

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: Abbeylara - Mainistir Leath Rátha	Ref: 472
County: Longford	Mark: 303
Category: B	Date(s): 14/06/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	43	46
Streetscape & Public Places	80	39	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	41	42
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	30	31
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	16	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57	59
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	30	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	35	37
TOTAL MARK	550	291	303

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... Congratulations on 55 years in Tidy Towns and thank you for the excellent information supplied with photography, a clearly annotated map and all the detail required for the different categories. Despite the passing years, the loss of invaluable committee members, the pandemic and all the changes you have faced, great energy and commitment prevails, and this was evident when we visited. This enthusiasm is also apparent when we read about the hard work invested behind the scenes to secure funding, permissions, support, etc. The new community garden will be a great addition to your community when it is complete. Your efforts to attract new committee members, your thoughtful thank-you cards, your creative approach to fund-raising and the countless ways in which you exploit opportunities to enhance your environment – this is truly inspirational

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

You have an interesting streetscape and a wide of buildings and architecture, some very old and beautiful, some much more recent and functional. Your endeavours to have privately-owned buildings better presented, painting doors, adding colourful wheelbarrows, etc., is commendable. This requires sensitivity and patience but is very much worth the efforts as these large buildings and properties have a dramatic impact on the appearance of a village. We hope you continue with these efforts and widen your scope to look at all buildings where unpainted concrete-rendered walls appear dreary or drab. Sometimes the addition of concrete containers is not enough to soften these structures. This is exacerbated by large areas of concrete paving and/or tarmac. Unlike some villages you are very lucky to have buildings and features of historical interest and facilities that provide character and personality. The handball alley, the pump, the stone walls and some of the recently built housing estates add to your built landscape. It is great to see benches and bins upgraded with sustainable recycled materials and/or painted. You are updating signage and focusing on footpaths and, parking and undergrounding cables and wires – all important components of the streetscape. Keep an eye on temporary signage, especially near the pump which is already accommodating many signs

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The plans for the new community garden are very exciting. Well done on the trojan work done to date. These efforts are not always seen or recognised. It appeared that some cutting back and removal of shrubbery may have happened close to the river at the village green. While not knowing how this river performs through the seasons and different weather conditions, it struck us that this is a unique feature and one that could be further enhanced and

used by the community. There was clear evidence of ongoing work, planting shrubbery and containers. Mulch would help reduce weeding and improve presentation while plants establish. Thank you for including a photo of the red pump with yellow daffodils. Great to see it at that time of year looking so colourful. The concrete containers and tall red planter were looking a little sad when we visited. In these large, paved areas it is hard to make an impression with containers, no matter how big the container they are and how well they are planted. Trees planted on the other side of the wall would have much greater impact. You have some very attractive planting at the entrances to the village and the mix of perennials, bulbs and shrubs is good to see. Likewise, you have a few nice trees. We would encourage you to grab every opportunity to plant more trees as they will soften some of the large hard landscaped areas and assist with slowing traffic

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

As mentioned earlier it is so unusual to have a river running through the village. You mention that this tributary of the river Inny is prone to flooding so clearly it needs to be well contained. That said, this could be a very important habitat that could be enjoyed by a very wide range of flora and fauna. Derragh Lake and the remains of the crannog are very interesting and you are right to do everything possible to create signage and linkage to the walkway – a great future project. It is good to see that the bug hotel is not to be lost in the development of the new community garden and the new garden presents more opportunities for planting pollinator-friendly and native species that support more wildlife than non-native plants. As Japanese Knotweed is delaying a construction project you have first-hand knowledge of the dangers associated with invasive species. Bird and bat boxes are other possibilities that you can consider

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

You listed your bug hotel and upcycled wheelbarrow under this category and they are to be commended. You also mentioned the plan to install water butts. This is one that you could expedite so that you can conserve treated potable water and have a physical talking point for others in the community. Indeed, you may find a way to incentivise others to install one in their homes. The installation of the multiple recycled plastic benches and tables is another great sustainability initiative. You mentioned recycling bins elsewhere under tidiness and they too are important tools in our efforts to be “doing more with less”

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Congratulations on your sterling efforts on the tidiness category. We found the village to be spotless. Those areas that need to be closely monitored like the recycling area and the river were completely litter free. We are sorry to hear about the dog-fouling issue. It was not something that we noticed during our visit. It is safe to say that your regular cleaning and new signage is having the desired effect. As stated earlier the great efforts made regarding unpainted/unmaintained buildings, sheds and large doors has a dramatic effect on presentation. Well done to everyone on the great work. Some Perspex on signage is ageing making it difficult to read some of the interesting information on notice boards – an easy one to address

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

Both housing estates and all residential areas appeared well cared for with one or two homeowners making a particular splash with containers. We noted the new trees in Rath Bheag and would encourage you to be ambitious with your tree planting efforts throughout the village – an investment in trees now will pay dividends for years to come. You have an excellent garden centre nearby who can advise you on choices. You have an opportunity to introduce small meadows in the grassed areas aiding biodiversity and reducing labour. Weeds in kerbs should be removed physically if possible. Your adopt-a-pot idea is fantastic as is reusing the wooden benches. Creating attractive spaces like this for neighbours to congregate can have profound impact on community spirit

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

Your approach roads are well maintained and litter free. The grass verges nicely mown to leave a wildflower corridor. Well done to the Fas workers. The stone raised beds under the signage are particularly attractive with colourful planting. One planter appears to have been hit by a vehicle or mower and it needs to be repaired. These planters are nicely capped and worth looking after. As are your stone walls so keep a close eye on ivy before it causes damage. It is great to read that you are included on the Longford cycling track and that a sign and parking racks are imminent. Yet another feature that deservedly puts Abbeylara on the national map

Concluding Remarks:

We found our visit very interesting as you have achieved so much over so long and yet there is still more that you can do to enhance the village for residents and visitors. Your group is clever and imaginative and not lacking in ambition. Working closely with the local school, participating in the Granard Easter Parade, making litter picking into social occasions with tea and biscuits are all great examples of get work done, canvass support and build pride. We hope that you continue to move onward and upward in the competition