensible idea as it is surprising the number of redundant poles, obsolete signage, obscured signage, lighting standards & bollards requiring painting etc. It provides an opportunity to liaise with the Council on what works they can complete over a specified time period & what work the Tidy Towns can undertake in quieter periods or assign to TY students or other willing participants.

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

There is no doubt that open communication is the approach to adopt when building relationships with residents

associations. We all want to live in areas we are proud of & establish good neighbourly relationships. Tournore Court are an example to us all of what can be achieved when we have one unified purpose. The work they do collectively is obvious on visiting & seeing how the estate is presented. The focus on nature & biodiversity is inspiring & the maze at the fourth green is a delight with the long meadows awash with grasses & wild flowers & buzzing with insect life. The little colourful free library is a great amenity & the substation's makeover as an art installation is stunning.

It is clear most housing estates take pride in their area as residences, gardens & communal areas were maintained. Many are very fortunate with the size of the communal green spaces & it would be worthwhile informing them of the value of adding additional trees, edible hedges & perennial planting schemes as in the case of Springfield, Marquis Drive, Hillview Drive, The Orchard, Town Court, Boreenatra & Rice's Court. Check out Pocket Forests, Easy Treesie (referenced in a previous section) & Tree Week for initiatives as many times cost can be the inhibitor. Your annual garden competition is a great local initiative & judging from the walkabout there are many accomplished gardeners, both floral & edible. Dungarvan certainly has both the potential & candidates for a garden trail!

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

It is notable that Dungarvan's entry roads have wide green perimeters. In a previous section, reference was made to increased tree planting in clusters for both biodiversity & visual impact. It was noted on the Youghal approach, there was a lot of signage & some of it in very poor condition. It might be worth consulting with all concerned on a unified theme or location for signage. Are there plans for the small green areas that run parallel to the road & footpath from the Youghal Road Roundabout into town? They have so much potential for landscaping with a seaside theme. Check out what Greystones Tidy Towns have done on some of their roundabouts & pathway edges.

There is a lot of new development occurring on the Abbeyside/Tournore side & it would be hoped that trees & well thought out landscaping will be incorporated into the plans. We will look forward to seeing the completion in the next few years.

The Shandon Roundabout with its long meadow at the core & Strandside Roundabout's seaside theme coupled with the high bank of oxeye daisies & grasses are a lovely vista for all when travelling into Dungarvan.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit Dungarvan once again. As a group you have & are achieving significant projects. It is heartening to see how many of Dungarvan's population are involved through various groups & events. There is no doubt you have a clear strategy & the more people you bring along with you will lighten the load & create greater interest in making Dungarvan an even nicer place to live, work & play. This adjudicator will watch with interest your continued progression.