

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Carrick-on-Shannon - Cora Droma Rúisc</b>	Ref: <b>543</b>
County: <b>Leitrim</b>	Mark: <b>356</b>
Category: <b>D</b>	Date(s): <b>22/06/2022</b> <b>29/07/2022</b>

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2021</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	53
Streetscape & Public Places	80	50	52
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	49	49
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	35	38
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	25	27
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61	63
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	33	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	41	41
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>356</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 oraibh. Thanks for the updated map and good to see you have included a 5-Year Tidy Towns Plan. It is apparent that you have a strong community spirit in Carrick-on-Shannon which has spurred on projects in the town. It is also impressive that you have been entering the competition for 52 years now. A committee of 20, along with 35 volunteers are healthy figures, but it seems necessary for the upkeep of a town the size of Carrick-on-Shannon, which has many ongoing initiatives. It is great that you keep close contact with the Chamber of Commerce in the town, as well as Leitrim County Council, Waterways Ireland and the various residents' associations, including Breffni Resource Centre. There seems to be a wide range of communication methods used to maintain contact with the various age groups and backgrounds, not only through social media but also the more traditional routes like the parish news bulletin and local newspapers. It is very positive to see that young people from local schools and clubs are encouraged to take part in several of your projects and campaigns. I was impressed with the Poetry Towns project and Carrick Camino, bringing in the arts, culture and encouraging new activities. Your various appeals for both locals in need and immigrants is heartening to see. Your 'Dog Poo' float was certainly creative and I'm sure raised awareness of the serious issue of dog fouling in the town. I am particularly impressed with your reusable Coffee Cup Campaign, especially as takeaway coffee has now become so mainstream.

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

The Public Realm project by Leitrim Co Co has created beautiful new streetscapes in Carrick-on-Shannon town centre, through Main Street to George's Quay. I was very impressed with the new widened street design, complete with granite/limestone paving, trees, street furniture and bike stands. I noted the striking turquoise pavers throughout the new footpath. Many of the shopfronts on Main Street, into George's Quay and Bridge Street are beautifully kept and several look freshly painted under the streetscape enhancement scheme. The mural, statue and bench at Church Lane are pleasant focal points and both churches are well kept. One or two shop fronts do not fit in well to the streetscape in regard to either signage type or disuse for some time. The refurbishment of the old Georgian houses at George's Quay is wonderful and enhances this historical part of town. Seoirse Terrace has been greatly improved by the new works too. The Market Yard is a wonderful space for locals and visitors. The central sculpture may need some mending. The old lampposts are lovely, with pretty hanging baskets, but the posts may benefit from some maintenance soon. The 'Market Yard Centre' signage tied to the original signage looks quite temporary and may need replacing. It is good to see 'Armstrong's' building being refurbished. The new boardwalk is fantastic, joining up nicely with the newly tarred surface leading from the County Council offices and George's Quay. The new car park behind Main Street is a great job and I understand it has really transformed what was a formerly

derelict area. The planting of shrubs/trees is good to see here as it breaks up the tarmac monotony and introduces space for wildlife. Some areas may still need work, e.g. the small old derelict building with Red Valerian growing from it at the end of the alleyway, along with a large patch of abandoned ground to the rear of the Main Street buildings. A pile of construction waste was noted across the fence into the unused ground next to the car park. The new paintwork at 'Siopa an Phobail' is a good, vibrant colour and the signage as Gaeilge is a nice touch. In terms of promotional signage, perhaps there is a little too much signage on the footpath in certain areas, e.g. at the Gala shop. I loved the colourful little paintings on the electrical junction boxes dotted around the town depicting eco-friendly images and messaging. These add interest and character, as well as prompting people to think and reflect.

