

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Baltimore - Dun na Saed** Ref: **1074**  
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **340**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **23/06/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	53
Streetscape & Public Places	80	42	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	48	51
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	31	33
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	35	36
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>340</b>

### Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2022. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór.

Welcome to the Super Valu Tidy Towns Competition for 2022. We thank you for your entry, and wish you all the best in all your future work. Good luck.

- Baltimore Dún na Séad, a mid-sized village with a permanent population of approx. 323 people – has entered the competition for 50 years and is celebrating the Golden Anniversary this year. There is a committee of 8 members with support of another 15 volunteers and over 100 residents assist with clean ups.
- The committee meets monthly with an annual AGM open to the public plus there are bi-annual whole community clean ups, coffee morning fundraising and various other meetings with local schools, County Council, new residents and for weekly clean ups etc.
- Support is received from a very wide range of different national and local agencies/businesses.
- Baltimore Tidy Towns has engaged in local fundraising activities with the support of Cork County Council, The Community Foundation for Ireland, POBAL, local businesses incl. Casey's Hotel, the Algier's Inn, Bushes Bar, Jacob's Bar, Cotters Gala, Rolf's Restaurant and Rooms and the Island Ferries.
- Your very well-presented Community Newsletter issued three times a year, a weekly article in the Southern Star Newspaper, email, Whatsapp and Facebook and local meetings are used for communications.
- There is strong engagement with local schools and you have designated a committee member to liaise with Rath NS, local playgroup and Ilen Rovers/GAA Club.
- The voluntary work undertaken by Baltimore Tidy Towns including the recent completion of the re-construction of a stone wall at Weatherglass Hill, has improved the community's sense of pride and the overall attractiveness of the village, which has direct commercial benefits for the tourist-centred businesses in the area.

The coloured map provided with your Entry Form was of high quality. It is good that you have provided a numbered and alphabetical legend on the map showing the location of the various projects and features in the village. Where possible, the legend should also include a precise description of the works completed at each location, which can be noted or numbered on the map or on a separate sheet. This facilitates the overall assessment process.

The quality of the application form is excellent and the 'before and after photos' highlighting the projects undertaken over the last year were very informative. The Baltimore Tidy Towns 3-year plan extending to May 2023 is a very impressive document and it is good that you have made specific reference to the UN Sustainability Goals, in relation to all your planned actions under the plan and in relation to SDG'S achieved regarding the various projects completed/noted under the 9 category headings. The adjudicator's assessment is based on a recent site visit and the contents of the application form which is suitably concise at 34 pages long - well done. The text inserted on the form which is in bullet point format for greater clarity, was also very easy to read.

