

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tralee - Trá Lí** Ref: **351**  
County: **Kerry** Mark: **347**  
Category: **G** Date(s): **16/06/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	49	50
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	47
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	47	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	43	44
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	25	27
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	35	35
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>347</b>

### 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 like many communities around Ireland you have been busy during the last two years advancing your work around Tralee. You have a wonderful cohort of volunteers which truthfully in a town the size of Tralee are all needed. Compliments to all involved and well done on recruiting such a number. Your stakeholders are important and we are delighted to see that you are increasing the number year on year with Crainn Chiarraí being the latest involved. With many Irish villages and towns, we now have members from other countries living with us and we read that some have engaged with you as volunteers .... welcome. We encourage this engagement as many of our new citizens have qualifications which will add to the knowledge in your committee. Engagement with the LA is crucial for any Tidy Towns group and we note that you have strong links with different departments who support you financially and with assistance and advice. Your detailed descriptions of 16 projects under this category were noted and forming a Strategic Partnership with Ennis, another large town, is admirable; hopefully an exchange of ideas and information will benefit both communities. Your Tralee TidyTowns 3-Year Plan has achievable goals in each category and we were pleased to see that you have identified Partners to assist in the delivery of these. Setting up subcommittees based on the Categories in the TidyTowns competition is excellent as it will provide a focus for the individual leaders to deliver worthwhile projects under each category. We look forward to reading about progress in future application. Instagram tends to be used more by the youth rather than Facebook so you might focus attention on setting up an account on this social media platform before next year. Unfortunately the adjudicators don't have time to be scrolling through large applications (like yours) so the insertion of photos into your application is excellent and we recommend that you continue with this approach. Referencing the Sustainable Development Goals in each category is also admired. We recommend that these are also included in your 3-Year Plan.

Please update your application form for next year and remove the (FP) projects as these are included (should be included) in your 3-Year Plan and should not be included in the main application form where we require New (N) and Maintained (M) projects only. The application form referred to projects in numerical order – 2.1, 2.2, etc, up 8.8 and 8.9 but your map had difference reference numbers - 2(a), 2(b), etc. Please keep the same numbering system for both to make it easier for the adjudicator to relate the form to the map. The Google Map links in the application form is not a suitable method of providing the location of projects as these are individual links and the adjudicators do not have sufficient time to download each map.

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

With streets and roads radiating from the centre of Tralee the layout is one which is easy to navigate and so admire

the modest vernacular architecture and the great Georgian and Victorian buildings which abound. The beautiful neo-Gothic Holy Cross Priory with its red sandstone walls with ashlar detailing is a dominant structure on Prince's Street. Kerry County Museum terminates the vista along the attractive Georgian Denny Street. Elsewhere modest vernacular buildings nestle in with elaborate Georgian streetscapes giving Tralee a distinctive experience for the visitor. Your most ambitious project 'ever undertaken' was the project management of 8 murals which were funded by Creative Ireland. These are indeed spectacular works of art and we compliment the artists involved. The one in Garvey's carpark brightens up this otherwise utilitarian area. These now add to other murals that are dotted around the town including those in the archway in Denny Street (which needs a little maintenance). Painting of utility boxes is something we have long advocated and we are delighted that 4 have been included in this year's work. Hopefully this is the beginning of a project to paint all the strategically placed utility boxes – following the necessary permissions being obtained. We loved the idea of your Christmas Window Competition as not only does it provide festive cheer along the streetscape it also provides a little gentle 'competition' between businesses – congratulations to the Kerry County Museum and Kerry Down Syndrome Shop. Dereliction exists in practically every town and village and in Tralee we noted many many empty premises as we walked around. It is good to see that some are occupied since the 2021 adjudication and hopefully this is the beginning of a revitalisation of the centre of the town. How many businesses took advantage of the Shopfront Enhancement Scheme launched by KCC in February 2021? Is this an on-going/ yearly initiative by KCC? Have you undertaken a derelict/disused property survey? We note your reply to the previous suggestion of making permanent planting beds in the town. Might we suggest that this be re-examined and some strategically placed permanent beds installed without interfering with the culvert system. The Tralee Town Centre Pavements Project was noted and the new pavement/public realm areas admired. We particularly look forward to the completion of the public realm area at the Island of Geese which is at an advanced state.

