

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Portlaw - Port Lách** Ref: **241**
County: **Waterford** Mark: **295**
Category: **C** Date(s): **30/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	38	39
Streetscape & Public Places	80	37	38
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	45	45
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	27	27
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	13	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	39	40
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	40	40
TOTAL MARK	550	292	295

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.

Thank you for your entry although once again we would ask that you complete the competition entry form as you are doing yourselves a disservice by not supplying all of the information requested. It would be interesting to know how many are on your committee & how many volunteers you can call upon to assist you with various projects. Do you work with the Portlaw Community Enhancement Committee & what other community groups & agencies do you interact with in the course of your work? By following the eight sections in the competition entry form you will provide us with a lot of additional information we require to assess Portlaw & provide the town with the best possible results.

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

Portlaw's town square is most unusual given its size & direction of arteries radiating from the centre. There are some substantial buildings retaining some of their original form & features that occupy prominent sites in the town square. It is wonderful to see surviving shop fronts of traditional Irish design & intrinsic artistic merit. The freestanding cast-iron memorial fountain in the centre of the square is of particular significance & lends a regal air. Portlaw is fortunate to have two planned "model" villages – terraces of one & two-storey mill workers cottages. These produce an attractive quality to the streetscape. The terrace of Alms houses form an attractive component within the streetscape.

The bilingual heritage street signs add character to the streetscape.

The work managed by you – the painting of six dilapidated high profile buildings in the town & St. Martin's Hospital under the Streetscape Enhancement Scheme – presents a good first impression for the visitor. Are there any more eligible works to be conducted under the scheme? Do let us know in next year's submission.

The purchase of Mayfield House, the Gate Lodge & land by Oakmount with plans for a conversion to a luxury hotel should in time have a positive impact on the streetscape as one has a direct visual line of sight from the town square.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The Town Park is a fantastic amenity & it is wonderful the National School children put it to so much use for both sports & physical education. The Park offers a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a green lung in an urban environment. The seating offers community members the opportunity to meet up, chat & watch the world go by. Are there plans for any additional trees or hedge planting? It would seem an edible hedge could be accommodated along some of the boundary railings. There are many towns that have developed additional interest & facilities within their parks – biodiversity areas, mazes in long meadows, ponds, herb gardens etc.

The Grotto is a sizeable area & lovely to see the maturing shrubs on the perimeter & the trees planted around. The standard roses were in full bloom & added lovely colour against the large boulders. You have a great opportunity here to add more trees to the existing trees – triangles of threes. There are a number of volunteer groups working with communities to plant more trees – check out Trees on the Land <https://www.treesontheland.com/> & Easy Treesie <https://easytreesie.com/>

The green area at the junction of Brown Street is a wonderful oasis in the town with the trees, water pump, mural & the moss art wall by Water Sustainable Living Initiative Ireland. There certainly are a lot of containers in this area to maintain.

The stone built containers with the colourful bench at Bridge Street has a lovely backdrop & has potential for well chosen perennial planting. This is an excellent booklet to reference for plant ideas. <https://pollinators.ie/top-10-pollinator-friendly-plants-for-different-situations/>

The climbing & standard roses on the green strip near the Cotton Mill present a wonderful vista on the street. The green area behind the bus shelter is another opportunity for planting.

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

It is wonderful to see you continue this year again the “Create Life not Litter” campaign with the window boxes. A fun activity for children & very personalized. However, as has been outlined in previous reports, annuals add very little food for our pollinators. Tidy Towns groups have a responsibility to provide plants for our insects that are both nectar & pollen rich. Perhaps next year, you might consider herbs or other plants that can be easily propagated or grown. Once again, the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a fantastic reference guide <https://pollinators.ie/aipp-2021-2025/> & the website, www.pollinators.ie

The Park by the river offers incredible options for biodiversity sections as you have the river alongside & areas left wild. Is the National School involved in conducting surveys on birdlife or insect life? There are lots of opportunities & resources through the National Biodiversity Data Centre to log sightings. <https://records.biodiversityireland.ie/start-recording> The Irish Garden Bird survey takes place annually in December & is a fun & engaging activity for households. <https://birdwatchireland.ie/our-work/surveys-research/research-surveys/irish-garden-bird-survey/>

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

Well done on sharing the public information evening on Energy Efficiency & Sustainability by South East Energy Agency. Your local club may be interested in the GAA Green Club Toolkit <https://learning.gaa.ie/greenclub> as it covers a variety of topics in this area. Like many communities you too are fortunate to work with the Mens Sheds who are skilled at reusing discarded & waste materials for the creation of new planters & containers. Their planned work on replacing the existing timber boxes at the fountain would be most welcomed by all.

The Tidy Towns Handbook, as referenced in last year’s report, offers a wealth of ideas in this area & should be consulted. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Sustainability-Doing-More-with-less.pdf>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The town square & many of the main arteries were well presented. Well done on gathering together with local voluntary groups to complete an annual spring clean. Unfortunately on adjudication day, there was a lot of litter to be seen in several areas of the town – the Grotto & graveled area to the right was strewn with cans, bottles & the detritus of takeaway meals; large commercial bins were overflowing & resulting in littering on Bridge Street; the Park by the river was badly littered with take out materials.

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

The residences & gardens in the town environs are generally well kept. Oakville has a lovely entrance with its stonewalls & greenery behind to soften the view. They are fortunate to have a wonderful backdrop of mature trees. Church Court’s bed of wild flowers, perennials & grasses at the entrance add interest & fantastic for pollinators. A little weeding & sweeping on the approach road into the estate would make it picture perfect. There are a significant number of housing estates & many were well presented on adjudication day.

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

Portlaw has wonderful estate walls on some of the approach roads that are well maintained with the backdrop of native woodlands. It is lovely to drive to Portlaw & pass healthy hedgerows with native grasses, mature trees & blossoms.

Concluding Remarks:

Portlaw is fortunate to have so much history & amenities. You have tremendous potential in all eight categories & it would be worthwhile consulting with the Local Environmental & Heritage Officers as well as the local community on putting together a 3 year plan. Other Tidy Towns groups are a great source of knowledge, expertise & a good sounding board for you & you would do well to make contact with those in your vicinity. Once again, the Tidy Towns Handbook provides you with all the information you require when completing each year’s application in addition to ideas & advice. We wish you well in your future plans for Portlaw.