

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Galway City Centre** Ref: **1340**
County: **Galway** Mark: **337**
Category: **H** Date(s): **07/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	52
Streetscape & Public Places	80	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	44	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	41	43
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	25	27
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	34	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	37	38
TOTAL MARK	550	328	337

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. Thank you very much for your application to this year's competition and for providing so much useful additional material such as the Pollinator Plan, your 3 Year Action Plan, as well as map and photographs showing all the work that you are doing, and the beautifully illustrated front of your application showcasing all that Galway City has to offer was greatly admired. The way in which you have structured your entry form is also to be praised, although you have a lot of different projects and quite a detailed form, it is very well laid out with photographs illustrating the work and in a very logical easy to read format, something which is greatly appreciated by the adjudicator.

Given the large area that you have to cover in Galway City, as well as the challenges of the past few years, you benefit from engaging with a very wide range of organisations and interests. You put it very succinctly when you state that the role of the Tidy Towns group in Galway is to work with the council, liaise with private property owners and encourage participation by all the community, and you appear to be succeeding in that mission. The city is famed for its thriving arts and culture scene and this has manifested with your recent awards as European Capital of Culture in 2020, and previous ones as European Region of Gastronomy, and European Green Leaf City.

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

The Arts Festival and Oyster Festivals are world renowned, but I was interested to read on your entry form that Galway has no less than 18 festivals listed, and although this brings great opportunities for the local economy due to the large numbers of visitors, both national and overseas, this also brings its challenges to ensure that the infrastructure can cope, that premises are kept looking well, and of course the fact that larger numbers of people can lead to more litter. There is also the historic heritage to protect, and I was astonished to read that there are over 600 protected structures registered in Galway City, so well done on the work that you do to conserve these in conjunction with the Civic Trust and Galway County Council Heritage Officer, particularly on the clean up of St. Nicholas Church. The plaques courtesy of Galway Lions Club look very smart and a nice way to remember the lives of outstanding former denizens of the city. The 'Space Invaders' scheme is a fantastic initiative to give venues and office space for the various festivals as well as charities to utilise, and along with your painting of empty buildings turns what could be an eyesore into a visually attractive and useful premises. Well done also on your promotion of the use of the Irish language by businesses in tandem with Gaillimhe le Gailge. The painted ESB utility boxes were greatly admired and a joy to happen across, many of them were very colourful indeed. There are many beautiful shopfronts to be found in the centre of Galway, far too many to list, but some that always stand out are The Wooden Heart shop, The Quays, The King's head, and the Treasure Chest.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

There is some fine work being done in Galway on your green spaces and landscaping. First to be mentioned of course has to be Eyre Square, an area of this was in the process of being transformed into a bar in anticipation of the Arts Festival when I visited, always a treat to visit, there is high quality landscaping and tree maintenance here, and the area was being enjoyed by a large number of people soaking up the sun when I was there, unfortunately however the crowd did bring with it quite a lot of litter, which must be quite difficult to manage at times. The planters with seats surrounding the green looked splendid, a really good mix of hard and soft landscaping to be seen here. The Fr. Burke Park looked very well, and the playground was well presented and clean and tidy. There is a lovely walk along the river near the Cathedral, and this had some lovely landscaping and planters to be seen, and I enjoyed this area as it was an oasis of calm away from the hustle and bustle of the throngs to be found in Eyre Square and the main tourist trail of Shop Street and Market St. etc.

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

Your work on biodiversity included projects spanning Terry Land Forest Park, Conservation Volunteers Galway as well as working with Merlin and Barna woods (which outside of your jurisdiction, are important to the city), these are all fantastic projects and to be applauded. I really like the Biodiversity Trail, guided by the new self guided Galway App Xpose, a really innovative way for people to really get to know about the wildlife on their very doorstep. Your 'Let's Get Buzzing Award' and your aim to develop Galway as a Bee Friendly City as well as becoming part of the National Biodiversity Data Centre Pollinator Habitats Programme is a great initiative to help our pollinator pals by incorporating wild and pollinator friendly flowers into parks, gardens and landscaping, and to raise awareness of the plight of these vital creatures. This is backed up by your 'Don't mow it, let it grow' campaign to try to convert people into appreciating more 'wild' looking areas.

