

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Currow - Cora** Ref: **897**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **319**
Category: **B** Date(s): **12/07/2022**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2021 | Mark Awarded 2022 |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80 | 44 | 45 |
| Streetscape & Public Places | 80 | 38 | 39 |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping | 80 | 41 | 41 |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality | 55 | 31 | 32 |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less | 55 | 18 | 19 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 69 | 69 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 55 | 34 | 35 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 55 | 39 | 39 |
| TOTAL MARK | 550 | 314 | 319 |

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 application form, maps and photos. You also included a basic 5 year plan. It's wonderful to be able to visit the communities this year and see the results of the hard-working volunteers. Your committee of five has an additional forty five who assist when the area needs to be tidied or a job needs to be done. Well done on having so many who volunteer. Next year we request that you insert the photos and maps into the relevant categories in the Tidy Towns Application Form as the adjudicators don't have the time to open and close individual files and attachments when they are on site in your community. We also advise that your Five-Year Plan is quite weak and needs considerable work done so that it is more meaningful – please amend for next year and add partners (as previously suggested by the 2021 adjudicators), and provide topics/activities/projects under each of the categories in Tidy Towns Application Form. While numbers were on your map there were no numbers in the application form so we had to decipher your form and haphazardly and luckily found the projects. Please also include only New (N) and Maintained (M) projects in your application and, as stated, number them N1, N2, N3 etc and M1, M2, M3 etc. All Future Projects and 'Hopeful' Projects should be in your revised 3-5 Year Plan. And finally, please insert your projects AFTER the brief introduction to each category and not in the middle. We ask all this, so that you help the adjudicators to have a pleasant and rewarding experience when visiting your community.

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

The village is a dispersed community with a mix of single and two storey houses and businesses set on individual sites and these with the RC church of the Immaculate Conception, the Community Centre, and Scoil Mhuire agus Naomh Treasa, give your village its architectural character. The mural of the blacksmith is very pleasant and a reminder of the traditions of your village. We admired the sign 'A Glimpse of Currow' giving us the history and archaeology in addition to informing us of local clubs – great for any new person coming to live amongst you. Like many rural villages and towns in Ireland you have dereliction which detracts from the streetscape and we see that you are trying to resolve this problem. We read that one property is now for sale and hopefully this will entice a family to come and live in the village. We admired the beautiful wrought and cast-iron gate at the church.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

While there is no large green space in the village your new Community Garden will be a great asset to the village. We appreciate that it is a work in progress and to date you have laid out the area and completed quite a lot – willow

arch, willow hedge, picnic area, pathways and the pond. We suggest that you add gravel dust to the pathways and bark mulch to the planting beds. There is a lot of gravel in various other planting beds, at the entrances to the village and around the school which should also be replaced with bark mulch. Bark mulch reduces the need for watering, protects the bare soil, creates new soil over time and creates a habitat for many important creatures. The area in the school with the willow arch probably should have grass to make it more pleasant – or perhaps wildflowers could be grown here? The area in front of the church is quite unpleasant. Here there is a need for an in-out system for cars and an area along the street with footpath, grass and trees. Not only would it enhance your streetscape but it would also make it safe for pedestrians accessing the church or walking along the road. 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. Select ones suited for a streetscape site and not ones for a parkland site. The graveyard was visited we don't think we've ever seen so much gravel in a graveyard. Please, please remove some and add grass to some areas.

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

The aim of this category is to encourage people to recognise, engage and celebrate the biodiversity and richness of the flora and fauna in their surroundings. To promote biodiversity, we need to manage habitats in such a way that we provide food and shelter for our fauna and a place to grow and thrive for our flora. Your actions must help to provide this in your local community. Many of these actions will simply require you to manage the land in a different way than that we have become used to. We were delighted to read that you have been granted funding for an ecologist to assist in informing you of these habitats and on actions, if any, to be taken. We look forward to reading more about this in future applications. We admired the Bee Friendly area in the school grounds and the vegetable area inside the picket fencing along the side entrance path. We read that one of your committee members attended a zoom talk on Biodiversity organised by Tidy Towns which hopefully has given your committee ideas on activities/projects under this category. We note your Lake project which we visited and saw the pollution. To date this has not advanced and we wish you well in your discussions with KCC, Inland Fisheries and St Brendan's Trust (the owners). We are delighted that you will involve the local school in the community garden with a project for Biodiversity week, when they will plant for pollinators.

