

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clontarf - Cluain Tarbh** Ref: **1205**
County: **Dublin** Mark: **239**
Category: **G** Date(s): **16/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	33	34
Streetscape & Public Places	80	34	35
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	31	33
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	16	17
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	10	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45	47
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	30	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	28	29
TOTAL MARK	550	227	239

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 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition and thank you for your completed application form with photos, your map and your Clontarf 3-5 Year Plan. We see that you are a new community having first entered in 2021 and we are delighted to welcome you back. We hope you find our reports useful with constructive criticism and helpful suggestions. Your Plan needs a little work – put dates and partners beside each activity/project which will help to focus your activities and your time. Your committee of eleven has an additional one hundred and four who volunteer every now and again, when a project needs extra hands or a tidy-up is happening with thirty regularly involved. Well done for involving so many of the local community. We were delighted to see that you have a dedicated email address, a Facebook page and Twitter account as social media is important in spreading information about your activities. Loveclontarf.ie also posts information about your activities. You list a large number of state and semi state organisations in addition to businesses and local community groups who support you. You feel that your efforts can be seen 'in the continued cleanliness of Clontarf' and that your volunteers' activities 'has also helped to create and strengthen community bonds' which is the true spirit of Tidy Towns.

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

Your area is quite large stretching from the Malahide Road to St. Anne's Park and consists of residential roads, commercial and business premises, in addition to a castle, schools, churches and sporting grounds. We note that you have a Heritage Trail along the Promenade outlining the story of The Vikings, Brian Ború and the Battle of Clontarf, but you have many interesting industrial, architectural, historical and archaeological structures around the roads Clontarf and so we suggest you undertake the creation of another Historical Trail which will include these. Easy to do as there's lots of information available. We loved the miniature lighthouses along the Promenade and we agree that those missing should be replaced as they are a unique feature to Clontarf. We are delighted to read that the transformer for the Howth tram is to be repainted – another feature for your new Heritage Trail. The pedestrian area at the bottom of Vernon Avenue (Clontarf village?) is particularly pleasant with the plaza, trees, lighting standards, and bicycle parking. We were disappointed to see that there were no seats provided. Seats could be inserted between the tree bases and still allow sufficient space for pedestrians to circulate. We noted the new seats on the roads – truthfully many more are needed, but make sure you install all of one type/design to add unison to your towns' street furniture.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

In addition to the green area along the Promenade you also have the great St. Anne's Park to one side with its array of mature trees and sporting areas, the green spaces at Mount Prospect Grove, St. Gabriel's Road, Mount Prospect Lawns, Vernon Heath, Kincora Drive and of course the private green spaces of Clontarf Castle, the Jesuit Retreat and Clontarf Park. Add to these the green areas associated with the schools, churches, and sporting clubs and we find that the area of green space is quite large for your community. Trees line many of the Clontarf roads, which we admired. Trees are known to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. By planting and caring for trees, you help reduce pollution, improve your surroundings, improve the appearance of your community and increase the value of your property. In addition, they provide shade for humans, food for insects and food roosting sites and nesting sites for birds. We suggest you carry out a survey of the roads and see additional places where trees could be planted – maybe in a few groups of coppices along the Promenade in addition to some of the residential areas. We loved your many planting beds which provided a great display of colourful pollinator friendly flowers and we admired that you had selected plants of varying heights to add interest and drama to the beds. Are there other locations where pocket parks or planting beds could be established? Carry out a survey of this too and you will be surprised that you will find a left-over space or corner space which will be suitable. We note the establishment of Greening Clontarf with a focus on the planting and maintenance of planters and flower beds. We counted seven containers in one area – left on grass! The guideline for plant containers is to use them only where planting directly into the ground is not possible; they should not in themselves attract any notice.

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

Lots of trees, green spaces, the Promenade and the sea – so plenty of food and shelter for our fauna and a place to thrive for our flora. We see that Dublin Bay, is a UNESCO biosphere reserve – do you know why it has this designation? The aim of this category is to encourage people to recognise, engage and celebrate the biodiversity and richness of the wildlife habitats in their surroundings. Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to achieve under this category. In this regard researching and raising awareness is more important than 'doing' at the early stages. To promote biodiversity, we need to manage our habitats and possibly to manage the land and coast in a different way than we have become used to. It is important to map these habitats and to promote an awareness of the many traits of your area. Try to list the plants and animals to be found in Clontarf and recognise their significance (native, protected, or alien invasive?). This information can be fun to gather and can involve the schools or other interested parties. Raise awareness through holding events such as tree, hedgerow or bat walk. Contact the Irish Wildlife Trust for more information. We looked for swift boxes around Clontarf – are there any? Maybe there are swifts nesting annually in some of the churches – e.g. St John the Baptist church along the seafront would seem like a good spot? Swift boxes are easy to install and very important in our towns which now have few locations for the swifts to nest. Contact www.birdwatchireland.ie or www.swiftconservation.org for advice on their installation and maintenance. We like the idea of Leave it Bee and we hope that you advance this with the people of Clontarf in their own homes/gardens.