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

- You have undertaken a wide range of actions under this category this year under the general headings of Buildings and Public Spaces. Under buildings you continue to encourage property owners to maintain their properties to a high standard and take steps to prevent dereliction and have secured an important commitment included in the Cork County Development Plan that derelict properties can be tackled in a systematic way in the future. In relation to public spaces you organize the painting of bollards, fences and seats at prominent locations in the village and have been successful in rebuilding, repairing and protecting old stone walls. You have also prepared leaflets and plaques in relation to the historic buildings in the village and undertake maintenance of the old graveyard at Tullagh Church.
- The adjudicator visited Baltimore for the first time on a warm morning in June. The walkabout commenced at the village name stone and it was noted that the planting scheme is growing very well here and is a very attractive feature as one enters the village. The approach to the village is characterised by beautifully constructed stonewalls and the imposing brightly coloured complex of buildings, which comprises Casey's Hotel. It is good to note that Casey's Hotel are great supporters of your Tidy Town's activities and the presentation of the hotel and environs was as you would expect, to an excellent standard. This includes the bungalow nearby which is expertly painted in a similar colour to the hotel. Some large stag headed trees at the entrance to the hotel car park adjoining the road would benefit from deadwood removal.
- The adjudicator took the time to call to the nearby Tullagh cemetery and was pleased to read the information plaque erected by the Tidy Towns Committee explaining the history of the old Church ruin located in the cemetery grounds. The Church is very visible from the hotel grounds and no doubt having this information available is of great benefit to guests, visitors and residents alike. The cemetery is managed in an environmentally sensitive manner with narrow tracks cut to allow public access and this is a very good approach in the interest of biodiversity.
- Laherne corner looked very well. A property on the opposite side of the road with an old hoarding and Harris type fencing did not improve the appearance of this area. Perhaps this site is earmarked for future development and hopefully a sensitive restoration of the buildings adjoining the road. The stone boundary wall and fuchsia hedging surrounding the Church Strand View Estate was noted positively and significantly enhances this area. There are multiple signs on one pole located at a corner opposite the Courtyard Estate and some of these may need to be renewed in the short/medium term. The use of multiple signs is good practice as it helps to prevent a proliferation of visual clutter.
- The residential properties at Freke Terrace with their colourful well-cared for facades significantly enhance the entrance to the village. A stone wall with natural vegetation on the opposite side of the road is also an important feature here. Road surfaces are poor in this part of the village and the surface needs to be upgraded and re-lined, as necessary. Just past Freke Terrace is an ESB substation, the doors of which have rusted and is unsightly and would benefit from re-painting in the not-too-distant future.
- In your application form you mentioned issues in relation to run down properties in the village and the condition of the old Schoolhouse is no exception. This is an imposing beautifully designed stone building with a slate roof and attractive architectural features and it is a shame to see it in its current condition. Hopefully it will be possible for the current owners to sensitively restore this building in due course, which no doubt will be welcome news for your committee. The public car park located opposite the old Schoolhouse was inspected and there was a group of volunteers here who had just finished working hard to keep this area looking well. At the time, they may not have noticed the presence of the adjudicator in their midst, so I would like to convey a well done to all those present.
- The exposed rock outcrop in the vicinity of the steps leading up to the Dún na Séad Castle is an important feature in this area and was admired by the adjudicator, as was the exposed stone work which is an interesting feature over the doors of the adjoining Fastnet House. It was interesting to read about the history of the castle from the plaque erected by Tidy Towns Committee and the castle and environs were presented to very good standard. However, a run-down industrial building located on a seaward site opposite the Castle, detracts considerably from this area and hopefully there are plans to develop this site in the future.
- The outdoor seating area, canopies and colourful buildings in the vicinity of Jacob's Hotel and Bar premises coupled with the wonderful views over the harbour to the islands provided a great holiday feel to this area and it was great to see holiday makers relaxing and enjoying the sunshine here.
- The environs of Weatherglass Hill looked very well and you are to be congratulated for the project expertly implemented here firstly to research the original configuration of the walls and barometer etc., and then secondly to repair the wonderful stone walls in this area and to upgrade and paint bollards, steps and railings. All of this work has ensured that this area is now superbly presented to the public. For the future it would be good to carry out an audit of the signage and assess the quality of the litter bins in this area, as some of these may now need replacing.
- The area around the Baltimore Harbour Building was visited and the recent footpath improvements and installation of a bus shelter were significant improvements here. The public toilets were also well presented and maintained with an attractive piece of sculpture adding to the scene. The planting beds in the vicinity of the public car park containing numerous Hydrangeas and Agapanthus plants were particularly admired.
- The adjudicator called to the Glenan's Sailing School/Railway Station Property and it is unfortunate that the site boundary here has deteriorated in condition to such an extent that it now detracts from the road environs in this area. Hopefully plans for the restoration of this building will be devised in the near future and we await developments in this regard with considerable interest. A number of other properties along this road are unsightly and in a bad state of repair and hopefully these also can be cleared/redeveloped in the not-too-distant future.

## **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

- It is noted that you follow sustainable gardening practices in the planning, design and maintenance of your green spaces. The use of recycled floats from the swimming pool for your kneelers is a very novel idea. You are involved in regular maintenance work on a large number of planted and landscaped areas in the village including the planting scheme around the village sign at the entrance to the village, Laherne corner (Casey's Hotel have

kindly now taken over maintenance of this area), Roantree corner, Dillons bank, Sherkin View & Weathervane area, Gairdín Aiteann, the Boat, the Cove Bed, the Wave bank, several gravel beds, the rockery area, the Green area, BIM & Memorial Bed, Cotters Bank, Castlefields Car Park and the regular maintenance of tubs and planters in the centre of the village. The maintenance of all the above areas is a significant task and the Tidy Towns volunteers are to be congratulated for all their hard work and continuing efforts in this regard.