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

The newly installed Town Park trellises enhance the park and many of the flowers planted at their bases were pollinator friendly, which is great. Some of the flowerbeds in the park looked quite dry on my visit, particularly near the George's Quay entrance, perhaps due to the previous day's hot weather. The bed along the tennis court looked quite weed-heavy with species like Silverweed, Nettles and Dandelion overtaking, with Laurel and Box hedge possibly hidden underneath. The flowerbeds and seating at the bus stop looked very pleasant, but quite dry on my visit. The flowerbeds near Cryan's and The Landmark hotels are lovely and colourful, but perhaps more pollinator-friendly perennial species could be planted here. The picnic bench unveiled in honour of the late Fr Devaney at Carrick View is a nice feature and memorial. The trees recently planted throughout the town and along the footpaths and roadsides are a great addition to the overall aesthetic and good for biodiversity. However, some did look a bit unhealthy, perhaps due to water-stress or lack of nutrients. I am glad to see an audit of the street trees is in your 5-Year Plan, which should greatly help with this issue. The Cortober Riverside is generally a well-maintained public space leading into Carrick-on-Shannon. It was great to see signs on local species here, including the Swift. The flowerbeds may have needed some watering and weeding in places. It is exciting to see that natural play areas along the Linear Park are among the key actions of your 5-Year Plan. The Linear Park itself is a wonderful amenity for the town of Carrick-on-Shannon, for both locals and visitors and seems to be much-loved and well-used. As mentioned previously, the areas for biodiversity are wonderful, not only creating ecological habitats but also areas of colour and vibrancy. It is also well maintained overall.

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

The number of projects listed in your application and 5-Year Plan is impressive. In the new car park behind Main Street it is great to see native trees like Rowans and Birches. There were also Field Maples and Viburnums, which are non-native, but still beneficial for pollinators and birds. Great to see the verges were not overcut on my visit also. Some of the planting here did look a little dry, though it was acknowledged that the previous days had been quite hot. While the traditional summer planting outside the Chamber of Commerce, shops and pubs is attractive (with e.g. Begonias, Petunias and Marigolds), I was especially delighted to see several efforts to plant pollinator friendly flowers and shrubs throughout the town. It is good to see that awareness-raising for the wet woodlands along the riverside is in your 5-Year plan. I admired the areas for biodiversity along Riverside Park, including the 'low-mow' strips, pollinator planting and 'Bird Sanctuary'. It is obvious from the little artworks dotted around that children are encouraged to get involved in nature here. The Willow features, e.g. the tunnel, look splendid. Some of the flowers here looked a bit parched due to the recent hot weather on my visit. Also, be mindful of the existence of Winter Heliotrope near the boardwalk and at the edge of the park towards the roundabout, as it is an invasive plant and can spread. I am glad to hear that native Bluebells have been planted this year which I'm sure look wonderful in the spring. I'm delighted that you are rejecting pesticides and have taken the initiative to purchase an alternative weedkilling machine via the Co Co. Some grass margins are kept longer in places, however the approach road verges in from the Shannon Roundabout were mostly tightly mown on my visit. The Liquid Amber trees planted along the N4 approach will help to create an ecological corridor. The new pollinator planting at the train station is gorgeous. I am thrilled to hear about the Swift projects happening in Carrick-on-Shannon. I did witness several Swifts flying around the town at dusk! It is great to see the support you are giving to Breffni FRC in terms of the community garden, etc. and the 'Sow and Share' Library is a fantastic idea. The Bug Hotel and AIPP-managed strip are also really positive steps from the Courthouse. To track your overall biodiversity year to year, it might be a good idea to carry out FIT (Flower-Insect Timed Counts), suggested by the National Biodiversity Data Centre, as described on the biodiversityireland.ie website.