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

Having 'The Green', a town park of over 14 hectares in the middle of a town is wonderful and Tralee has benefited from the vision of the Denny family who created it in the 17th century. The variety of manicured grass, wildflower areas, planting beds, trees, sculptures etc. makes it a park to please all. As we walked around the park we met joggers, walkers, family groups, teenagers meandering, and dog walkers - all enjoying what the park has to offer. The Rose Walk was particularly admired. Nearby Pease Park with the Garden of Contemplation was also quite pleasant, although we noted poor maintenance of the planted areas including the rose garden beside the path. Has herbicides killed the roses? We called to the Museum to collect the species spotter sheets (mentioned in your application form) to be told they hadn't had them for a few years. We did however pick up Heritage Hunters, Tralee Town Park which is an interesting trail of the Park. Throughout the parks and in other areas (e.g. along the entrance road to St. John's Catholic Church) suckers were noted on trees and these should be removed from the base of trees and anywhere they appear along the trunk. These can be removed using a sharp knife or pruners while they are young taking care not to damage the trunk when removing. We note that a tree management and maintenance programme has begun following comments by previous adjudicators so perhaps the removal of suckers will form part of this programme. We called to the community garden in the park – the information panels surrounding the garden are almost entirely covered by growth. Either remove the panels (which are almost impossible to read) or cut back the growth. There were quite a number of planting troughs/ containers which had either no planting whatsoever or token planting installed. Do a survey of planters and ask for those of little streetscape value to be removed as they add nothing whatsoever to the streetscape and in fact take away from it. See comment above on permanent planting beds in strategic locations.

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

The guided biodiversity and wildflower walks in the Town Park were well attended by the five secondary school and one primary school students as noted in the photos. We encourage this activity and hope that it becomes an annual event for the schools. We were delighted to read of other new projects this year under this category – native tree planting, the LAWPRO's work, Cards from the Waterside, tree walks etc. We note that chemical free weed spraying contractor has been appointed for Tralee – we did however note that chemicals have been used in a number of areas. Hopefully this practice will have ceased next year. We looked for swift boxes around the town – are there any? These are easy to install and very important in our towns, which now have few locations for the swifts to nest. Contact [www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie) or [www.swiftconservation.org](http://www.swiftconservation.org) for advice on their installation and maintenance. The apple trees and native choill beag planted by the secondary school students will take a few years to mature but what a wonderful initiative of LEAF and An Taisce. The Tralee Bay Wetlands area is a wonderful haven to visit and we noted many of the 'Lakeside Residents' when we visited. The planting of 3,000 native trees by the Laharn and District residents' association with be of great benefit to the wildlife in years to come.

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

The installation of the water station in the town park was noted and its location not too far from the playground is admirable. We need more of these in our communities and hopefully you plan to install others around the town – perhaps in the new Island of Geese Park? The Circular Economy: Cup to Earth project is commendable – at present in a pilot stage. Keep us informed of this, especially when other businesses become involved. One good result of Covid is the number of Webinars that have been undertaken by community groups and you in Tralee also found these well supported when you featured waste management and composting. I looked to see if a recording of the Webinars were on your Facebook but didn't find them. Did you record them so that those who couldn't attend on the day could access them? Have you plans to continue with more educational Webinars? Other organisations also organised Seminars and Webinars on food waste, energy efficiency etc. which you list. Self-watering hanging baskets are now the norm in most large centres and we read that Kerry County Council purchased 12 for distribution

in Tralee. We must assume this is the beginning of a programme by the Council to increase this number. We looked for water butts as we walked around and saw some in private homes but none collecting the water from large buildings – is this something you could encourage? You could then use this water when watering the many planting troughs, beds etc in your care. We commend the students and teachers in the Secondary schools for the projects 30-day Challenge and Green is the new Black etc. It is wonderful when teachers are committed to sustainability as it plays a huge part in influencing programmes in schools – well done teachers. ‘The best way to predict your future is to create it’ Abraham Lincoln. Do you know the Green Flag status of the local schools – Primary and Secondary? You might add this to the information in your applications next year. ESB fast charge points for electric cars are becoming a normal sight in our towns and Tralee too has these in prominent locations.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