- The adjudicator called to the small open space area in the vicinity of the Island Craft Shop and this area, which includes a sloped rockery planted with a range of flowering herbaceous plants, was a delight to behold. The quality of planting scheme and maintenance here was excellent and the adjudicator would have loved to be able to witness the flowering Agapanthus planting here, later in the summer. The picnic benches were well maintained and in a good condition despite the coastal location and the fuchsia hedge around the area was also an attractive feature.
- The 'Gravel Beds' area opposite to Harbour was visited and the various signs erected to provide information to the visitor were positively noted. However, the area looks a little lifeless and it might be good to consider for the future a complete re-design of this space. This could include the introduction of some natural features such as areas of grass, wildflowers, herbaceous and tree planting, using species tolerant of coastal exposure. The concrete block wall is prominent and this could be screened with the judicious use of vigorous climbing plants. Where appropriate, the signs could be relocated and placed together, so as to reduce clutter in the area. The large concrete pipe planters do not enhance this area and no doubt require significant ongoing maintenance and perhaps these should be removed altogether.
- The open space areas around the children's playground were visited and these generally exhibited a very high standard of maintenance. The wildflower area to the rear of the circular stone seat and the planting of fruit trees along the open space boundary wall were also positively noted.
- You have been successful in reducing reliance on annual bedding schemes for your floral displays and this is an important ongoing initiative you have implemented over the years. As you are aware the many colourful perennial and pollinator friendly plants e.g., Alstroemeria spp. can be used to very good effect as an alternative to the flamboyant but labour/water-intensive annuals such as Begonias and Petunias etc.

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

- Your main achievement under this category this year has been the completion, after a delay due to Covid, of the Baltimore Area Biodiversity Action Plan. The adjudicator notes that this is a of major importance for the village of Baltimore due to its proximity to a significant nature reserve at Loch Hyne and existing SAC's and SPAs at Roaring Water Bay & Islands and Sheep's Head to Toe Head. The implementation of the action programme recommended under the plan is eagerly awaited and it is noted that already 7 of the 23 actions have been completed.
- Thank you for the photos showing the Bees foraging on flowers growing in the village centre – it is heartening to note that your actions are having a practical and very positive impact on pollinators in the area.
- Other actions under this category which Baltimore Tidy Towns have been involved with and supported include the Wildwork@SECAD biodiversity training at Gairdín Aiteann, engagement with Rath NS pupils working with BTT volunteers as citizen scientists, the annual coast watch survey, protection of the bat colony in the tower of St Matthew's Church and completion of a habitat survey of the local ringfort.
- The committee may be aware that the New All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) 2021-2025 has now been launched and it is particularly concerning that one third of bee species in Ireland are now threatened with extinction. As well as this Plan, useful guideline documents are now available to Tidy Towns committees to increase the numbers of pollinators in your local area, including guides which are specific to local communities, farmers, councils, transport corridors, sports clubs, businesses etc. Different 'How to Guides' are also available showing how to establish pollinator friendly planting schemes, pollinator friendly roundabouts, use of 'Managed for Wildlife' signage etc.
- This year the AIPP is focussed on gathering survey data to assess the impact of all the good work groups such as the Tidy Towns are carrying out across the country e.g., as part of your Biodiversity Action Plan actions. The National Biodiversity Data Centre has developed a new app to make this survey work easy for groups through the use of 'Fit Counts'. FIT stands for 'Flower-Insect Timed Count'. By carrying out FIT Counts throughout the year and across future years, it will help track the impact of your actions on insect numbers and diversity as well as providing important data for the National Biodiversity Data Centre ([biodiversityireland.ie](http://biodiversityireland.ie)). It would be good to get local schools involved in these counts. Please follow this link for further information [Flower-Insect Timed Count \(FIT Count\) - National Biodiversity Data Centre \(biodiversityireland.ie\)](https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/fit-count/)
- The sowing of wildflower seed has become very popular with Tidy Towns committees in recent years. However, this may not be the best course of action as some of the 'wildflower' seed is imported and may contain invasive species. The preferred approach is the 'Don't Sow let it Grow' principle. In other words, where there is a bare patch of ground or grassed areas let the seed/plants occurring naturally in the soil/sward develop and mature as this will have the best ecologically sound result. The removal of clippings at the end of the season with appropriate machinery will impoverish the soil encouraging greater species diversity. More information on this and other items under this category can be found in the updated Tidy Towns Handbook.

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

- The adjudicator notes from your submission that Baltimore Tidy Towns committee members and volunteers are very aware of the current impact of climate change, the importance of the circular economy and of the value of the U.N. SDGs. It is good that in all your activities you endeavour to reduce as far as possible, the negative impact you might have on the environment and in contrast try to make a positive impact.
- The growing of plants from seed, composting and rainwater harvesting and the recycling/reuse of various

landscaping materials by Baltimore Tidy Towns are all very worthwhile practices under this category. All these initiatives help to reduce your ongoing costs, transport needs and enable the conservation of potable water.