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

This is a category where many communities struggle but truthfully it is just about being aware of how we use the resources of the planet so that we cut down on our waste. This category is about tackling the growing waste mountain that is creating problems of pollution, unwanted land use, and the use of dwindling resources. It is a global and a local problem. To save the Earth we need to move quickly to a zero-waste society. Educating both young and old in Sustainability – doing more with less is crucial. Tidy towns committees are encouraged to try and prevent the generation of waste when carrying out their day-to-day activities. As a committee starting off, it is recommended that you get the basics right and focus on simple but effective measures. For example, you could make your own compost for use in your landscaping schemes as this avoids all of the associated packaging and other waste that comes with shop bought fertilisers. Growing your own pollinator friendly plants, harvesting your own seeds or sourcing donations of plants from keen local gardeners is recommended as this also avoids the waste associated with shop bought varieties. Consider harvesting rainwater in order to avoid using treated water when maintaining your planters. This is a simple process which involves placing a water butt on a downpipe to capture rainwater. Using waste or surplus products (like timber) to make planters are other items like bird boxes and seating benches is also encouraged. Avoiding chemically based pesticides in favour of weeding by hand or naturally based alternatives such as organic weed killer or a mix of vinegar, salt and washing up liquid. The Return for Change sounds excellent – will this become a regular event for you/the school? We also like the Leaf Cages (we saw a few) so that leaf mulch can be made for your planting beds and also this initiative helps to keep the paths safe and leaf free. Reusing items is always popular and preloved items will always find a home.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We assume, as with other villages and towns around Ireland, that you took part in the An Taisce Spring Clean-Up this year? We encourage groups to taken part in nationwide Clean-Up events as it focuses the mind of the general public of the high amount of litter/fly tipping/ dumping that occurs nationally. We see that several young people helped you in the Big Beach Clean as part of the Dublin Community Clean-up and Clean Coasts Big Beach Clean last September. Being a coastal community, you have this additional area to maintain and so we thank you. When we visited the centre of the village, the residential roads and the Promenade were all virtually litter free – please commend your committee and the hard-working volunteers. Unfortunately weed growth was noticed at kerbs, base of walls and in open spaces in some areas which gave an unkempt feel to these areas but in the main weed growth was not a problem. We love the big belly bins supplied by DCC and see that you have approached DCC with a view to putting in more bins in Clontarf. We agree that there are not sufficient bins along the Promenade. Remove the ivy which is encroaching on the beautiful Villa Rosa sign as otherwise it will soon be hidden. You provided stewards for Pieta House's 'Darkness to Light' walk on 7 May 2022 where approximately 5,000 people took part

and volunteers did a litter pick along the route afterwards' – well done. There is quite an amount of sucker growth on trees along various roads and these need to be removed using a sharp knife or secateurs. We noted the leaf cages and unfortunately large bags of litter had been deposited behind two of the cages. We wonder if the cages were located individually in the open and not against a wall would this deter people from leaving their rubbish. If dog fouling is noticed, we recommend that you paint 'Clean up after your Dog' on the footpaths where it is a problem. We have seen this in other communities and have been told it works better than signage on poles. Dog poo bins are on the wayhopefully.

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

The standard of presentation of individual houses withing Clontarf was generally very good and we applaud the many home owners and occupiers who clearly take pride in their place and keep their front facades, road frontage, gardens and boundary walls well-presented and neatly maintained in support of your work. We see that you will launch 'Adopt a Patch' shortly. We have seen in other communities where the area (town) is divided in sections and a list is put up in the local supermarket where residents/business add their name to an area and so the whole town is then covered by volunteers for litter and weed control and for taking care (grass cutting etc) of communal areas including road margins. You might consider this approach. This can then be put on Facebook to encourage others to join. You added two new benches more are needed. Don't forget to encourage the residents to grow pollinator friendly flowers from now on. Have a look at the website http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Gardens_actions-to-help-pollinators-July-2016.pdf for ideas for the garden. In time we suggest you introduce a Best Kept Small Estate and Best Kept Large Estate Competitions. This gentle rivalry is healthy and encourages residents to become involved in their estates. The prize is a framed certificate and a plaque for the estate presented at a social function (maybe in DCC offices) where the local press is invited giving publicity to you and to the residents. Trim the grass around the base of trees on the residential roads.

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

Although we've been to Clontarf many times, we didn't know where the Alfie Byrne Road was so we were delighted to see it written on your map. We admired the Welcome to Clontarf entrance signs. Main roads were in good condition with road markings clear and road signs clean and, generally, in suitable locations. While your roads are primarily residential when you leave the Promenade, we noticed that some motorists drove quite quickly and so we were delighted to see speed ramps on many of these roads. Paths have been repaired in a number of locations which look good and we see that dipped pavements have been installed on paths at some road junctions. We assume this is an ongoing project and you will have them installed at all road junctions in time, which will give wheelchair/mobility scooter users and those pushing buggies as well as small children on bicycles an easier route. There are many blank rendered walls in Clontarf where we recommend that you plant ivy or some other climbing plant. This will not only improve the visual appearance of the roads but will also benefit our insects and birds. We love that the Promenade is now part of the Sutton to Sandymount cycle route. Hopefully DCC will increase these routes so that commuters will use them daily going to work and not just cycling clubs and others using them for exercise and leisure.

Concluding Remarks:

We enjoyed visiting Clontarf, which we know quite well, but this time visiting with a more critical eye and seeing the success of the work undertaken.

We found your numbering system a little confusing. While we understood e.g. that 3M06 is a planter in the Application Form when it came to looking for this on the map it was confusing. The legend and the location on the map with the icons seems to use different numbers. Maybe you need to use a separate map for your planting projects? Please also put the activities into the correct category. You have activities relating to litter/weed control/tidiness/information on bins etc etc in most categories – these ALL belong in Tidiness and Litter Control.

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2022 competition.