

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: Knocknagoshel - Cnoc na gCaiseal	Ref: 343
County: Kerry	Mark: 234
Category: B	Date(s): 14/07/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	31	31
Streetscape & Public Places	80	32	33
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	31	32
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	21	23
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	11	11
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	26	27
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	26	26
TOTAL MARK	550	228	234

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 which included a map, photos and your 3-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 thirty is probably one of the biggest committees we've ever come across. We are delighted to see that sub-committees exist which will make it more manageable. In addition to this, at times you have fifty volunteers – eighty yellow high-viz jackets working together in a small village must be some sight. You list state and semi-state organisations and also businesses who help you and who give you funds to undertake your projects. We are delighted to see you have a dedicated email address and that you are also on Facebook. Social media is important as well as the traditional methods of getting information to the community. You have entered the competition for the past 29 years and we hope the reports have been of some help to you in the intervening years.

You entered the TidyTowns competition in 2021 although your application form states that 2020 was the last date of entry. Please correct this in next year's application. We also request that you put projects into the correct categories e.g the painting of the murals belongs in Streetscape and Public Places and not in Residential Streets and Housing Areas and there were others. Please also note our comments in the Concluding Remarks about filling out the Tidy Towns Application Form and adding the projects to a Map.

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

You are a rural village with a mix of vernacular single and two-storey buildings and these with the topography of the village, its climbing roads, wide open area in the centre, and great views across the Kerry countryside gives your village its character. The dominate buildings in the village are the St. Mary's RC church, the National School (the signage on the gable is unpleasant and detracts from its beauty), and the Community Centre. The memorial to Charles Stewart Parnell with the words of the banner carried to one of his rally addresses is in a prime location in the village. We loved that the houses in the centre 'island' were all white with black slates roofs to differentiate them from the other structures in the village. We admired the stone bridge over the river to the north of the GAA facilities – remove the weed growth (including ivy) so as to show of this beautiful structure. The tomb of the resurrection in the Church grounds has, we see, become a paint store – not acceptable. Could a few seats be added at the grotto so that those visiting could sit for a while as they pray? The kissing gate entrance to the church was admired – the support bar needs straightening. We support your efforts in documenting the architectural features of your village – you have quite a number. We admired the various murals including the one of the banner. You also have some fine

flat iron gates in and around the village which were noted.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have fields all around you and the GAA pitch to add to your green spaces but you also have created a very pleasant garden in the centre of the village which we visited – the Owl Garden. Vertical sections of railway sleepers make up the planting beds which had great variety of shrubs and flowers of varying heights adding drama to the area. We admired the wise old owl – is there some significance of owls to your area? (see Tidiness and Litter Control for additional comments on this garden). Remove the planters located beside the seat and put the plants directly into the ground. 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. This also applies to the violas in pots, sitting on the gravel bed, in the church yard. The high planting bed on the approach to the village from the south was ablaze of colour with butterflies and bees visiting on the day we were there. The hooks over were missing their hanging baskets – remove the hooks if you're not going to install the baskets. Maybe install the hooks in another location in the village where you can't add a planting bed and colour is required. Move the planters a little away from the pump in the centre of the village so that the pump is more visible – this is the feature you are displaying and the planters are a bonus. There is a LOT of gravel in the bible garden, which make it harsh and a little unpleasant which is a pity as it has the potential to be wonderful. Have a rethink of what you're doing here and please 'soften' the area as it is quite unpleasant at the moment. In addition, the weed control fabric is visible which detracts even more from the area. Earth, even with a few weeds, is better than areas of multicoloured gravel with weeds. The GAA facilities are located a considerable distance from the village which is a pity as it requires people to drive rather than walk to this amenity.

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

There is a rich natural area surrounding your village and it is important to promote an awareness of its many traits and to map these habitats. Appreciating your local wildlife resources is vital in order to succeed under this category. The work being undertaken at the Owveg river is great – an area of conservation and contemplation. We love that you also envisage the area to be used as an outdoor classroom for the schools. You have three protected sites spanning the parish and you are aware of the significance of these; the Hen Harrier Special Protection Area, the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation, and the Knockatarriv/Knockariddera Bogs National Heritage Area. You have recently installed bird and bat boxes and we will be interested to hear when these will be occupied – it'll take a few years so be patient. One of your members has given talks to the two local National School pupils on the importance of peatland ecosystems. Has this talk been offered to the whole community? We have no doubt that a talk on the benefits of your local bogs for biodiversity and carbon storage would be well attended.