- Another key initiative under this category for BTT this year was that your volunteers were amongst those taking part in VOICE Ireland's Sustainable Communities Training which led to the setting up of the Baltimore Community Market, now held on Sundays in the Community Hall.

- It is noted that as part of your Community Road Map, plans are being drawn up for Baltimore to apply to become an SEC and you are investigating the possibility of your community producing its own electricity and you recently made an application for funds to pursue a community energy project. This is a great development and we wish you every success with your application and future deliberations on next steps to achieve this.

- Other areas worthy of consideration by Baltimore Tidy Towns Committee for the future under this category, which can be a follow on from your membership of the SEC and is in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals, include the development of small electric microgeneration schemes for Wind, Solar and Hydro in partnership with the Local Authority and these may also attract suitable SEAI or Leader funding.

- You might look at the overall availability of public e-car charge points and bicycle parking facilities in the village, and where there are deficiencies, suggest suitable locations where these could be provided in the short term.

- The ongoing management of rainwater and floodwater in the context of climate change is an important topic under this category. This is a particularly important issue for coastal communities which can suffer severe flooding associated with winter storms coinciding with spring tides. The committee should be aware of the nature-based solutions to the management of rainwater/floodwater and surface water run-off in village areas, water sensitive design, best practice etc. A recent publication by the Dept. of Housing Local Government and Heritage is available and provides important guidance in this regard.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

- You are very active under this category and have achieved great things including at long last the undergrounding of power lines at the village square – well done for your unwavering commitment to this item over the years. There are further power lines in the village which also detract from the streetscape and will need to be addressed at some time in the future.

- The securing of a new TÚS worker is a positive development and will allow you to enhance your social media presence and intensify maintenance on the ground. Your vigilance regarding the timely removal of graffiti and the designation of Baltimore as a poster-free zone is commended.

- The overall presentation of street furniture is important under this category and you undertake regular maintenance of seats and other items of furniture.

- The impact of derelict sites can be very negative in a village like Baltimore and you are commended for all the actions that you take here to improve the situation.

- It is heartening to note the large numbers of children and young people took part in your Big Village Clean Up in April this year – well done to all concerned with this.

- During the visit the adjudicator did not find any litter in the village, in housing estates or along any approach roads, except for just a very small amount of litter at the bottle banks. Well done

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

- The ongoing good relations that exist between Baltimore Tidy Towns and the several Residents Associations in the village, and with the County Council is bearing fruit and well done to all on the enhancement work completed at Church Strand View and the Cliff Estates.

- It is pleasing to note that several full-time residents regularly clear the verges outside and near to their properties, without using any weedkillers and the Baltimore Holiday Homes owners and residents are so appreciative of all your work that they are now providing an annual donation to support your activities.

- You continue to liaise with Baltimore Community Council in relation to the ongoing maintenance of the children's playground and the installation of a new bus shelter near the Community Hall and Rath National School.

- The Church Strand View estate was visited and the houses and gardens here were well presented with the open space areas extensively planted. These plantings require significant maintenance inputs and perhaps it may be necessary to consider whether the number and size of the planted areas overall should be reduced. Road surfaces at the entrance Estate are poor and will need upgraded in the short to medium term.

- Harbour Court estate was visited and there is a well-constructed stone wall and timber fence, which enhance the entrance to this estate. The internal open space areas here are also well maintained.

- The Dún na Séad estate was visited and houses here have distinctive stone porches and gables and the communal open spaces were well planted and maintained. Perhaps the future maintenance could include provision for wildflowers under the trees.

- The Courtyard Estate is a small scheme of traditional style houses which were all very attractively presented and the adjudicator particularly admired the stone walls and the Hydrangea plantings at the very end of the estate.

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

- You are commended for leaving the vast majority of soft verges along roads and laneways in Baltimore to be left grow wild, so as to provide useful wildlife corridors.

- It is noted that BTT is also making representations to have the number of disabled parking bays in the village increased, as part of an overall traffic and parking plan for the village, in consultation with Cork County Council. We wish you success with the resolution of the various points raised in your letter issued in January 2022 and no doubt some of these points have already since been addressed.

**Concluding Remarks:**

Baltimore Tidy Towns has been very innovative and active over the last year and all your efforts continue to have significant impact on the overall presentation of the village and the lives of local residents. Well done to all concerned and we wish you every success in the competition.