

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: Dunhill - Dún Aill	Ref: 242
County: Waterford	Mark: 231
Category: B	Date(s): 09/06/2024

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	35
Streetscape & Public Places	80	32
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	29
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	23
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	48
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	22
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	22
TOTAL MARK	550	231

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. Dunhill is most welcome to the Tidy Towns competition & we hope that, as a community, you gain much from the experience now & in the future. The Tidy Towns movement will provide Dunhill with a wonderful opportunity to holistically plan to make the locality the best possible place to live, work & visit. Your core group including your committee is a good representation of the local population and it is heartening to hear you are well supported by the community itself, community groups & relevant agencies. When you are completing next year's submission, do refer to the Tidy Towns handbook on this category, it is a great source of information. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Community-Your-Planning-and-Involvement.pdf>

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

For a small community, you have an impressive number of amenities – Halla Pobail Community Hall, Dunhill Squash Club, National School, Multi-Education Centre, Castle, Anne Valley Walk & more besides. The views from the main car park are panoramic & certainly worth taking a seat to soak it all in. Dunhill is fortunate to have two wonderful examples of thatched houses that add to the character of the village. Harney's is presented to a high standard with a lovely colourful façade. The church occupies a prominent position being on a height & is well maintained. All the community buildings facing the car park have freshly painted facades & look exceptionally well tended. Is the well you referenced located at the designated seating area at the car park? If this area is to be adjusted, perhaps a consideration for the realignment of the bench might be considered – the best views, in this adjudicator's view, are to the left rather than straight ahead. The cast iron water pump presents such a pleasant sight & unexpected pop of colour at the end of the street. The vernacular farm buildings with milk churn stand intact are such a nostalgic sight. It is amazing what a fresh coat of whitewash does to emphasis their beauty. Have you recorded the milk churn stand for National Heritage Week? <https://www.heritageweek.ie/projects/recording-milk-churn-stands> When you are completing next year's submission, do refer to the Tidy Towns handbook it will provide you with guidelines for this section. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Streetscape-and-Public-Places.pdf>

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

As a rural enclave, green areas surround you in Dunhill. However, you have taken the opportunity to use existing areas within the village to soften the built environment. The infilled stonewall planted with pollinator friendly plants & shrubs running the length of the car park is a significant undertaking & we note your measures to get water close to

the area. Are there any opportunities to harvest rainwater from any of the buildings across the road? Rainwater is much preferred by plants than chlorinated water & the difference in plant health is remarkable. Also do ensure that the growing medium is 80% good quality topsoil, 15% compost & 5% grit, as this will require less feeding & watering. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a fantastic reference point when you are considering the introduction of new plants or the replacement of existing plants. <https://pollinators.ie/aipp-2021-2025/>

The long raised stone bed in front of the school has some lovely plants & softens what would otherwise be a long boring wall. You referenced increasing the height of this wall, it seems an unnecessary task to undertake. Instead focus on a cohesive planting scheme ensuring you have interest all year round & a food source for pollinators. As the school grounds to the front have mature trees & shrubs, is there a need for the 2 containers at the gates unless they serve another purpose? The cohesive planting scheme could then be carried on down to the Community Hall where there is ample opportunity for additional greenery. As you are at the beginning of this process, it would be worthwhile engaging the services of a landscape ecologist. Many groups like yourselves have applied for & used Pobal funding for this purpose. <https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/>

The area on the corner across from the school is an ideal location for a small wildflower meadow. Instead of adding bought seed, all you need to do is reduce your mowing regime. Here is a link to an interesting article on this very topic on the Pollinators website. [https://pollinators.](https://pollinators.ie/which-is-better-a-sown-ornamental-wildflower-meadow-or-a-biodiversity-meadow-created-by-reduced-mowing/)

[ie/which-is-better-a-sown-ornamental-wildflower-meadow-or-a-biodiversity-meadow-created-by-reduced-mowing/](https://pollinators.ie/which-is-better-a-sown-ornamental-wildflower-meadow-or-a-biodiversity-meadow-created-by-reduced-mowing/) You clearly have plans for the area opposite as it was prepared with bare soil on adjudication day. The repaired dry stonewall here was in keeping with the rest of the bank. Spring bulbs that are nectar rich e.g. crocuses, muscari, Irish bluebells, tulips, alliums etc would be ideal for this space. We look forward to the before & after photos next year.

The area in front of the church with the four brightly planted containers seems a perfect location for rambling roses or other climber alongside the ivy thus in time removing the need for the containers. The long planted bank between the church & Cois Cille is quite an area to maintain & plants there are thriving. When considering infill plants for the gaps do refer to the All-Ireland Pollinator Friendly planting code.

The mini orchard is a great use of a small space & you may be able to add more here. At least one of the trees is not thriving & may need replacing. There is great potential here to create an edible corner with fruit bushes & perhaps some hedgerow fruits.

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

The walkway from the church to the rear of Cois Cille residential estate is a stunning example of nature left free to recreate. The hay meadows were a delight & the sound of insects was incredible. A single mowed edge on both sides, as you have done, will suffice in order to maintain easy access.

We have to recognize we are in a biodiversity crisis & the use of herbicides has a dramatic impact on nature. There appeared to be some use of it in the old & new graveyards around the perimeter & grave surrounds. It is imperative that alternatives are found – manual removal, use of equipment, leaving a gap thus ensuring the grass growth is away from edges etc. The attached link provides more information on pesticide alternatives.

