

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castleconnell - Caisleán O gConaing** Ref: **1045**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **346**
Category: **C** Date(s): **12/06/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	46	48
Streetscape & Public Places	80	44	46
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	44	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	35	36
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	23	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	66	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	38	39
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	40
TOTAL MARK	550	335	346

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. Thank you for your entry and for your commitment to your place. Keep up the great work.

The application form did not state the population but we have found a sum of 2,107 on the internet from the 2016 Census which means you are in category C as you have indicated. We liked the way you mentioned that the 9 committee members have 96 years' experience – well done. There are 10 volunteers who help when needed and you also avail of expertise as and when required. Well done for working away on your projects during the Covid pandemic and finding time to honour Olympic hurdler, Sarah Lavin and the two Morrissey brothers for playing in the All-Ireland Hurling Final of 2021. Other activities are noted. The 2022 calendar was an exciting project which attracted huge community interest – and a sponsor. We also note the other supports and events listed in your application. The list of supporting agencies and sponsors is impressive.

Facebook is your primary means of communication with almost 1,700 followers, you have a school's liaison officer and are developing bee's hotels and distributing sunflower seed to children. Thank you for telling us about the 14 stop nature trail with narratives by Éanna Ni Lamhna and artwork by Vincent Warfield and also for your summary of activities since 2008. Your map and legend has a lot of information displayed, but it takes quite some time to study and become familiar with each item. Please place the legend on the map as it would save considerable time in referencing over and back two documents, especially now that they are digitised. Finally, we commend you for highlighting sections of the application form by bullet point and bold formatting – which makes it easier to read. We would greatly appreciate reducing the size of your application in future by providing less information on projects.

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

Many thanks for responding to some of the comments from last year's adjudicator. It is much appreciated that you clarified some matters and updated us on others. Well done on painting the community hall. It is good that Worrall's Inn has been restored after the 2014 fire and we note your concerns about the future use of the building and that you are hopeful that Culhane's Pub will be restored soon. Well done for the improvements on the Mick Mackey statue on Castle Street. It is in a lovely setting with plenty of trees and shrubs on both sides. Private houses on the opposite side of the street are well-maintained. At the bottom of the street, the shopping centre and car park is completed to a high standard. However, there is still space for planting small trees in the concrete islands to help soften the impact of cars. Trees are a better solution compared with the use of plant containers. We admired the limestone surround at the information panel, and the repairs done to the panel at World's End. We have noted the improvements made to the stone wall at the ferry car park.

The National School looks well, and we were pleased to see so many trees growing in the front garden and the Green Flag flying. P.J. Guerin's building was very colourful and has climbing plants on one wall. The pump on the corner of Main Street is well painted and is surrounded by flowers. However, we feel that the railing that surrounds this feature takes from its appearance – is it necessary?

All Saint's Church, Stradbally and the adjacent house are a delightful complex that is enhanced by the stone wall boundary and existing mature trees. The old ER VII post box could do with some attention. Alongside these buildings is a large cemetery in two parts, one of which closer to the church appears to be older.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Under the heading of formal and informal planted areas, you have listed several actions, including pollinator friendly plants such as lavender, cornflower and many more that you are now using for floral decoration in the village. The addition of 4 lime trees planted on the square is noted and the 5 alder trees at the boat slip. Watch out for sycamore seedlings which are growing as weeds amongst shrub planting. It is best to cut them at the base.

There is a triangular green space between St Flannan's Terrace and Belmont Road. It appears that ash dieback has essentially killed the ash which should be removed before the trees become dangerous. The other trees make good impact, so we suggest that new tree planting be done to replace them in future years. To ensure longevity, we suggest that oak trees be planted as they can last for more than 1,000 years.

We were very impressed with the white and pink flowers on alpine plants growing on the top of the stone wall at the bottom of Castle Street. It is an excellent display. Hanging baskets on poles were also well done.

We admired the limestone kerbs placed around the information sign on nature and wildlife in the green space beside the river. It is a job well done and the rest of this space looks well.

