

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre:	Maynooth - Maigh Nuad	Ref:	377
County:	Kildare	Mark:	352
Category:	G	Date(s):	13/06/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	55	57
Streetscape & Public Places	80	44	45
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	51	52
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	38	40
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	24	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	39
TOTAL MARK	550	342	352

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Fáilte chuiig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2022. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hionrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo.

You have a large group of volunteers who are very active. They attend conferences and training throughout the year, and travel any distance, to help better understand this competition. It has changed and evolved a lot over the years as national policy has changed.

You work closely with relevant bodies and community groups. Maynooth University's Green Forum, and the Green Campus work closely with Maynooth TidyTowns and should be congratulated.

Your entry included your group's aims for the next five years. Perhaps you could organize some surveys, or erect a suggestion box, to garner ideas from the students, residents, and businesses, to help direct your work also?

We particularly liked your quote 'Small changes executed by each of us can improve the place we live in and our quality of life'. This is an ideal mantra for this competition.

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

We were excited to read in your 2022 entry form of your advanced plans to develop a heritage trail in Maynooth. It was your adjudicator's first time visiting and we were excited to see many of the famous buildings such as Saint Patrick's College and the entrance to Carton House. It is important to collect information from suitable sources, so we welcomed reading that you are working closely with the Heritage Officer of Kildare County Council and your local Heritage Group. With a surprisingly compact centre to Maynooth, it would be quite easy for visitors to negotiate a trail. Well done on testing your draft trail on students at the University.

We applaud your work to advance aesthetically pleasing shopfronts. Most premises looked well. The Town Library was freshly painted and looked very well. The 'Avenue Restaurant' caught the eye as it was nicely painted, but it was felt that the scale of advertising hoarding on the gable end of the building was not suitable for its strategic location. Interior shutters allow for window shopping even when premises are closed. This was noted in the windows at NCS Auto Parts, for example. The large, original windows and floor tiles at the entrance of this shop were admired. Maynooth Bookshop also has lovely window displays, and pleasant signage. But we were also not sure about neon lights on some traditional buildings.

Several different groups all helped to enhance the ICA hall. Elsewhere the new educational buildings, including Gaelscoil Raurí, were admired. The planting schemes at the school entrances were lovely.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

There are not many villages in Ireland with such a lovely presentation of mature trees as found in Maynooth. Well done on maintaining them and pruning the growth from the basis of the lime trees.

Planters have been carefully positioned to make a strong impact – such as the three-tiered planter at the top of Main Street, at the entrance to Carton House. It was lovely to see the ‘managed for wildlife’ signs, and bee-friendly mowing in the estate here.

Congratulations to Maynooth University – driving around the campus it was a pleasure to see how you are managing your grounds with wildlife in mind also. We also liked the landscaping in the car park at St Patrick’s which helped soften this area.

The OPW is also a partner for the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, so it was disheartening to read that they mowed their grounds very early in the season. Maybe this was one over enthusiastic, new staff member? The simple act of allowing dandelions to grow in e.g. April, allows much-needed food for pollinators, many of which are just emerging from hibernation. The long roots are good at aerating lawns also. Perhaps you can run a campaign to persuade all landowners, including homeowners, hotels, government bodies and schools to make Maynooth Ireland’s Pollinator haven and all pledge not to cut dandelions until May?

The volunteers of Maynooth TidyTowns have worked regularly to pick up litter remove graffiti, power wash street furniture, and hand-pick weeds as necessary. are striving not to use weedkiller. However, you are struggling with weed management at Courthouse square. Perhaps the County Council may be persuaded to manage weeds here using a handheld weed-burner for example? Or perhaps you could apply for a grant so one could be used by scheme workers?

We loved to see where flowers have been allowed to flourish on walls – such as the ivy-leaved toadflax.

Another big piece of work completed last summer was removal of the broken and dangerous timber fencing at the Meadowbrook Interchange – again well done on this hard work.

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

Well done on your extensive work over the last 12 months for this category of the competition. You are rounded applauded for completing your five-year Biodiversity Plan 2016-2021. The works at the Joan Slade Enhancement Project was one of the last key projects to be completed and tremendous effort was put into exposing the traditional stone walls here.

During National Tree week another 50 trees were planted in Greenfield estate as part of a plan to rejuvenate an area that has had problems with dumping.

Ten of you also took part in a citizen science project researching and recording insect populations. Why does this matter? It is estimated that pollinators provide a service worth nearly €900 million to the Irish economy. The actions of these ten volunteers and providing their findings to the National Biodiversity Data Centre (www.BiodiversityIreland.ie) is important to help monitor these declining species.

