

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Castletownbere-Baile Chaisleáin Bhéara</b>	Ref: <b>597</b>
County: <b>Cork(West)</b>	Mark: <b>329</b>
Category: <b>C</b>	Date(s): <b>12/07/2022</b>

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	48	49
Streetscape & Public Places	80	47	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	42	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	34	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	24	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60	61
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	32	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	33	34
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>329</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.

- Castletownbere Baile Chaisleáin Bhéara, a small town with a population of over 1000 people – has entered the competition for over 40 years and has a committee of 5 members with support of another 39 volunteers.
- Congratulations are due to your former Tidy Towns Chairperson, Mr Barry Harrington who has been a leader of Castletownbere Tidy Towns for 42 years and we thank him for all his efforts on behalf of your community and town. It is noted that your AGM held in early 2022 was well supported by all sectors in the community and you have Whatsapp groups for your committee members and volunteers. You arrange 'Flashmob' clean ups on Monday evenings in conjunction with local clubs.
- You receive support from a total of 19 different national and local agencies/businesses.
- Social Media – Facebook, a notice board in SuperValu, emails, a newsletter, your AGM – public meetings and committee engagement with schools etc. are used for communications with the general public.
- There is strong engagement with local schools and transition year students do a litter pick every Wednesday and you invite underage sports clubs to your planned litter picking event on Monday evenings, with support to date from Castletownbere GAA & Beara Ladies.
- From the voluntary work undertaken by Castletownbere Tidy Towns in recent months, it is clear that community spirit is alive and well in your town and local residents continue to be actively engaged in making Castletownbere a better place to live, work and visit. It is heartening to read that the Tidy Towns Competition has allowed your community to take greater pride in their town and has allowed you to take steps to improve your environment and to plan for the future.

The map provided with your Entry Form is a little small in scale for a town the size of Castletownbere and the details provided were quite faint. It would be good to provide an updated more user-friendly map with numbered legend perhaps at A3 size, clearly showing the main features of the town together with a numbered list referenced on the map, showing the precise details of the projects undertaken over the last year.

The quality of the application form is very good with text boxes highlighting the projects completed or in future planning and this makes the document very easy to read. Thank you for the separate document showing all your photos, which highlight the strong engagement of the local community in your work activities. The adjudicator's assessment is based on a recent site visit and the details on the application form which is suitably concise at 18 pages long - well done.

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

- You have mentioned a wide range of projects which have been carried out or are in planning this year, including various landscape maintenance and enhancement schemes, addressing derelict sites, painting and streetscape enhancement work, walking routes, signage improvements, traffic plans and discussions on plans for a future Marina Development for the town.
- Your adjudicator visited Castletownbere on a cloudy and misty morning in July. The centre of the village near the entrance to the port area was a hive of activity, which is to be expected for such an important fishing port located on the south west coast of Ireland. The main feature noted at this point was the wonderful wall mural on the gable of Murphy's Restaurant. The nearby planted area was well presented and maintained and enhanced the overall appearance of this general area. The extensive car park area located opposite the SuperValu premises was full with parked cars, quite early in the morning. Perhaps the introduction of a suitable tree planting scheme would enhance this area by reducing the impact of the cars and large expanse of hard surfaces. The scheme could also aim to better regulate and control car parking in this part of the town.
- The adjudicator was very impressed with the overall presentation of commercial and residential buildings along the town's main street. The delightful window display at Harringtons Homevalue premises was particularly admired. The stepped entrance to the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, which is an imposing building situated on an elevated site overlooking Castletownbere, would benefit from the introduction of some landscape elements to counteract the extensive areas of hard surfacing and concrete, which characterises this area. It is great to read that funding has now been granted for a vertical garden at these Church Steps.
- Some of the metal bollards situated along the main thoroughfare have also been damaged by passing traffic and are now quite unsightly. Perhaps an alternative solution could be considered for the prevention of parking and protection of footpaths in this area.
- The Central Square area which is characterised by very wide road surfaces, is to a large extent dominated by car parking and traffic movements. A complete re-design of this area is necessary to make it more pedestrian friendly, to introduce more pleasing central landscape elements and to protect and enhance the views of the surrounding streetscape. The canopy associated with O'Donoghue's garage is an imposing structure, which also dominates the surroundings here. It is noted that a Town Redevelopment and Traffic Mgt. Plan is advancing to planning permission stage this year and we wish you well in your consultations regarding this important project.
- The children's playground was visited and was found to be very well maintained, although some items of formal play equipment may need to be refurbished in the short/medium term. The wide concrete footpath fronting the playground may provide an opportunity for suitable tree planting in this area.
- Road surfaces and markings throughout Castletownbere are less than ideal and it would be good to devise a plan for phased road improvements in the centre of the town over the coming years, as part of the agreed future town Traffic Management Plan.
- The local national school Scoil an Croí ro Naofa was visited and the adjudicator particularly admired the planting schemes and stone wall boundary erected along the frontage of the school, together with attractive murals displaying native plants etc.