<https://pollinators.ie/pesticide-free-places/> There is an excellent publication on the management of graveyards with 24 practical actions that can be taken <https://pollinators.ie/faith-communities/>

The signage for biodiversity in a number of places is illegible & requires replacing with either well-sealed posters or alternative signage in a natural medium e.g. wooden signs.

It would be fantastic to involve the local National School in some of the educational courses & surveys that are available on the National Biodiversity Data Centre. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/monitoring/> The school may already have adopted the Green Schools program which seems likely given you have the Anne Valley Walk within walking distance. In next year's submission, you might ask the school to include a short synopsis of what they are doing in some of the categories.

The Anne Valley Walk was a pleasure to traverse & the amount of wildlife on the move was quite amazing to see & hear.

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

This is an area where you are hiding your talents under a bushel – the integrated constructed woodland is at the forefront of soft-engineered water management. There is no doubt that the success of the project over the past two decades has provided a template for other communities to follow suit in Clare, Kerry & Mayo. On adjudication day, it seemed to be a hidden treasure with very poor signage & uninviting pathways when contrasted with the Anne Valley Walk. In your annual submissions, do include a brief synopsis detailing visitors & any survey results.

The Eco-Park is another remarkable success story – a social enterprise established by the community. On adjudication day, it was clear there were many enterprises incubating there & how fantastic that previous occupants have outgrown the space & moved on. The services it provides must have an economic impact on the local economy resulting in reduced commuting, availability of services locally & the encouragement of local initiatives.

There is no doubt you have other practices that meet the sustainability goal as we saw polytunnels, raised beds & compost areas at the Eco Park. If you have a read of the Tidy Towns handbook, there is plenty to digest in this area. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Sustainability-Doing-More-with-less.pdf>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You are to be commended for the spotless standard of the village on adjudication day. In next year's submission, do let us know if you partake in An Taisce's National Spring Clean <https://nationalspringclean.org/> & if not, do register for the event. It is a worthwhile campaign. It would be great to know if your National School has adopted the Picker

Pals program or is involved in clean ups.

A sweep up of the area in front of the car park stonewall would make an excellent first impression.

An audit of your street furniture would be helpful in order to note what poles are redundant, what signage & lighting standards need painting, whether signage is adequate in locations etc. Once you have that information in one place, it makes planning an easier prospect. Also keep an eye out for discarded posters, safety fences & equipment & remove when no longer required. The green gate at the rear of the school would benefit from a new coat of paint. The signage at the entrance to the Eco Park would benefit from an organized presentation.

Have you considered locating the information boards at the bottle bank together? The Copper Coast one is of a very high standard.

In order to reduce clutter, you might consider using dog-fouling stencils on the paths where this is an issue & thus remove the posters from poles.

It would be advisable to engage with your Local Area Engineer on the state of some of the roads. The road by the side of the school has potholes, uneven surfaces & quite a gap between the road surface & the footpaths thus allowing vegetation & silt to accumulate creating an untidy appearance & significant maintenance. That might also be a good time to ensure all gully traps are cleared out & free of debris. The surface area around the bottle bank also requires attention as does the road between Cois Cille & the village. The bottle bank had no litter on the ground however there were bags tucked in between the receptacles. The clothes receptacle would benefit from a power wash.

You might let us know why there are so many uncovered pipes along the pathways. Well done on covering some with planting schemes. They seem, where uncovered, to be attracting deposits of debris.

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

Cois Cille has a lovely stone boundary wall with a beech hedge softening the image. The boundary wall ties in nicely with the existing dry stones walls of the surrounding farmland. It is always lovely to see the Irish names used for new developments. The large green area here has space for children playing as well as the potential for more tree planting & areas left for nature. It is worth engaging with Pocket Forests & Easy Treesie on planning for mini woodlands. www.pocketforests.ie www.easytreesie.com On adjudication day, it was lovely to see small grass areas left long. Additional trees could be added to existing planting & the area underneath left long for grasses & wildflowers.

The estate across from the school has capacity for an edible hedge at the entrance, as it would not interfere with visibility when exiting.

The village residences are well presented in the main & once the new residence is completed it will enhance the streetscape. The two thatched residences are simply charming & add so much character to the village.

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

The sign on the approach road from Annestown is completely obscured by vegetation that needs to be cut back to ensure its visibility.

The approach road from Kilmeaden has wonderful flowering hedgerows although the road surfaces, as mentioned previously require attention.

The approach road from Waterford has a lot of interesting stops along the way – Dunhill EcoPark, Anne Valley Walk, GAA grounds & the connecting walkway between the EcoPark & Anne Valley.

It would be worth engaging with Waterford County Council on village signage on all the approach roads. If you see what other local villages have erected it will provide you with food for thought.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a delight to visit Dunhill. What you have achieved to date is quite the accomplishment & a testament to the community. With regard to the Tidy Towns submission, please do read the Tidy Towns handbook as there is a wealth of knowledge on each category. It is essential that each of the 8 categories have relevant information input in order to allow the adjudicator an insight into the work you have completed in the past 12 months. A good map is essential & an accompanying legend. Again, there are examples on the Tidy Towns website.

<https://www.tidytowns.ie/competition/handbook/>

We wish you the very best as you start out on your Tidy Towns journey.