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 has become increasingly important in the Tidy Towns competition as it now has a marks allocation of 55 – the same amount as the key categories of nature and biodiversity, residential streets and housing areas and approach roads, streets and lanes. Tidy towns committees are encouraged to try and prevent the generation of waste when carrying out their day-to-day activities. It is recommended that you get the basics right and focus on simple but effective measures. For example, you could grow 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. 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 should also be considered. Undertaking all of these actions will enable you to avoid generating waste in the first place and allow you to lead by example in your community. We noted that you use reusable cups – we hope so! We looked for the compost area but didn't find it – it wasn't marked on the map. There are many other ways to advance in this category and we suggest that you examine the website <http://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Sustainable-Waste-and-Resource-Management.pdf> which may give you some ideas for your community. Also contact the environment officer in Kerry Co Co who will tell you on events/ talks which you could attend to learn more about Sustainability – doing more with less.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Like many communities in Kerry, you took part in the Kerry Clean-Up Week in April and also the Spring Clean-Up – we commend you on this as it focuses the attention of a community on the need to be vigilant on litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. We note that you were disappointed at the amount of litter and fly-tipping that had occurred over one winter period. We sympathise with you but truthfully all communities are horrified of what they collect during this annual event. When we visited the centre of the village was virtually litter free and weed growth was minimal so well done the volunteers. Weed growth, however, was noted at all of the planting beds on the entrance roads which gave these areas an unkempt feel – a pity. The bring bank areas were neat and the bins were clean and presentable. They had been recently emptied and were ready for the next batch of glass and cans. Their location is ideal as they are on view and so shouldn't cause a problem with people leaving cartons and bags. The timbers to the rear need to be replaced where they are broken/missing as this is adjacent to the entrance to the Community Garden and so quite visible. Remove all poles in the village which have no function or sign. Poles are clutter in the streetscape. Herbicides should not be used to remove weed growth. We recommend trimming the grass margins at footpaths, at roadside kerbs, at the base of sign posts, estate names, etc. etc. rather than using weed killer. Tracts of dead grass edges are unattractive. Use a spade in the spring at pathway edges and kerbs and this will keep them tidy for most of the summer. Use strimmers (or clipping shears) around the sign posts etc. Rough up the earth around tree bases. We appreciate this is more time-consuming, but the streetscape will be so much more attractive as a result. The green open space at the cul-de-sac in Lakeview Park should have a narrow strip of the grass along the road edge trimmed so that it is obvious that the area is being maintained, and that the remainder is being allowed to grow wild for pollinators and small mammals. The area around the lime Kiln needs attention. Remove the

rubbish bags from inside the gate to the kiln, remove the weed growth from the paths, and repair the stone walls around the planting beds. Here too add bark mulch rather than the gravel which is harsh beside planting. Various bollards e.g along the road and in the church carpark, need painting.

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

Individual single and two storey properties are the main housing units in the village and on approach roads and the standard of presentation of these 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. Equally the residents of Lakeview and Parkmore estates were, in the main, very presentable. The open communal space of Parkmore with its central play area and trees grouped in a little coppice was visited. Please advise the residents not to use herbicides which had burnt the grass around the base of trees and at the footpaths making it unpleasant. We admired the planting bed at the entrance to Parkmore but we recommend that bark mulch replaces the stones between the plants and also put the flowers into the ground rather than in a planter. Guidelines 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. Dicksgrove Lodge is quite a unique property – it not often in Ireland that the main part of the house is circular in plan; we're guessing this has a history? We also admire the beautiful stone piers into Parkmore House.

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

Approach roads to Currow had hedgerows neatly trimmed giving good visibility to motorists. The road surfaces are in fair condition but road markings need attention – something you should have done soon. You have great stone walls along some of the entrance roads which were well maintained and which we admired. We particularly loved the bridge over the river with its white capping and concrete buffer at the base. Village name signs, direction signs and speed signs were all clean and legible and easily read with branches of trees neatly trimmed back. We noted the rumble dipped paving in a few locations to warn those who are visually impaired, and to facility those who use wheelchairs and mobility scooters, in addition to those pushing buggies, to cross the road with ease. We note that you are in contact with the area engineer regarding various other upgrades and we wish you the best with these. While it is a little way out a footpath to the GAA pitch would be wonderful so that, in addition to being a walk for everyone, it would facilitate children and adults accessing the facilities on foot.

Concluding Remarks:

We were delighted to visit your village, our first visit, and thoroughly enjoyed our stay as we meandered around taking in the sights. We suggest you consult the Tidy Towns Handbook which has been revised. It is available to download it from the Tidy Towns website. It includes plenty of suggestions for suitable projects to consider under the various categories. Please also take our advice on the map and on filling out the application form. This advice is given to help you to make the adjudicators' visit rewarding rather than frustrating.

Also have a look at the Sustainable Development Goals and how they relate to your projects. Tidy Towns in conjunction with Limerick City and County Council ran a webinar on the SDGs in 2021 and the presentation is worth reading as it will be helpful for your application next year.

The link is : [https://www.limerick.](https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf)

[ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf](https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf)

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2022 competition.