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

You tell us of community groups and individuals in your community and what they are doing in terms of sustainability but we question what are you the Tidy Towns committee doing? This is a category where many Tidy Towns committees 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. Educating both young and old in Sustainability – doing more with less is crucial to succeed in this category – you must lead by example. Tidy towns committees are encouraged to try and prevent the generation of waste when carrying out their day-to-day activities. As a committee, 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 also recommended as this 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. Advise the community to do likewise. 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 (including vinegar, salt and washing-up liquid) 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. More ideas for actions under this category can be found in the Tidy Towns handbook which is available online. Please compliment the National School on their planting beds – the rhubarb was coming along nicely. The Community Garden was visited – closed, but we could see through the fence some of the activities taking place.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The seat in the owl garden is in need of painting – the red paint is peeling. Quite a lot of weed growth was noticed in the crazy paving area and the black weed control fabric is visible all along the paths where there is gravel. The paint was also peeling from the wall at the ESB substation. Unfortunately, when you undertake to paint a wall, it must be done regularly. We note that, luckily, ivy is beginning to grow on this concrete block wall which will shortly eliminate the need for painting. In terms of ivy growth – it is very suitable for plastered or block walls but NOT a stone-built structure. While ivy is a wonderful for insect life and as we mentioned is acceptable/good on rendered (plastered) walls it is not acceptable on stone structures as the roots penetrate between the joints in the stones, making the walls/structures unstable, leading to their collapse. Natural stone constructions are in themselves great habitats for insect life and also very beautiful in the streetscape. We advise the removal of the ivy from the grotto wall. You mentioned the graveyard clean-up. Can we advise that if you could borrow a few goats, they do a wonderful job in cleaning a graveyard, without damaging gravestones, and they eat everything including briars. They are recommended for historical graveyards. Needless to say, they must be tethered or corralled. The wall

surrounds and the seat at the lime kiln need to be repaired as they are damaged and detract from the area.

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

The houses on the approach roads are a mix of bungalows and farmhouses with yards and outbuildings. All were well maintained and those with garden had trees, shrubs and colourful floral displays with great varieties of pollinator friendly planting. Houses within the village itself were also well presented and some had been recently painted and were very pleasant. We were delighted to see earth in the flower bed in the communal space at Church View. Nowadays many/most communities feel they should cover the earth in stones – which we abhor. If you need to cover the earth, use bark mulch (preferably one you've made yourselves). Mulch reduces the need for watering, protects the bare soil, creates new soil over time and creates a habitat for many important creatures. We loved the pedestrian connection between Church View and the main street in the village. A lone seat exists in the communal green spaces opposite the houses in this estate – add another one, some trees and a planting bed to make this area more appealing. An Cnoicín estate has also a planting bed with a variety of pollinator flowers and with a timber surround. This bed too had earth in between the plants which is totally acceptable and preferable to gravel. Mulch could be used here too if so preferred.

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

We liked the way a narrow strip along the grass margin on the entrance roads was mown giving the motorist a warning that they are entering a village /town. The planting bed with the Ceanothus loved by the honey bee and bumble bee growing was admired. On the diagonal is the name sign for your village picked out clearly in white making is legible for the passing motorists. The vertical Fáilte sign is pleasant but the flowers obscured the sign. Remove the planter here and put the flowers directly into the planting bed. The fox, sitting proudly in the planting bed, was spotted. Road surfaces are good, road markings are clear and directional signs clean and legible.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to visit your village.

In terms of your Tidy Town's application form you will have seen that this year we requested that applicants would number their projects as, new projects (N), or improved/maintained projects (M) and all 'future' projects should only be included in your 5-Year Plan and NOT in the Application Form. You are to give each action/project a number as New (N1, N2, N3 etc.) or Maintained (M1, M2, M3 etc). This same numbering system to be used to indicate the locations of these projects on a map – N1, N2, N3 etc and M1, M2, M3 etc. This is to help the adjudicators to negotiate their way around your village and see the various projects or locations of projects. Needless to say, attendance at seminars etc. will not be marked on a map but then they never were. We wish to state that this is not a criticism of your work but to explain to you that as adjudicators we rely on a clear application form and accompanying map to inform us of your projects and make our visit rewarding. We would appreciate if these points could be taken into consideration when preparing your 2023 application.

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2022 competition.