

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Kilmacrenan - Cil Mhic Neanain</b>	Ref: <b>977</b>
County: <b>Donegal</b>	Mark: <b>262</b>
Category: <b>B</b>	Date(s): <b>08/07/2022</b>

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2021</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	35	36
Streetscape & Public Places	80	35	36
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	36	36
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	16	17
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	12	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	35	36
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>262</b>

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

Fáilte Cil Mhic Neanain 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. Welcome to the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition.

Thank you for your entry form, which was nicely laid out, contained concise information and was easy for the adjudicator to navigate. Your hand drawn and annotated map was a great help on adjudication day. You have a strong Tidy Towns committee of 9 members given the size of the village and receive assistance from other volunteers on an occasional basis, so well done in this. We also note the continued support you enjoy from local bodies including your local Men's Shed, and many thanks for their support with tasks such as painting. Are there any sports or cultural groups in the village you could link up with to gain further support for your works? Is there a local team using the sports pitch that could be enlisted to help occasionally. We would encourage you to develop a 3–5-year village plan, including key projects in all Tidy Towns competition categories. It will be in effect your works programme for the next 3-5 years. This need not be professionally prepared but can be a simple list of your aims and objectives and a clear timeline. Consider working on this over the next year as this will help focus your activities and also help gain you marks in all competition categories. We would advise you to consult the tidy towns' handbook for advice on how to prepare this. Be sure to give the community time to comment on this and perhaps a suggestion box could be installed in the Coffee Time Café to allow the views of all residents be taken on board as it is being prepared. We are glad to hear that participating in the competition over the last long 30 years has been so fruitful for your community and has helped foster a spirit of pride and desire to keep the village clean. We fully recognise the work that your dedicated team undertake, and the time and effort individual committee members make for the good of the wider Kilmacrenan community.

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

We very much enjoyed our walk through the village. You have a range of buildings of varying scale and styles which combine to make your Main Street. A lovely old vernacular red painted iron gate was noted on our stroll, a lovely remnant from the villages past which no doubt was locally made by previous generations of the Kilmacrenan. Talk to your heritage officer about the best approach to take if restoring these valuable heritage objects. The complex of traditional buildings that make the Coffee Time Cafe were a joy. The adjudicator enjoyed a delicious lunch and cup of tea in the outside seating area and was served by exceptionally friendly and polite young staff. Thank you for your update in the efforts taken by the groups to address empty and derelict premises in the village. By contacting owners you can but hope that they will bear in mind the impact their properties have on the appearance of the overall village. We hope Donegal County Council can assist you with this issue too. Even small gestures by owners, such as the removal of the tired vertical upper floor signs at the Village Court, could help improve the appearance of

the facade here. Likewise the removal of the worn curtains in the windows of some empty premises will result in a neater facade. The graveyard and Chapel were well presented. The sports pitch by the Lurgy River was busy on the day of the visit with some bikes resting against the pitch boundary timber fence here. Is there a need to investigate the demand to provide for bike parking in the village?

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

Beautiful displays of roses were noted in the open space by the Lurgy River which was alive with the sounds of with busy bees. There was evidence of Ash die back by young specimen trees at the stone wall here. Keep an eye on its progress and any other infected ash trees in the village. If they have become so advanced with disease that they may become a danger, please inform your Local Authority Biodiversity or Environment Officer. The planters to the rails of the new bridge were admired and liven up this modern piece of road infrastructure. It does not quite have the charm of the older stone walls along side it. The picnic bench at the riverside open spaces is unfortunate to be located by the bins here. Consider relocating it in a more fragrant spot or moving the bins to the sports area car park nearby? We note that you have been thwarted in your efforts to establish a formalised pollinator garden. But even minimal maintenance of this area with its apple and plum trees will greatly aid pollinators. Avoid using chemical herbicide as well as they can have a detrimental impact on biodiversity. The raised planted area and grass at the prominent and well-presented black Welcome to Kilmacrenan sign on the Letterkenny side of the village was looking very well. We note this is kept maintained by your committee. Some of the newly planted trees here seemed to be struggling and may need to be watered during dry times or have the tree ties removed if they show on damaging the tree trunk by rubbing.