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

- Due to resourcing issues your Tidy Towns volunteers and CE Staff are now taking responsibility for regular maintenance works on a total of 11 different sites across the town on behalf of the County Council. You have also carried out 4 new projects this year and a further 6 planned for the future under this category. Well done to all involved with this work.
- On the Glengariff approach to the village the coloured bicycles, floral displays coloured seating and adult exercise equipment all enhanced this area and were admired.
- Reducing reliance on annual bedding schemes for your floral displays is an important initiative which you have implemented successfully over the years. As you are aware, colourful perennial and pollinator friendly plants e.g., *Alstroemeria* spp. can be used to very good effect as an alternative to the flamboyant but energy/labour/water intensive annuals such as *Begonias*, *Petunias* etc.

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

- You have listed a wide range of projects completed this year under this category and some of which e.g. waste collection activities, might be better included under the Sustainability or Litter and Tidiness categories. Nevertheless, it is wonderful to read that the Castletownbere Sewerage Scheme is now operating successfully, which no doubt has had a significant positive impact on the water quality and marine life in Bantry Bay. Your approach to weed control is commended and the adjudicator is very interested to note that a combination of vinegar, salt and soap has been effective for you in dealing with weeds in an environmentally sensitive way.
- You make reference to the fact that all planting provided in Castletownbere is carried out in accordance with the National Pollinator Plan – that is very good news. The committee may be also 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. 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'. FIT Counts are very simple and are a very useful tool for TT groups to measure change in their local biodiversity, especially when they have taken action already for pollinators. 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](http://biodiversityireland.ie))

- Another topical issue under this category is the sowing of wildflower seed which 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 over time, encouraging greater species diversity. More information and interesting links on this category of the competition can be found as part of the official Tidy Towns Handbook.

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

- A major item which attracted the attention of the adjudicator under this category this year was the harvesting of 17,000 gallons of rainwater at the Sacred Heart Church and installation of a similar scheme at St. Peters Church. It is noted that the harvested water is used to water the planting schemes located throughout the town - this is a wonderful and very practical water conservation initiative.
- The installation of bicycle parking facilities at the DayBreak premises and the new electrical car charging point on the pier to the rear of St Peters Church, both aiming to promote different and more environmentally friendly modes of transport in the town, were also very positively noted.
- There are many other worthwhile sustainability and environmental initiatives which are in progress in Castletownbere in conjunction with local businesses and the Dept. of the Marine e.g., the segregation of collected waste, re-use of coffee grinds and teabags for compost, repainting old bicycles to provide colourful floral displays, installation of solar panels at SuperValu and Daybreak premises etc. and we wish you every success with their continued implementation.

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

- We note that your waste recycling and transfer station is operating on reduced hours and you are looking at alternative arrangements to ensure full day/weekly coverage. You are continuing to organise daily/weekly clean ups with volunteers, CE Staff and local schoolchildren and Castletownbere GAA Club who carry out their own post-match clean ups. You have also engaged with Cork County Council and local businesses to deal with unwanted and unauthorised signage around the town and are monitoring the use of public bins to discourage dumping.
- On the day of adjudication there were no issues to report with regard to litter or tidiness issues in the town of Castletownbere - well done.

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

- Thank you for the before and after photos showing the work carried out by CTB Tidy Towns at the front entrance to the property of a local elderly resident affected by road improvement works. This is a great example of the community caring for our more vulnerable neighbours and well done to all who were involved with this timely intervention. The adjudicator noticed the beautiful Agapanthus plants flowering profusely in this bed on the day of adjudication.
- The colourful recycled planting troughs are a great initiative and have added to the quality of the road environs of the town. You have mentioned a total of 7 different maintenance type activities under this category which no doubt is a significant draw on your stretched resources. We wish you well with the introduction of a best garden/flower display competition and your efforts to improve street name signage in the town.

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

- There have been significant engineering and improvement works carried out along the approaches to Castletownbere in the last year, including the installation of new footpaths, cycle lanes, public lighting, fencing along the seafront and parking along the approach road from Circle K to Dinish Island (a new planting scheme is also due to commence here), a new traffic layout at Dinish Bridge and road resurfacing works from west end of Castletownbere to Dunboy. It is great to see a separation of cyclists from live traffic on this main approach to the town.
- However, the overall impression as one approaches the Castletownbere from the Glengarriff direction, particularly on the seaward side, is dominated by concrete materials i.e. concrete footpaths/cycle lanes and concrete post and rail fencing. The visual impact of these materials does not enhance the road environs on this approach to the town and this vista is likely to further deteriorate over time.
- A comprehensive landscape scheme aimed at softening the impact of these elements, whilst at the same protecting existing scenic views in the area is needed. Perhaps in your discussions with Cork County Council regarding bilingual name signs to be located at the entrances to the town, you might consider the issue of the overall impact of the new road improvement scheme on the town. These bilingual signs are very important as they provide a first impression and inform visitors that they are now entering the environs of the town of Castletownbere.
- The area referred to as the looped walkway at Dinish Island was visited and there is a need to implement a major tree planting scheme on the town side of the distributor road here, to screen the existing industrial-type

premises from the adjoining attractive coastal landscape. This could be included in your future plans for this area, to be considered in conjunction with the Dept. of the Marine and Cork County Council.

**Concluding Remarks:**

Castletownbere Tidy Towns continues to make good strides in the competition and it was a great pleasure to visit your lovely town and note all the work undertaken and plans in place for the future development of your community. You can be justly proud of all your achievements this year.