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

Like most towns in Ireland, Carrick-on-Shannon is very busy with through-traffic. I was delighted to see several bike stands throughout the town. I do see that a review of Bike Lane markings is in your 5-Year Plan, which is great, as well as a push for better cycling facilities, including a dedicated bike lane to the railway station, which would be fantastic! There is a good relationship with Letirim Co Co, so who knows what might happen in the near future. The bus stops would benefit from better timetables and information displayed for those needing or wishing to take the bus. I was delighted to see the spaces for outdoor dining along the streets, created under the Public Realm Improvements Scheme. Initiatives like this lead to more 'liveable' and attractive town centres, enticing people to come and live and work in urban areas. It is a step in the right direction in terms of reducing the prominence of the car in town centres. How lucky your town is to see the arrival of the 'Honestly' Farm Kitchen and shop. Not only is the food delicious (I stopped by for dinner!), but it is sustainable and locally sourced – and all within a 'fast food' setting! I am delighted to hear that 85% of the pavers in the new footpath paving are made of suitable recycled glass. The little community library seems to be well-maintained and used, encouraging sharing of goods and reuse. As stated earlier, I was very impressed with your reusable coffee cup campaign and I hope you can keep this great initiative going. It is great to see the Co Co has established a new bottle bank area at Park Lane, which I'm sure will

encourage better recycling behaviour and waste segregation in the town. The installation of water refill stations is an excellent addition and they are quite discreet within the streetscape. Perhaps a small sign or icon at these stations would make it clearer that these are water refill stations, especially for visitors unfamiliar with the town. It is also great to see that sustainable, local produce is sold in the Market Yard every week, e.g. local flowers by 'Leitrim Flowers'.

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

Overall, I noted that Carrick-on-Shannon is kept very tidy throughout. No doubt this is due to the hard work of Tidy Towns volunteers, TÚS workers, local businesses and Leitrim Co Co. Tidy Towns volunteers were seen out weeding and cleaning up the Attifinlay Roundabout at Tesco on a Tuesday evening, which is a weekly practice as per your application. The Public Realm works would definitely have helped to reduce clutter in the form of overhead cabling, which can look untidy. The new solar bins were noted throughout the town and blend in well with their surroundings. It is good to hear that rubbish is segregated during litter pick-ups and there seems to be a great community effort, including young and old. Your campaign to address the serious issue of dog fouling is very positive and your spray painting and St Patricks' Day float in particular, seems to have made an impact on the Co Co and local people! The DNA testing is a new one for me and I would be very interested in seeing how this progresses. I noticed there are signs up regarding the €150 fine around the town and vicinity.

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

It is clear from your application that a lot of effort goes into working with local resident's associations to improve the housing estates in and around Carrick-on-Shannon. Most of the estates visited were tidy and well presented, e.g. Shannon Court in the town and Shannon Lodge off the Dublin Road. The 'Estates Tidy Up Project' is a good idea and shows that the Tidy Towns is supporting the various housing estates in their clean-ups. As stated previously, the townhouses along St George's Quay now look fabulous, including the two refurbished Georgian houses and Hatley Manor. It would be great to display some information on these historical buildings, but perhaps the Heritage Walking Tour and the development of an app (as stated in your 5-Year Plan) will help with this. St Mary's Close at the top of Church Lane looked very tidy and well looked after. Summerhill is presented quite well and the surfaces look like they have been upgraded, but the street has not yet fully benefitted from the public realm scheme and the ESB building here looks quite rundown. The new memorial bench at Carrick View is a lovely addition. There was a pile of construction waste noted beside the apartments here. The rose bed is lovely and great to see some trees planted in recent years on the green, however some may need a little TLC as they looked potentially water stressed. Much work seems to have been put into the Breffni Heights area, especially at Breffni FRC. Lis Cara estate has undergone improvement this year according to your application, which is good to hear. Perhaps in future you can clarify what you mean by 'unwanted trees' being felled here. A patch of pollinator friendly flowers was noted at the far end of the estate, which is positive, however, there were burnt areas at the base of the Birch trees on the green, suggesting weedkiller is being used. Perhaps the 'Estate Champions' under the Key Projects of your 5-Year Plan will help to enhance this area. It is good to see some of the retail premises at Hartley Business Park occupied and perhaps in time more of this retail park will be utilised which will improve its overall look and character. The houses and retail spaces along the Leitrim Road into Main Street are mostly very tidy, with some 'For Sale' signs up. When they are purchased, perhaps it will breathe new life into this street. The Community Services centre looks a little tired and would benefit from some enhancement. Some of the older buildings have been painted and murals added in recent years, which has helped keep dereliction at bay. This will need to be maintained until the street is eventually more occupied.