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

You have a wealth of habits surrounding you which have so much potential. You note in the submission the importance of your two rivers – the Lurgy and the Lennon. This is a category where you can really gain marks. Its purpose is to help towns and villages promote and understand why their habitats are important and helping local residents value them. We would urge you to look at the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, as per previous advice, to further your aims here. This excellent document has advice for practical ways groups can alter their landscape management practices making them as pollinator friendly as possible in very practical ways. For example, to reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides in your work. Could the church be persuaded to alter the mowing regime to grass areas in the graveyard to enhance biodiversity? As well as managing your grass areas in a wildlife friendly way look to the village and its resident's gardens for habitat enhancement opportunities. Distribute the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan recent guide for gardens to all residents – perhaps as a web site link if you have a digital presence. No matter how big your garden or small your window boxes this guide has easily implementable advice for all your residents. Remember that biodiversity can be found in all niches and crannies. For example, the old stone walls by the river contained a mix of ferns and mosses which are a micro habitat in their own right.

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

This category can be a difficult one for many centres to tackle. For further advice we would encourage you to consult the Tidy Towns handbook and also to visit <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>. The Local Prevention website have added a specific 'Tidy Towns' page to their website so you can see what waste prevention projects have been done by other similar groups around the country in villages similar in scale to Kilmacrenan. There are various case studies to learn from with practical tips, advice, free downloads of brochures etc. this is a great resource to gain advice on how to address this category. Do you have composting areas developed or how do you deal with green waste and grass cuttings from communal areas such as the graveyard? We noted beautiful strawberry plants to the planters at the café seating area. Can the theme of edible landscape be built on by the committee encouraging the planting of more apple or plum trees in communal areas for example?

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

The standard here was good with very little litter evident in the core areas. We note in your entry form that you have litter patrols arranged. Our thanks to all who take part in this. Also do you take part in the An Taisce Spring Clean. Some recent litter was noted by the purple recycling bins. Ensure the bins are being collected regularly to prevent having times when they are full, and then users leave debris such as plastic bags after their visit. A few recent discarded items were also noted by the wall mounted bench by the river side open space. Ensure this area is a part of your litter patrols.

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

There are a range of residential types in town and once again they were presented to a high standard on adjudication day. We note that you have a proactive relationship with residents of the villages housing areas and work together to keep communal areas maintained as required. How great to see building work being done to townhouses along the village main street. Hopefully a sign of new residents in the village who you may be able to get to support your works. The mini bee gardens at the entrances to The Racecourse were a nice touch and the view from the green here to the surrounding landscape was admired. Can some of the grass to the entrance walls be dug out and low Maintenance pollinator plants such as roses or long flowering geraniums be installed. This will actually be less work to maintain than the grass and will add much to the biodiversity value and appearance of this neat entrance feature. Your supporters at Aiden Peoples Landscaping may be able to give you advice on this.

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

Road and footpath surface were well maintained and given the long Main Street; this contributes to the tidy appearance seen on the day of our visit. As previously mentioned, look to reduce the mowing of verges in line with the All-Ireland Pollinator plan. The name sign on the Milfort Road needs a clean and the area directly in front of it cut back to improve its visibility. As previously mentioned, the raised welcome sign on the Letterkenny is a lovely set piece. Roadside boundaries were generally good with the neat stone wall along Rosemount looking well with the maturing trees to the open space behind.

**Concluding Remarks:**

Kilmacrenan is a lovely village with an interesting mix of buildings, in an attractive rural and riverside setting. The efforts of your dedicated committee and the local community are clearly visible to the visitor. We wish you success in addressing issues facing your community. Thank you to all involved in this year's submission for their hard work and good luck for 2023 and beyond.