

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Galbally - An Gallbhaile** Ref: **452**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **351**
Category: **B** Date(s): **11/06/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	44	45
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	43	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	42	44
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	27	29
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	40
TOTAL MARK	550	341	351

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.

We note your population of 257 has a Tidy Towns committee of 18 members and a further 100 volunteers assist when needed. Your regular meetings have been online during the pandemic, and you are well supported all local clubs, associations and community groups. You make new residents welcome and have recently had refugees from Ukraine. You have listed several groups which help you, including the JP McManus Foundation, Ballyhoura, Limerick County Council, PRL Group, and many more including FAS. You have a very good communication system.

The National school benefits from your participation with them on the Green Schools plans and we note the Junior Tidy Towns initiative. Thanks for the list of events which were organised by Limerick City and County Council. The one project for our attention is the work involved with the county councils which border Galbally which achieved

- Improved road surfaces in the village area and approach roads.
- Road markings upgrade to reduce the risk of accidents.
- Traffic management infrastructure to reduce the speed of vehicular traffic through our village.

Many thanks for responding to the adjudicator's comment from 2021. It is great to see that such comments are taken into consideration. A small tip – please leave the page formatting in portrait because switching over and back to landscape interrupts the flow of reading your application.

Many thanks for the map of the area. However, we found it a little confusing because of all the numbers which are not in any order and very crowded. May we suggest that you place a legend on the page with project titles and try to have the numbers in a sequence. Finally, a 43 page application with links to 12 other documents/reports on your website is more information than we need to evaluate Galbally. We prefer to have more time to spend in the town.

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

In our view, the most important part of Galbally is the square – which we note has had recent road surface improvements. Many towns would be very pleased to have a square as large as yours. However, we feel that the square has potential to be a major feature of the town, instead of being used as a through road. The R662 goes diagonally through the square and breaks up the square into two small triangular space, most of which is used for parking. In our view, this encourages traffic flow at speeds which are too fast – despite speed limits. If the square was redesigned to include a green space to include the IRA monument, it could then be a feature of the town that would add significant enhancement instead of it appearing like an obstacle to parking of vehicles. A proposal would

entail removing the diagonal R662 and instead, using the short R663 section which comes straight to a T junction. The revised layout for the green space could include tree planting that would add further enhancement – compared with the unsatisfactory impact of the existing trees growing around the square at present.

We note you are making several efforts to have some houses in the square improved and we commend the efforts of owners who have done good work in that regard. Other information in your application under this heading will be discussed under different criteria – for example signage. The murals on the side of a farm/industrial building caught our attention – it is a great way of stimulating interest in the community. The church looks well and is well framed with a line of mature trees.

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. Trees are the most important element in the landscape and the square is the most important place where they should be looking their best. Unfortunately, the specimens there are very poor quality, and most have been badly pruned. Instead of looking well and enhancing the buildings they take from them – some are just tree stems with a small mop head of leaves. Compare their appearance with the trees growing in the fields behind the houses. We suggest that all of these trees should be removed, and a new planting scheme devised as part of a new layout for the square. Since such a scheme will be the responsibility of Limerick County Council, it would be advisable to initiate discussions with them as soon as possible. We admired the specimens of birch trees in the school garden but suggest that the antirrhinum growing on what was once a plant container should be given a better home.

Well done on producing your own plants locally and for the continual renewal of flower beds – they looked very well. The men's shed did a fine job on making window boxes and we liked the idea of planting commemorative trees in the GAA grounds.

We visited the graveyard and admired the stone wall boundary. It was great to see large mature beech trees inside the boundary wall of the cemetery. The graves are maintained by families of the deceased and in general, they look well. The grass is well-maintained. The golden form of Irish yew trees is appealing. The old church ruin is an important feature, and we note that some ivy growth is dead and needs to be removed. If not already done so, we suggest you seek professional advice on how to preserve the ruin and prevent the ivy from damaging its structure. The GAA and Rugby grounds are extensive and form important green spaces in your community. We advise that more tree planting be considered to enhance these areas without impacting on the sports activities. A very fine children's playground is constructed near the eastern boundary.