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

The new road surfaces and footpaths have really enhanced the aesthetic of the streets and roads on the way into Carrick-on-Shannon, from the Dublin Road, into Main Street and into George's Quay. The whole look is now sleek and modernised, yet in-keeping with the overall historical aspects of the town. It is obvious that much work, including planting and weeding is being carried out on the main roundabouts into town, e.g. the Tesco/Attifinlay Roundabout and Shannon Roundabout. The landscaping at the new Honestly Farm Kitchen & Shop breaks up the monotony of hard surfaces in the retail park. It is promising that Liquid Amber trees have been planted along the N4 approach road, which will enhance this stretch, as highlighted in your 5-Year Plan. Overall, the grass verges are well maintained on approach to the town and some are managed for pollinators, which is good to see. The newly tarred road and footpath are pleasant on the way to the new boardwalk at George's Quay. The Leitrim Road into Carrick-on-Shannon was relatively tidy and litter-free, however, the fencing along the roadside does need to be replaced, along with suitable native tree planting, etc. It is good to see this is a key project of your 5-Year Plan. It is also not as apparent on the Leitrim Road, as with the other approach roads, that you are entering a vibrant, pollinator-friendly town here, due perhaps to a lack of appealing welcome signage.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

I was very impressed with my visit to Carrick-on-Shannon. It is a very pretty town with a beautiful riverside, attractive centre and some lovely historic buildings I didn't expect to see. Much effort has been put into enhancing your town, especially in the areas of Streetscape & Public Places, Nature & Biodiversity and Sustainability. You also seem to have a great community spirit. I wish you every success and cannot wait to return in future!

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

We were delighted to return to Carrick and see the improvements across all eight adjudication categories of the competition including biodiversity and sustainability. You have submitted a long-term plan which helps to focus your

efforts. Your entry stood out for its community spirit and the number of ways in which the community has worked together on various projects and activities. The St Patricks parade theme regarding dog waste made us smile! You are asked to consider the arrival points into Carrick for all traffic including the train station, the harbour areas, and approach roads. Those arriving by boat have wonderful views and information of the area. The tourist office has displays about your keep cups and flowers looked great around the harbour. Likewise the pollinator-friendly flowers at the roundabouts and the pedestrian boardwalk over the Shannon bridge make a good first impression. The one area where we felt needed some work is the train station. The platform does have nice floral displays. But we were disappointed for the lack of cycle parking at a time when we are to promote sustainable transport options. Provision of cycle lockers, and a covered cycle park should be provided. Those walking into Carrick will see the rusty metal railings under the train line which need to be enhanced. Next door the Eir buildings had a surprising large amount of rubbish visible inside the railings and the whole place had a look of neglect.

To facilitate cars not blocking the pavement at the harbour maybe some bollards can be installed to prevent vehicles reversing too near buildings. We loved the messages on the utility boxes around Carrick – other messages encouraged you to help yourself at the mini library, or to join the volunteers at their regular meeting place. The bottle-top art at the harbour was also admired. Landscaping at the biodiversity garden by the Shannon, and in the park and in front of the Dock was lovely. The planters at the dock were eye catching and the selection of bee-friendly vegetables and flowers was lovely. New landscaping on main streets was of a high quality and a lot of negotiation and debate took you to this place. Maybe a long-term plan would be to enhance the heritage railings at the tennis courts.

As always – The Bush Hotel had a fantastic garden display - every time we visit, we see something different. Toppers and The Oarsman looked well, and we were delighted to see previous derelict sites now being refurbished such as Armstrong's. When premises were closed the on-street dining facilities on Bridge Street looked a little bare – maybe some flowers or some brightly coloured paint could help here?

As always it was a delight to explore Carrick and on adjudication day many visitors were doing the same as us. Keep up the good work.