We love the support that community groups and volunteers give when a County Wide Clean Uptakes place and this year you also had support of your new Ukrainian community. Did any join the committee following this introduction to your work? The Neat Streets Town Takeover by students from all the secondary schools in January 2020 was an excellent idea. Could this become an annual event for the youth in Tralee? Having the Primary school children attend a Tralee MD meeting and talk about litter, based on their experience, is excellent – compliments to the teachers and students. We are delighted that MTU were involved in Tralee Clean-Up and their work to the river will result in a cleaner aquatic system. The liaison with the Tralee Lions Club and the weekly Sunday morning litter pickups is admirable. Your volunteers, CE workers and various other organisations are also involved in the litter pick-ups and when we visited Tralee was relatively tidy and litter free. The bring banks at Garvey’s carpark were emptied, clean and free from litter. The new litter/butt bins looked good – hopefully they will be well used by the smokers. Weed growth is a problem and while we talk about leaving nature for the pollinators there are situations where weed growth should be removed – edges of streets, footpaths and areas where we, the pedestrians, use. Have you thought about dividing Tralee into zones and asking the volunteers to keep an area litter and weed free? This has worked in other towns where a map of the town divided into zones and list of volunteers is placed on the community notice board. Others tend to join in when they see this. The tree guards in The Square have been used as bicycle racks (maybe that’s intended?) and paint is badly chipping. We noted stainless steel tree guards elsewhere and perhaps these paint free ones could be installed here too. Remember that signage is clutter and takes away from a streetscape or a beauty spot. We noted five signs on one pole, seven on another and eleven individual signs/names/notices on the building in the scenic Wetlands Area – beyond your control we know, but maybe pass on advice for them to remove the signage clutter. Signs can be painted on the ground and are equally successful.

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

There are a number of residential streets in Tralee which adds great value to the town as it ensures vibrancy when the businesses and shops have closed their doors for the day. As we meandered around, we noted family groups, window shoppers, dog walkers, runners etc all enjoying Tralee’s quiet roads and streets. Many properties were well presented – freshly painted and with planting tubs, window boxes or hanging baskets filled with colourful flowers and trailing plants. Your CE workers help to maintain the communal areas of your many housing estates, but individual resident associations do their part in planting and tidying. New footpaths have been installed in some areas which in time will blend in with existing paths. The area set aside for biodiversity by the Castle Countess residents is admirable. The beautifully maintained communal spaces with feature planting beds and trees at Spring Well Gardens is a credit to the residents. Natural stone walls (a haven for insect life) abound, behind which are many pollinator friendly gardens. We recommend that tree guards on the communal open spaces be examined and removed if they are no longer are needed.

Some individual properties have made great efforts in their pollinator friendly planting – the yellow house with the red door and red gates on Castlecountess was one we particularly admired. Have you suggested pollinator friendly planting for the residents’ associations? Very often individuals and indeed associations are not aware of the plants (and colours) which attract pollinators. A list on your Facebook page would be most helpful. Have you a Best Kept Garden and Best Kept Housing Area awards? A little competition is good and individuals and associations enjoy the challenge. Advise individuals and associations on planting for pollinators, environmental weed control methods and grant applications etc. We also recommend that you advise them to examine trees with stakes and ties – these might need attention.

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

Kerry County Council and Tralee Municipal District have been busy with the installation of new footpaths, some road improvements, stabilising the road subsurface along the canal near Blenerville, and cutting the grass verge on approach roads – all admirable. A town as big as Tralee with its large population and many many visitors needs this degree of maintenance and more. In the centre of the town some footpaths were badly cracked, while others had poor repairs carried out - all need attention. We note that areas in the town have been upgraded in recent years using quite expensive labour-intensive paving and we see this is also being carried out in the Island of Geese. Tarmacadam repairs have been carried out to the dark limestone in The Square which is unacceptable – expensive paving materials were used and this type of repair detracts from the area. In some residential areas edge break up entrance roads was noted which is also in urgent need of repair. Road marking were also badly worn along a number of the streets and residential areas visited. We must assume that a programme of improvements is ongoing – but truthfully in some areas it is quite urgent. We loved the Age Friendly and Disable Parking bays clearly marked. You have a number of pedestrian links between the streets and we loved the named archways into these e.g. Barrack Lane. Some of these laneways are a little dull and the walls could be used for murals based of local facts / history / people of note associated with Tralee. We noted the number of bike rack locations dotted around the town

and while none were being used, we have no doubt that they are at times. Cycle ways begin and end at random - is there any plan to have these cycleways linked? Or are alternative plans being considered for the cyclist? Carparking along Denny Street is on the inside of the cycleways which we found unusual – have there been any incidences of drivers opening their doors causing accidents?

**Concluding Remarks:**

It was a pleasure to visit Tralee and stroll around your street and lanes. We were delighted that you made reference to the Sustainable Development Goals in the various categories in your application. Please note comments regarding the Application Form and Map and correct for next year. Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2021 competition.