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

A lot being done in this category, and it is great to see that this is a coordinated effort with many organisations in Galway working towards being more sustainable such as An Mheiteal Rothar, An Taisce, Galway County Council, Transition Galway, and of course your Tidy Towns Committee. Some of the initiatives being undertaken include the use of rainwater harvesting and avoiding using chemicals, segregation of litter collected, up cycling 'waste' wood for the Men's Shed to make planters, as well as bat and bird boxes. Other practical ways that people can help that you encourage is the 'ReCupán Galway' which encourages the use of reusable 'keep cups' when someone is buying their daily coffee in order to reduce the amount of single use cups, as well as the 'cash for cans' scheme both of which offer small financial incentives, as well as raising awareness of the waste that can result from the use of single use drinks containers. Other projects include the 'Slow the Flow' campaign to promote water conservation as well as some smart city projects to enable the city to become more energy efficient, as well as a data dashboard providing environmental information.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

A lot of good ideas in this category, with a big emphasis throughout your entry of reducing waste in the first place and recycling whenever possible. This is seen in your ReCupán campaign to reduce the instance of single use cups, and also the media campaigns you held to encourage people to dispose of coffee cups and disposable face masks correctly. The bilingual 'Clean it Up, You Dirty Pup' project is a humorous, but pointed way to try to get dog owners to clean up after their pets, the stencils of dogs with the catch phrase were to be seen throughout the city (I counted over 70 places on the map you provided!). Other work being done includes street clean ups, the removal of graffiti and unnecessary poles, as well as the painting of derelict buildings with the consent or help of the owners. Unfortunately, despite all this valiant effort, there was quite a lot of litter to be seen in the Eyre Square area, particularly on the green, and the bins surrounding the green were bursting to overflowing, and there was also quite a bit of litter to be seen on Shop St. which is a pity given all the work that you are doing in this area, but can be hard to avoid given the number of visitors bustling about the day I visited.

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

Overall there was a very high standard of presentation of housing estates and residential areas to be seen, some of those visited included Forster Court/The Green Lough Atalia, Beach Court, and Wood Quay, amongst others. There are some good initiatives to encourage residents to keep their premises and surrounding area looking as good as possible, including the amenity grants funded kits which includes litter pickers, gloves and bags, as well as the community planting initiative which gives landscaping advice to residents associations and sometimes plants and shrubs. The Galway City Tidy Towns and Garden Competition sounds like a popular event, with over 300 entries last year, with prizes for categories such as window boxes, floral displays as well as community projects, so your increased involvement sounds like a great way to not only encourage estates to look their best, but may also garner some new volunteers for your work.

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

Galway is a busy city, and the various approach roads reflect this, however, there is great work being done that enhances the experience for the visitor, especially if driving into the centre. I found many of the roundabouts to be very attractively landscaped, and I am sure that the daffodils as you enter the city must be a spectacular sight come springtime. I am glad to read that some of the large signage which mention clamping and towing are to be removed and replaced with more positive, welcoming signs advertising all the awards that Galway City has achieved including UNESCO City of Film, and World's Friendliest City. The flower beds at Lough Atalia in particular looked really well, and these also added colour at various other spots such as the Cathedral and Fr. Griffen Road. You are

also reducing the number of signs and poles in the city and removing these as well as working to identify places for more bicycle racks in the centre of town which may encourage cycling and cut down somewhat on the number of cars being used.

Concluding Remarks:

It is always a pleasure to visit Galway City, such a vibrant colourful place that nearly always has some interesting festival or street art happening, and it is great to see you doing so much work to improve the sustainability of the city and to reduce, reuse and recyle as much as possible. Best of luck in this year's competition and I look foward to visiting again and seeing the progress of many of the projects that you have in train.