You are now drafting your second long-term Biodiversity Action Plan. This time you have a lot of different pressures. The town is attracting many new developments –homes, supermarkets, and installation of fibre optic cabling. This has disrupted some of your previous work but comes with opportunities. Thanks to the quick thinking of your volunteer Sean Lyons, 40 trees were saved and relocated. They had been planted five years previously but were being removed to make way for a footpath & cycleway. The builder helped the volunteers and residents replant them in Meadowbrook estate.

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

This category of the competition is about reducing your environmental impact and taking action to be more sustainable. You have rainwater collection tanks at both the Parish and the Larine Centres. You are considering where you can locate some more - ideally near raised beds or planters, as they will need more watering than traditional flower beds.

There were some stretches of cycle lanes, and we observed limited cycling facilities. We would recommend more cycle parking at sports facilities, for example. Have you any cycling facilities near the Greenway such as bike parking or permanently installed bike pumps?

You are also looking at ways in which you can reduce the electricity use through the ‘Maynooth Unplugged’ initiative of Maynooth University. Electric Ireland estimates that some appliances can use 20% of their electricity whilst in stand-by mode – so let’s pull the plug on this!

You are very good at salvaging and reusing equipment. At Parsons court the new flowerbeds consisted of ‘recycled’ stone, soil and even plants! This was one of many examples provided where you have recommissioned items elsewhere. Finally, we applaud your close links with construction companies building Maynooth. You have encouraged them to adopt greener ideas, such as repurposing felled trees for public seating.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhairéacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Thanks to all your hard-working litter pickers. Last Summer 35 Kilos alone of cans and bottles were picked up!

A transient student population has many positive impacts, and some negative, on any small community. It is good that you are working closely with the University and the Council and the Student's Union to develop a Litter Management Plan. As mentioned in your entry, cigarette butts were also noted as an issue on adjudication day. Does your litter plan target specific actions for these?

You raised awareness of the issue of dog fouling by running a poster competition with school children. Well done.

You have many regular volunteers picking up litter on discrete areas and you hope to expand on this as the number of residential homes increases. Your volunteers help the hard-working scheme personnel with litter picking during the weekend patrols around the Greenway.

The new litter bins were admired on the Main Street. Christmas lights were in situ in the Summer and the permanent erection of these on buildings is not attractive and should not be encouraged.

Driving into Maynooth along the Naas Road, on the LHS there was a large frame that would have held up large advertising hoarding. As there is nothing there now, can this be removed now please?

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

With many new residential estates being developed in Maynooth it's important to link with them where possible. There are other ways to involve new residents. Men's shed could provide kits of pre-cut bird houses for specific events. Families could then assemble their own bird boxes that could be erected in public green areas. Keep being creative!

We applaud your efforts to target those estates where there are quite high population of student residents. You are supporting Resident Associations and helping their reactivation where necessary. You could replicate the works at Larine Centre with helping groups make their own herb gardens? You could also encourage them to follow your example to scuffle at the base of walls to remove weeds, as opposed to using weed killer.

We visited Castle Dawson to appreciate the new raised beds. We also applaud the tremendous efforts of your volunteers at the garden of Saint John of God Residential Centre. Nearby Newtown Inn was busy, and the trees here provided nice shade.

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

Last autumn, over three weekends, up to 35 Maynooth TidyTowns volunteers helped rebuild floral beds and assisted with the delivery of topsoil by Aiden Burke to greatly enhance the Celbridge Road Junction with Straffan road. Thank you for providing the 'before and after' pictures here that helped demonstrate the extent of work involved.

With many new homes being built, you are recommended to apply for funding for a permeability survey of all the residential areas across Maynooth. This should identify better places and easier access to promote cycling, walking, electric scooters (there were lots) and the use of public transport.

Side lanes off Main Street were nicely maintained such as School Lane. The HSE Day Centre had a nice garden, and No 144 Dunboyne Road caught the eye too.

The opening of the Greenway last year has proved extremely popular. You are now considering how travellers can be enticed into the village from this new arrival point. It would be important to keep it natural, and easily maintained. You are also planning to enhance the overpass with Irish Rail. You are recommended to view the landscaping at Kill around their footbridge over the motorway. You can get some great ideas from this village, and from the free planting guidance available at www.pollinators.ie

Concluding Remarks:

As a first visit your adjudicator was impressed by the many heritage structures of Maynooth. Biodiversity and Sustainability projects feature strongly in your submission. Your entry form also stood out for the number of impressive projects that your volunteers have tackled over the last 12 months. You obviously have an abundance of energy. Well done on your great work and your submission and your participation in this competition for over 50 years.