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

The Ecology Park is a wonderful idea and we read through the 2017 report by Geraldine Hayes. In our view the most important matter is access. The road is narrow and curved with no place to stop or park (if coming by car). The sign at the entrance is hard to see. We suggest that you explore a safe access and guide people to it. Well done on the curlew nesting areas project done with Birdwatch Ireland. Also, your attention to invasive species of plants and the feral cats is noted. Collecting seed from native trees, especially the oak in your area is very rewarding. The 3-year wildlife diversity plan will be a big help for environmental education, especially within the school and you are paying attention to water quality and habitat protection and control of aquatic vegetation.

Discontinuing the use of herbicides was a big challenge for you and one which meant more work in tackling weeds. Participating in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan makes sense, and we note your success in persuading landowners to refrain from mowing grass to encourage wildflowers to establish. You have provided useful information on your work on protecting habitats for birds, bats and insects. Participation in National Tree Week, using your locally grown saplings is to be commended as is the involvement with biodiversity week. The Galbally Scenic Calendar project is a great idea for engaging with the community and its diaspora. We were pleased to see plenty of vegetation growing alongside the stream.

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

From your application, we can see that you are actively involved in several relevant projects under this heading. The green initiatives in the local school, include collecting old batteries, promoting re-usable drink container, growing food in the school garden, promoting recycling centres and supporting biodiversity week are just some items on your list. We have also noted the recycling in local shops initiative which deals with cardboard, batteries, plastic and paper bags. Egg cartons and glass jars. Your work on building an awareness of the need for water conservation in the community is noted as are the existence of rainwater collection tanks. You are availing of community workshops to foster environmental awareness.

Other initiatives mentioned include the Bring Your Own Milk Container and Bring Your Own Coffee Cup (BYOCC) initiatives. Galbally Primary School's Recycling Event & Bird/Bat Boxes from Recycled Materials and used book selling. The vegetable gardens in the school grounds were noted.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhairacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Under this criterion you have conducted surveys arising from which you are focussing on three sites that present most issues. Actions include the installation of cigarette butt collectors outside premises. About 100 volunteers assisted with the annual 'Team Limerick Clean-up'. In May you had the annual clean-up and you have a campaign advising people on how to dispose of their waste. Well done on paying attention to cleaning signs and removing fly posters, especially in the square and you are working with retailers to minimize the quantity of goods placed on

footpaths. Well done on all these initiatives.

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

Essentially, the entire village is a residential area and is maintained by your volunteers assisted by the CE workers as well as some residents. Marian Terrace is a scheme of single storey houses with small gardens attached and larger gardens across the road. Well done to the residents for taking care of their property. On the entrance road we noted the interesting stone wall which includes built in seats. That style of seating is attractive and seldom seen in other parts of Ireland. Many private properties in Galbally look well – we admired one garden with two large monkey puzzle trees. The trees in front of Aherlow View are so much damaged that they should be replaced.

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

Stone walls such as the one opposite the church are very important features to retain in your landscape. A triangular green space at the junction of the Limerick Road and the Mitchelstown Road has a few nice trees but the impact is lessened by too many unofficial signs. It is not clear where Galbally starts and ends. At the junction of Mandeville Park and where the R663 turns is the 13th century Moor Abbey – a significant national memorial around which there are plenty of signs, including one in Irish welcoming people to Galbally. There is clutter in terms of signage and poles, and many are dirty and adjacent farm gates need painting. It would seem to this adjudicator that the precinct of this monument would best be seen as part of Galbally. It would then become an important part of your Streetscape and Public Spaces criterion, as well as Green Spaces and Landscaping and of course it is then on your Approach Roads criterion. The Ballyhoura Cycle Routes information sign and the Beara-Breifne Way signs are of a very good standard, although we were surprised that they were not bilingual. Beside the latter is a small white sign with information on the Galtee Mountains. Unfortunately, it was almost hidden with foliage. Well done on the 'Go n-Eiri an Bothar Leat' signs as you leave Galbally.

Concluding Remarks:

You have a beautiful small town with great potential to look much better, especially if the square is redesigned. We hope our few words of advice in this report are helpful for your future projects, and it is great to see such a proud and active community doing its best to have Galbally looking its best. We look forward to receiving your much reduced application in 2023.