

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Blanchardstown - Baile Bhlainséir</b>	Ref: <b>365</b>
County: <b>Dublin</b>	Mark: <b>253</b>
Category: <b>F</b>	Date(s): <b>20/07/2022</b>

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2021</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	31	32
Streetscape & Public Places	80	34	36
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	31	34
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	22	24
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	22	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	44	46
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	27	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	27	29
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>253</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. We are pleased to welcome your committee of 13 members to this year's competition and it is great to see that there are 30 volunteers who help you with your projects. We are glad to read that there is good engagement between your committee and Fingal County Council and we wondered if any contact had been made with Fingal Leader or with Fas / Tus as both of these organisations have provided assistance to tidy towns committees in other centres. Well done on forming connections with the Fingal volunteer centre and the St Brigid's Church team and for collaborating with residents associations for cleanups, planting and painting projects. Sports clubs (GAA, soccer, athletics, rugby and basketball), social groups (men's shed, gardening groups, walking clubs) and interest groups (such as historical societies) have provided lots of new recruits for committees in other tidy towns centres and we urge you to approach them to see if they would like to get involved in your projects. It is pleasing to see that many local shops, pubs and services are firmly behind your committee as this demonstrates that your work is highly valued by the business community in Blanchardstown. You are also commended on developing a comprehensive communication strategy and we are pleased to see that a wide range of communication mediums are used. We are delighted to learn that productive links have been built up between your committee and the Edmund Rice school with students helping out on a weekly basis with litter picking, planting and other maintenance tasks. We recommend that you try and identify other projects that would be suitable for collaborations with the transition year students - particularly under the nature and biodiversity and sustainability categories. Thank you for your completed entry form which was helpful during adjudication. However, we were unable to find the map that you referred to in your entry form and this created difficulties when trying to locate some of your projects during our visit. Be sure to include a map with your entry form next year. It is great to see that your participation in the competition has generated very positive feedback from your community and we are glad to hear that the level of awareness litter and biodiversity has increased.

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

We enjoyed visiting and exploring Blanchardstown on a bright sunny July afternoon. Your committee will be delighted to hear that your area looked tremendously well as the vast majority of commercial and residential buildings were presented to a high standard and public spaces appeared well maintained. While wandering around, we stopped by St Bridget's Church where the hard work of your committee and volunteers was evident from its carefully maintained grounds, eye-catching mature trees, nice planting and neat boundary walls. The pollinator friendly beds between the rear of the Church and the car park (that was adjacent to the entrance to Scoil Bhríde Cailini) were particularly impressive. Many good quality commercial buildings could also be seen along the Main Street and while it is not possible to review them all in this short report, it is necessary to refer to the premises which

stood out. Praise is due to the Black Wolf, Cunningham's Funeral Home, the Hudson Rooms, Wings Burger, Brownes steakhouse, CT2, the Beechview medical centre, Supervalu, Ryans Garage, Rudy's Restaurant, Eden Café, Taste of Provence and the Credit Union for achieving high standards of presentation on their business premises. Bank of Ireland and Lloyds pharmacy also impressed and we admired the traditional design (with its modern extension) of the adult education building. You are commended on the work that you have done maintaining public spaces and well done on enhancing the old pump (outside Supervalu) with a fresh coat of paint and colourful planters. We note that a new bench with planters has been installed and we also enjoyed seeing the eye-catching Steora bench along the Main Street.

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

It was obvious from our visit that your committee and volunteers have been particularly busy with planting projects over the past year. This was evident from the number of high quality schemes which were visible during adjudication. The extensive pollinator friendly planting bed on the approach to your village from the N3 is delightful and it's no surprise to hear that there has been very positive feedback with respect to this excellent project. We were delighted to see that it appears to be planted almost entirely with species that attract pollinators with verbena, hydrangea, snow poppies and black eyed susan's among the many attractive plants to be seen here. We also enjoyed seeing the bark based beds to the rear of the church where hebe, lavender and fuchsia could be observed. We applaud the efforts made to revamp the extensive beds that surround the Supervalu car park. They looked tremendously well with verbena, beardtongue, agapanthus and decorative grasses among the pollinator friendly plant selections here. The bed to the front of Ramor Park was no less impressive and you are also commended on the work done to the lovely bed at the junction of the Clonsilla road where Peruvian lilies (we think), black eyed susan's and beardtongue were on display. Well done also on the work you have done providing a selection of planters and hanging baskets along the Main Street with the cascading floral displays in the tiered planters outside Bank of Ireland and Lloyds pharmacy providing bursts of bright summer colours. The contribution of individual businesses to this category was appreciated as a good number (such as the Black Wolf) were displaying planters and hanging baskets of their own. A special mention is due to the credit union on Clonsilla road where the mature bank of shrubs were admired. Good quality landscaping could also be seen at the Garda station and box hedging surrounding the seating area at Rudys drew positive attention. We were delighted to read that the mature trees that line your Main Street are so well looked after by Fingal County Council as they are a very distinctive (and positive) feature of your area. We would also like to commend your committee and volunteers on your avoidance of weedkiller and herbicides and for campaigning for others to do likewise. Unfortunately, we are unable to locate the planting that has taken place (with the assistance of the transition year students) at the entrance to Tolka Valley Park and we would ask you to draw the attention of the adjudicator to this project next year. We note that a regeneration programme has been suggested by the Consultant Biodiversity Officer of Fingal County Council for River Road and we wondered about what this involves. Perhaps some further details on this proposal can be submitted next year? It is also noted that a number of new areas have been identified for potential tree planting (which include the Mill road and the Parish Field) and we look forward to seeing these projects progress in the near future.