St Joseph's Cemetery is relatively new as evidenced by the small number of graves present there. It would be nice to see some landscape treatment such as trees and shrubs planted there – while there is still space, before all the grave sites are filled. Cemeteries can function as amenity areas or parks if landscape treatment is considered at the design stage. Dead weeds in the hard surface areas indicate that weedkiller is being used. If they were removed, the place would look better. The concrete wall could be softened by use of climbing plants. Otherwise, the cemetery is well-maintained.

It was good to see the bronze medal award signage. We noted the signs about nature which also looked well.

Some birch trees were badly pruned – perhaps because of overhead cables. Arboriculturists should be engaged to do such pruning as they are trained to maintain a tree's shape. Some excellent planting schemes using perennial plants were admired on the outskirts of the village.

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

Under this heading, you have mentioned the Water Heritage Day activities with Ruairí Ó Conchúir, recording butterfly data, solitary bees and bee hotels. The Environmental DNA testing on 3 feeder streams into the lower Shannon at Castleconnell was an interesting project. We note that because the water quality is not good in the Ferry Stream, you will now focus your activities in the Hermitage Stream. We admired the colourful perennial planting on the sides of earth banks in Castleconnell. We liked the sign at the river informing people about what foods are suitable for wild birds. The modern playground is well used and is in good condition.

For more ideas on suitable projects under this criterion, we suggest you consult the handbook on this link. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Nature-and-Biodiversity-in-your-locality.pdf>

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

Well done on getting a water carrier for areas on the outskirts of the village. We note your intervention in doing away with disposable cups for getting the 5K and the 10K runs to be plastic free. The school successfully worked on their latest Green Flag on the theme of Global Citizenship & Energy which was hoisted on May 22nd. We admired the grounds of the school which has several trees. We especially liked the columnar Italian Cypress trees. You have participated on the energy reduction training course from which no doubt you have plenty of new ideas for the future. For more ideas on sustainability, we suggest you consult the handbook on this link.

<https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Sustainability-Doing-More-with-less.pdf>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Congratulations on your 'weeds on Wednesdays' project. We can see from the pictures that it was well supported. It is thanks to your efforts and that of similar committees and volunteers throughout Ireland that Ireland is looking much better.

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

There are several residential estates in Castleconnell. Some of those we visited include Inis Cluain – a small estate where the houses are well-maintained and we noted trees are growing on the open space. Castle Court is another small estate which was clean and tidy with some gardens landscaped. In Scanlon Park there were two open spaces. It was here that we noted an old tractor tyre which someone may intend using for a flower bed. The old tyre looks untidy and we do not advise that it be used for planting – it would best be removed as soon as possible. Breach na Sionne is a new residential scheme which has some planting. We liked the wildflowers at the entrance.

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

Daly's Cross at the R445 appears to be a main entrance to Castleconnell and we note you planted low growing

perennials in the median. The plants looked well but the bed needed attention at the time of our visit. The welcome sign is well done in limestone but is almost invisible. Perhaps if the letters were painted white it would be easier to see. Shouldn't it be on the other side of the road where people can see it as they turn into the road. A little north of the cross is a feature with plants in raised boxes, enclosing a seat. Heraldic crests of various groups are positioned in the hard surface. This feature is well done, but one wonders why it is here alongside a busy road. It would seem more appropriate for an open space closer to the town centre where it would more likely be used by people walking in the area. This grass strip is more suited for a simple landscape treatment that would enhance the Castleconnell approach. We suggest climbing plants such as ivy to be planted against the concrete block wall to soften its appearance, a line of trees of the one species, such as lime, maple or birch to highlight the entrance to Castleconnell and instead of cutting all the grass, just mow the edge and allow wildflowers to establish on the rest of the site. The rest of this junction is unfortunately untidy because of the unoccupied building.

Concluding Remarks:

You have a beautiful village, and it is great to see such a proud and active community doing its best to have Castleconnell looking its best. Well done on your many efforts to improve your environment. We hope this report is helpful in your endeavours and look forward to receiving your application in 2023.