

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Headford - Áth Cinn** Ref: **978**
County: **Galway** Mark: **284**
Category: **B** Date(s): **06/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	37	37
Streetscape & Public Places	80	33	35
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	34	36
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	36	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	29	30
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	32	32
TOTAL MARK	550	275	284

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 including some photographs with your entry form as well as the maps with legends, and your 5 year Plan of Action and Activities, which is greatly appreciated. You have a tight committee of 5 people, with a very strong army of an additional 42 volunteers. Evidently an extremely strong sense of community and service in Headford, with congratulations on the recent awards to Venetia McEllin on her receipt of Individual Volunteer of the Year Award, and to the Headford Lace Project prize in the IPB National Pride of Place Awards under the Creative Community Category, and well done on maintaining your Community Green Flag Awards last year.

It is great to hear that your Tidy Towns and other community work is such a collaboration between the Tidy Towns Committee, Galway County Council, local businesses and other groups and all the work that you do on the Reimagine Headford Project, and getting involved in participating in the Development Plan process. The work that you do with Galway Rural Development also looks like it is working well and helping with getting SICAP funding and loans, and the sponsorship from local garden centres must be of fantastic help, as is the sponsorship from your local Credit Union. In addition, local Rural, Social and CE Schemes work to maintain your public spaces such as St. Mary's Church, Community Orchard and Garden etc. You appear to have very good communication channels with strong use of the various social media platforms.

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

You appear to have got great benefit from the new Streetscape Enhancement Scheme, and thank you very much for providing the really useful before and after photographs which really illustrate what a difference initiatives like this can make to a town or village. A tremendous team effort from the Headford Town Team, the painters, the architect advising on colour schemes, as well as the interest and effort done by local residents and business owners, with striking results, and we note that 41 applicants were successful in their applications, fantastic work on this, well done to all involved. Some buildings which looked particularly well included McLoughlin Solicitors, the Homeplace cafe, The Thatch Pub, and the landscaping surrounding this, The Angler's Rest Hotel, and The Varley Pub amongst others.

The Lace Matrix is a very unusual and striking project, which rightly commemorates and celebrates your bobbin lacemaking heritage, what makes it special is not only the work itself by the artist Róisín de Buitléar, but the fact that you had a public lacing installation which involved over 100 hands from novices and experts alike to turn it into a communal art piece, a very novel initiative, and you also have a song called "Toss the Bobbin!", and fantastic to see it has been included in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The information signposts including the brief history of Headford look very well and a good point of interest for local and visitor alike, the area around these is well landscaped, complete with a bench to have a rest, two small comments, some of the poles nearby could be freshened up a bit with some paint, and a splash of colour with a subtle planter of flowers could enhance this area even more.

Best of luck with your work on the Reimagine Headford project, exciting stuff, and we look forward to seeing how this progresses, with some interesting projects such as the potential re-imagining of historic streetscapes, and lost spaces.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have some lovely natural amenity areas including the Headford Demesne Golden Mile Walk, as well as the Sandybanks Lane Riverwalk, with your plans to repair and enhance this area, well done to all those involved in sponsoring this project, from local clubs and businesses to the local Credit Union. The information sign was also really interesting, showing what kinds of wildflower, mammals and insects could be found here. We note also your plans to include play equipment along part of the walkway so that even the younger members of your community can enjoy this area.

The owl sculpture at the Community Orchard was admired, and looked very attractive as it watches over visitors. Well done also on the work you have done in the area surrounding St Fursa's Hall, a lot of really good work done here.

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

Again, some really good work being done in this category, including the installation of a large polytunnel, with plenty of work to be done at the weekly meitheal, and it will be interesting to see the fruits of this work as it develops, and all the vegetables that result. Well done on receiving a grant from The National Lottery in order to make the Community Garden more inclusive and accessible to all, and well done on using recycled materials for this. There are some really attractive planters to be found throughout Headford, and it was good to see the inclusion of so many bee friendly plants, and you mention your use of a water sprayer, and I presume that you water some of your plants with water from rainwater harvesting?.

Well done to Headford Community Garden on the retention of its Green Flag Status over the past two years, and on all your work in the Community Orchard, and we hope that the oak sapling from the great Brian Boru Oak flourishes. Other projects include the Flax project to process these into fibres, which sounds like a fascinating experience, and best of luck with the harvesting and processing of the flax into linen fibres planned for later in the year, and fantastic work on the 650 plus trees along the Annacutra river.

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

Plenty of activity in this category as well, some of the initiatives that you are undertaking include;

-An energy audit in order to input into an Energy Master Plan for Headford along with information on how to be more energy efficient and sustainable, and BER surveys.

-The use of more sustainable lighting in St. Fursa's Community Hall, as well as solar panels in Headford GAA Club.

-Rainwater Harvesting at Joyces Garden Centre

-Meals on Wheels project, following collaboration between your Community Garden as well as Solas Family Resource Centre.

-Sustainable Christmas Lighting Project, this is a really novel and sustainable idea which harks back to your lacemaking heritage with a Christmas tree covered in yard thanks to Headford Yarnbombers, must be a wonderful sight around Christmas.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Good work in this category, practically no litter to be found in Headford on the day that it was visited, the majority of the streets were pristine, and the Bring Bank area was spotless (the cute dog mural on the electric box was also admired!). Community buildings such as the GAA Hall, the church, the graveyard, etc all looked well, and maintained to a high standard. Well done to the Kilcoona Cubs Group on their litter pick up event in the Spring, which not only helped remove trash, but also helped educate this generation on the importance of this from an environmental as well as aesthetic viewpoint. As well as major cleans for big events such as parades, you also do 'Two-Minute' street cleans which are obviously effective.

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

Overall, the standard of residential homes in Headford was high, with many houses boasting fine gardens, hanging baskets, window boxes planters as well as fresh paintwork, and it is nice to see so many homes along the main street still in residential use. The Headfest Gardening Competition is a great way to encourage that residents are also engaged in planting and promoting pollinator friendly planting.

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

The majority of streets, lanes and approach roads are in very good condition and clean and neat. As with a lot of rural towns and village throughout Ireland, Headford has got some derelict buildings, and it is good to see you tackle this issue, including your plans for the power washing and painting of some derelict cottages, with some assistance from Pobal. The work being done by the Headford Yarnbombers is fantastic and I really like the 'People in your neighbourhood' project. Best of luck with the work being done on the new footpaths on the Cong Road to link the town centre up to the end of the off-road walking trail, which will result in a fantastic amenity for your community.

Concluding Remarks:

It was an absolute pleasure to spend some time in Headford, which is an absolutely charming place to visit, and I wish you the best of luck in this year's TidyTowns competition as well as all the projects and initiatives that you have planned.