

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballinakill - Baile na Coille** Ref: **810**  
County: **Laois** Mark: **239**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **02/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	37	38
Streetscape & Public Places	80	34	36
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	27	27
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	20	20
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	17	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45	45
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	28	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	23	23
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>239</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.

Thank you very much for all the documents submitted, particularly the photographs, which as the saying says are worth a thousand words. Your action plan is well laid out, make sure all actions are achievable and during the winter months make sure you review it and set new goals and targets for 2023. Whilst your committee is small in number it is great to see you are involved with the wider community including the Development Association, Parish Council and GAA Club. I believe that participation and cooperation make for great communities. From what I saw on my adjudication visit you are excelling at this. I am also impressed that you are engaging with Statutory Agencies. Often the most important work for any TidyTowns groups is to advocate on the behalf of their communities, so continue this important work.

Thanks also for identifying the projects which relate to the Sustainable Development Goals. This has become increasingly important in this competition.

I would encourage you to re-engage with the young people of the Parish. I think it is important to do this outside the formal education system. It would be great, therefore, if you could re-engage with the local Youth Club on a project during 2023.

You are communicating effectively through a variety of means. I see from your Facebook Page you have an "Adopt a Place or Project" scheme. This is a great way to get people involved in keeping their own area clean and tidy, a good initiative. Let us know next year how many you people you got to participate.

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

Upon entering the village, I stopped at the GAA Club. Whist I didn't get inside it, I was impressed with the indoor area which I saw on the Club's Facebook page. Other GAA Clubs throughout the Country would be envious of such a fabulous facility. Well done to the Committee. From there down into the village, it's impossible not to notice the Twin Trees, a fantastic feature.

Your main street is very impressive. The planned layout gives a sense of historic importance due to the proximity of the Heywood Estate. I liked the street lighting columns and I agree they could do with a clean or a repainting, that is identified as a project for this year. The 1798 monument is impressive as is the nice tree planting, although you might at some stage consider removing the tree guards. The buildings in the village are all, bar one, nicely presented. This includes the Churches, Schools, Drury's, Duggan's and the houses around the Square to mention just a few. I do hope that Laois County Council can work with you on addressing the derelict building, through the Derelict Sites Act 1990. I am pleased the Council have acquired the building on Stanhope Street, let us know next year what their plans are with it. As you know dereliction is complicated and slow to progress but keep at it and celebrate your successes.

I noted your new Heritage Trail interpretive board, agus tá áthas orm go bhfuil Gaeilge ann comh maith. I visited the Ballinakill Amenity Park, whilst it is a work in progress, I was very impressed. How fantastic it is to have an outdoor swimming pool in your community, not something you see everyday in Ireland. I was sorry I hadn't taken my swimming shorts! Such an amazing achievement for the community to return this to use, well done. The play park has nice equipment and I was happy to see families enjoying it on the day I visited. I noted your hedge planting, once established this will be a lovely addition.

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

I am glad to hear that you are having a landscape plan professionally developed. This will be of great benefit to your village. Please ensure that you integrate this plan into your strategic plan. The picnic seating area with planters at the village pump was, I thought, a nice addition. I thought it would be nice to plant some pollinator friendly plant species at the blue painted pump in the village. This would add some extra colour and would be similar to what you have achieved at St. Brigid's Drive.

The school and both Church Grounds are nicely kept as was the local graveyard, well done to those involved with this.

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

The primary objective of your planned landscape plan should be to promote biodiversity. I look forward to seeing an increase in your marks in the category as you strive to implement this plan. To date you have embarked on promoting biodiversity by planting hedgerows, a biodiversity area on the Castlecomer Road and the planting at the Amenity area, both these projects I have previously mentioned in this report.

You have a great amenity with the lake in the village, use this to your advantage in this category.

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

The air pump and solar panel at the swimming pool, are the standout projects for you in this category. It would be good to know, next year, if the data is available, how much Carbon this system has saved in comparison to a fossil fuel equivalent. I would also recommend, as did last year's adjudicator, to install a water bottle filling station and a bike rack at the amenity area if there is funding available to do so.

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

Overall Ballinakill was neat and tidy on the day I visited. Unfortunately, some rubbish had been left at the bottle bank. The clothes banks were full and rather than coming back another day, someone just left 3 or 4 bags on the ground at the bank. There are no words to describe how frustrating this is for everyone. It is heartening to hear you collected less litter this year. Perhaps you have removed a lot of historic or long lie litter and now it is just about maintenance. Keep up this good work, it still remains to be one of the most important activities of Tidy Towns.

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

All 4 estates were well presented on the day I visited. Please thank the residents on my behalf for making the effort to maintain their areas to such a high standard. I admired all the residential houses in the village, it would be a nice place to live. Hopefully you can encourage more owners to participate in the streetscape improvement schemes.

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

The Town Trees is an outstanding feature in this category, very unique. It is good to see you developing projects in this category such as the bulb and tree planting. Approach roads are a first impression for any visitor approaching the village, so it is encouraging to see you are not overlooking this category.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It was a pleasure to visit Ballinakill for the first time. There is great progress being made to improve facilities and amenities in the village, making it a great place to live. I have no doubt that if I get the opportunity to return again, these projects will have reached fruition, go dtí sin, gach rath oraibh.