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

It is great to see that your committee and volunteers have embraced the recommendations of the All Ireland Pollinator action plan and that you are taking a number of steps to increase the amount of pollinator friendly planting in your area. This can be seen by the number of pollen rich plant varieties that you are including in your planted beds and hanging baskets as well as promoting the growth of wildflowers at the entrance to the village (from the M3) and at Ramor Park. The addition of pollinator friendly strips at Woodgreen Park also provides a further example of this approach. A logical next step would be to encourage a higher number of residents associations to engage in pollinator planting in their estates as this would further boost sources of pollen in your area and benefit biodiversity. Residents associations could also be asked to adopt a 'don't mow, let it grow' approach and leave all or parts of their amenity areas uncut in order to encourage the growth of natural wildflowers. Avoiding the use of weedkiller and herbicides is tremendously important and it would be great if you could get residents associations and private households in Blanchardstown to adhere to this approach. This project could begin by hosting a workshop on sustainable gardening and planting in your area and asking local people to attend – as it would help to raising awareness of these issues among the wider community.

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

This category provides your committee with an opportunity to explain what actions are underway in Blanchardstown to conserve energy, reduce resource consumption and avoid the generation of unnecessary waste. We note from your entry form that your committee are carrying out some good practical actions that include; selecting battery operated equipment (rather than equipment that burn fossil fuels), using solar powered litter bins and sourcing recycled paint for use in your projects. These are all good projects and we urge you to keep them going. We were also pleased to see that you are engaging in rainwater harvesting (to enable you to avoid using treated water) with a site secured for a 100 litre water butt (at the Church / Community Centre) and others being sought. You should also consider making your own compost and leaf mould as this would enable you to avoid using commercial produced peat based fertilisers and soil supplements. We are pleased to read that you are not using bedding plants with perennial shrubs preferred for your planting schemes and we encourage you to consider propagating your own plants or seeking donations from local keen gardeners in your area. We would also like to hear about what your local schools and businesses are doing to promote the adoption of more sustainable behaviour in Blanchardstown so please let us know in 2023. Don't forget that tidy towns groups also have a role in raising awareness of the need to conserve energy, drive down resource use and avoid waste generation in their wider communities and we urge

you to consider hosting a workshop on these sustainability themes. The Environmental Awareness Officer in Fingal County Council should be able to provide you with assistance in organising an event like this.

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

There is no doubt that your committee, volunteers and schoolchildren are working hard to control litter levels by carrying out twice weekly litter picks in your area. Well done also on continuing to empty the 'No Butts' collectors as cigarette butts can often make up a significant part of the litter found on our streets. We are delighted to report that your continued efforts are paying off as the standard of litter control in Blanchardstown was high during adjudication. The vast majority of areas that we visited were litter free and it was clear that litter collections were ongoing as a number of Fingal County Council litter bags were spotted on Main Street that were ready to be taken away. A small amount of litter was spotted along the Main Street but these items were isolated and quite difficult to spot. We were also pleased to find that the standard of tidiness was high with clear signage, weed free roadsides, cleanly swept pavements and tidy bins to be seen. Small improvements are possible. While we note that a signage audit is underway, be aware that two very untidy signs indicating parking for the mobility impaired were spotted (one opposite Tolka House and another close to Brownes steakhouse). Well done on getting the new solar bins installed as they looked great but someone untidy (older) bins could be seen at the bus stops near to Tolka house.

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

The absence of a map in your entry form created difficulties when considering this category as it was not particularly clear which estates and residential areas needed to be adjudicated. Notwithstanding this point, a number of excellent estates in the vicinity of Main Street and they demonstrated that residents associations and your committee have worked exceptionally hard to ensure that their areas looked their best. Church Lane looked nice with its decorative name stone and ground cover entrance planting. St Patrick's Park is a lovely space and noting that development is taking place here, we look forward to seeing it complete when we return in 2023. St Bridget's Park is very neat and tidy with trimmed grass and nice trees visible and we thought that Hazel lawn is delightful with its decorative name stone surrounded by wonderful roses in bloom. We are also delighted to see lovely banks of established pollinator friendly planting at the pedestrian entrances into the green area of Hazel Lawn from adjoining estates. The beds looked magnificent with yellow marigolds, Peruvian lilies and alliums among the species that were on display. Praise is also due to the Ramor Park residents as eye-catching entrance planting, a trimmed grass amenity area, an attractive name stone and lovely mature trees were observed here. The work undertaken at Rushbrook, Roselawn road and Summerfield is also commended.

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

The approach roads into Blanchardstown achieved a high standard of presentation during adjudication. The entrance from the N3 provided a highlight with its spruced up boundary wall, extensive linear landscape bed (stocked with pollinator species) and attractive name stone (which appeared to be new). The mature beds on this approach also helped to create a positive impression. The entrance from Snugborough also looked well as it appeared neat, tidy and well maintained. The work of your committee on sprucing up the wooden sound barrier (at the end the river road) with a fresh coat of paint is appreciated. You are also commended on the maintenance work that you undertake along the canal. We note that a Greenway is also proposed along this route and we would welcome an update on this important project next year.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

We would like to congratulate your committee, volunteers, residents and project partners on your performance in this year towns competition. It is great to see that your projects are leading to significant improvements for your area and we urge to keep up the good work!