

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Coon-Coan - An Cuan** Ref: **1111**
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **275**
Category: **A** Date(s): **03/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	35	36
Streetscape & Public Places	80	34	34
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	35	36
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	32	34
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	13	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	26	26
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	37	37
TOTAL MARK	550	268	275

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 Tidy Towns Competition Coon. This is my first visit to your beautiful village. Even for a small village you have good numbers on the committee and can rely on others in your community to assist. You also prove, that regardless of the size of a town or village, there are always others you can partner with and this is evident through involvement of local faith communities and the school. You also have an excellent grasp of external resources that can support your tidy towns work such as LAWPRO, County Council Heritage Officer, Birdwatch Ireland and many more. Leveraging this support is an excellent way to progress projects that may require specialist knowledge like the swift survey. Also, for a village this size to have a Biodiversity Action Plan is proof of how grassroots community action is needed to tackle the biodiversity crisis. But we'll discuss this more under the Biodiversity Section. Your map was clearly laid out and I had no difficulty finding any of the projects. Your submission also clearly laid out; projects marked as N or M and with photographs. Make sure to check out the SDG information on www.tidytowns.ie as well as application form for the SDG Special Award which both have great ideas about how to align your activities with the Goals.

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

The R.C Church is a major element in your streetscape and it is maintained to a high standard. Also your Community Hall, used for so many essential community activities and events, was well presented on the day of adjudication with the front lawn awash with wildflowers. Congratulations on taking action on the old Eir Building – had you approached them first asking their assistance? This is another excellent example of tidy towns activism that is so important in all our towns and villages? Also well done on positively engaging with local owners, like the old Creamery Building, it also looked well on adjudication day though given its central location may need more regular painting. The addition of swift nest boxes will be most welcome. The Public House was well presented, though the old pallet planters on the wall could do with removing or freshening up – Billy's Forecasting Stone was intriguing! The bilingual signage looked well and it is so important we keep the Irish language in aspects of our everyday life, from news to literature to anti-litter signage in a beautiful little village called An Cuan. The Garden of Remembrance is still in progress. Perhaps consider relocating the 'No Dumping' Sign as, in its current location, takes away from this lovely public place.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The landscaping was very nice and well maintained. It is evident you have put a lot of thought into your planting schemes, having planters that provide summer blooms but also early spring bulbs. These will be an important early

food source for pollinators and other wildlife but hard to know from your application which was new and maintained. I can see how your Biodiversity Action Plan has informed your planning in this regard; highlighting how some consideration in advance of planting can contribute to an aesthetically pleasing streetscape but also benefit wildlife. The planter by the entrance to the Basketball Court needs replanting as did one or two other small planters but all in all excellent work.

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

In this Section you are achieving great strides, informed by your Biodiversity Action Plan as well as wildlife expertise from the Council, Birdwatch Ireland and others. Having this Plan in place, like the 3-Year Plan we recommend for groups, will provide you with a clear roadmap to implementing positive biodiversity actions in your village for the next few years. I was particularly impressed with your schools best-biodiversity window box competition. Instilling this sense of eco-responsibility at such a young age will reap benefits for Coon and wider society so well done. Regarding your efforts to provide additional swift nesting sites, this is an excellent initiative as their nesting sites have declined considerably in recent years. Partnership initiatives such as this between Tidy Towns/Wildlife Agencies/Private Landowners is the way forward and an example of SDG15 – Life on Land and SDG17 – Partnership for the Goals. Similarly, the manner in which you are choosing your planting for Streetscapes will also have a benefit to pollinator and wildlife – ensuring food sources throughout the year. Whilst bird and bat boxes are nice ideas, I think given the lovely natural landscape around Coon that perhaps your resources (if limited) could go elsewhere, unless of course you have industrious volunteers who can build them. The native apple trees will also be a wonderful source of food for wildlife – and perhaps the odd local baker who might fuel some Tidy Towns volunteers with apple tarts? The GAA grounds had a wonderful young hedge and a great species diversity of flowers growing at the base, something that will change over time as the hedge matures. What I also love about Tidy Towns is how I constantly come across new ideas and ways of doing things – in this case, Hugelkultur – discussed next in Sustainability: Doing More with Less. The Biodiversity Area was wonderful and so serene. I went exploring and loved the sound of the river at the bottom. Your two wildlife signs were excellent – I really liked how you focused on visuals over excessive amounts of text, very engaging and informative and the planting in front was excellent, though the one opposite the public house needs replanting. Great to have the expertise of Lorcan Scott from the Heritage Council. Also, I loved how you used existing resources such as the sign from the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

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

Well done on the Water Butts. There is often the perception that water is an abundant resource, especially in Ireland where our climate would have you think it rains 365 days a year! Water and its subsequent treatment require resources and energy – by collecting it for landscaping you have taken a simple but highly effective sustainability action. Congratulations! With regard to your decision on hanging baskets – this was not taken lightly I imagine but this Adjudicator applauds you for your decisive action. You instead plant more sustainability and wildlife friendly – what's not to love. However, you now have empty brackets – give some thought as to what you could do here or consider having them removed. The Hugelkultur project is great, I see the benefits of it here and again congratulations on this initiative. Reducing material sent to landfill is so important, especially organic material as this leads to the creation of leachate and emissions. The 80 trees will continue to sequester carbon on an ongoing basis as well as providing important habitats and food for wildlife. This project also illustrates that we can help tackle one crisis (climate) whilst also tackling another (biodiversity).

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On the day of adjudication your village looked wonderful. The last Adjudicator was right, no weed to be seen – well except for the odd one at the fencing near the playground, though I doubt it will stay there long! Well done for acknowledging the great work of your TUS employee. In providing this experience to someone you are making it easier for them to return to the workforce. Coon are the Kings & Queens of simple yet highly effective interventions – I visited your recycling area and saw the fencing you installed, nicely done. I even peaked over to see if flytipping was present and was happy to see that there was not a rouge piece of litter in sight! The attention to detail in terms of the recycling area, posters, etc is proving effective as you have established a high threshold for what is acceptable in your village – keep it up. I only spotted one or two items of litter (in the playground carpark) but these were obviously fresh. The fencing at both entrances to the GAA grounds could be freshened up and the old bunting could be removed/replaced. Also, some of the lamp posts, such as in front of the substation, need a clean. The blue wall mounted benches at the entrance to the playground could do with a paint.

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

Castle Hill looked very well on the day of adjudication. However, I did note some use of herbicide to control kerb grass – it would be better and more effective to do this manually. The Rose Bush at the entrance was beautiful and well maintained to ensure the name was still visible. It was great to see the mature trees as well as younger specimens planted. Other homes were equally well presented, a reflection of how you are all working together as a community to make Coon a most attractive place to visit.

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

Great to see that hedges on your approach roads are maintained in line with the Wildlife Act. The approach roads, with their pollinator management, were awash with colour but with a purposeful mown strip closest the road. A win-win for all; less management for us humans and more food and habitat cover for wildlife. Simple yet highly effective. Some of the paths had bushes that were overhanging and could force people out onto the road. Some

minimal cutting here would be acceptable as this fresh growth is not nesting habitat. Some of your road signage was also obscured by excessive growth – perhaps worth raising with the local Area Engineer. The water pumps with their planting on the Athy Road looked wonderful as was the bright blue gate further down.

Concluding Remarks:

Congratulations on all your hard work. Coon is a most beautiful village to visit and it is clear all the community are playing their part - keep it up!