

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: Gyles Quay, Lordship & Mountbagnal	Ref: 2281
County: Louth	Mark: 208
Category: B	Date(s): 03/07/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	30
Streetscape & Public Places	80	31
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	31
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	21
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	34
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	20
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	21
TOTAL MARK	550	208

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 Tidy Towns Competition and thank you for your first entry to the competition. We are delighted that you have made the leap and hope that you will enjoy the experience and have many successes in the future.

Although established as a Tidy Towns Committee in 2020, this is your first year of entering the competition. You have a committee of 8 and a further 25 volunteers and have clearly set up a structure with regular meetings, a work programme and agreed projects.

The support of the local GAA Club, St Patrick's GFC and Rampark Primary School shows that you have broad community backing so well done. Well done also to the businesses who have and continue to support you in your endeavours. Your engagement with the local school is also very supportive and you are encouraged to continue to involve the younger members of the community in your activities as much as possible.

You have a good social media presence, a volunteer Whatsapp and use the parish bulletin for information. You are planning a general meeting in September and it is vital that this takes place, in so far as possible with good notice to encourage all residents to become involved as much as they wish to be able. Word of mouth is often a very effective means of communication also in smaller communities.

Your entry form was clearly and articulately presented outlining your new projects in each category. It is not necessary to outline future projects as these are noted on your three year plan. Although you numbered your projects, these numbers were not transferred to the map. Indeed you used different numbers on the map which was confusing for this adjudicator. The map was clearly laid out and nicely colour co-ordinated and it was possible to find your projects but it is recommended that each new projects is numbered on the entry form starting at 1 and following through sequentially without starting at 1 in each category. These projects can then be marked, with the same numbers, on the map. Landmarks can be shown on the map, perhaps with letters. Projects should also be marked on the legend.

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

Lordship, Mounbagnal and Gyles Quay are three very different townships that make up one large community. Gyles Quay is a lovely small harbour area and beach and is obviously a hot favourite with many holidaymakers in the summer time. Mountbagnal is just off the main road and as such a quieter more residential area. Lordship is on the main road with an array of lovely houses, beautifully kept with an amazing green school, church and two graveyards, one in the centre (Lordship) and the second just off the main road at the outskirts of the village (Newtown).

Both Newtown and Lordship graveyards were delightfully maintained. The name signs, gates, walls and paths are

clearly a huge improvement and you are to be commended for this work. The seats at the altar in Lordship graveyard are a lovely, sustainable addition and no doubt frequently used. Rampark National School was a delight to visit. With the help of the Tidy Towns Committee, it has become a magical space with nicely planted window boxes and containers, a great wildflower area at the front of the school, a polytunnel filled with flowers and vegetables, as well as outdoor spaces, a pond teeming with wildlife, and so much more. Well done to all involved. Do let us know how the school is progressing with the Green Flags. Your key project this year was the restoration of the Lordship graveyard and although we did not see any before photographs (and these are always a good idea for all of your projects to allow the adjudicator see the progress), there is no doubt the graveyard is immaculate now. The newly planted trees will need some care in the early years however. The original stakes were still attached to the trees already marking the trunk and in very dry periods, watering and possibly formative pruning will be required.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

There was no sign of the hanging baskets outside Giovanni's take-away or the church as mentioned in the your entry form but both were spotlessly clean and nicely kept. The church grounds had clearly been given a makeover and they looked particularly good. The area below the hedges on either side would benefit from some ground cover planting.

The previously graffiti filled wall was bright and cheerful and the planting really gave it a lift. It would be advisable to plant some hardy climbers to help cover the wall and trellis somewhat. This would also increase biodiversity and might be a place where a bug hotel could be placed, if there was enough foliage cover to provide safety.

It is no longer recommended as an appropriate to use old tyres in greenscapes. In general, anywhere that there are plenty of areas of open space and green areas, containers are considered to be unnecessary. They are generally only recommended on hard surfaces where no planting directly into the ground can take place.

The planting of bulbs to bring colour in the spring will make a lovely display. Please do include photographs of these next year. We look forward to hearing the locations and developments of your bird boxes. Perhaps the children in the school can get involved with a project linked to the boxes.

Your three year plan outlines a number of excellent projects in terms of green space and landscaping. It is recommended that you carry out a habitat survey to inform your decision making. Habitat mapping can help inform decision making in a number of areas including planning, climate change mitigation and conservation of nature and as such is an important first step in understanding the habitat around us and what we need to protect them and to identify any gaps in linkages of habitat. The Heritage Council provide excellent information in their Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Villages.

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

There is evidence throughout all three townships that people are striving to improve biodiversity by leaving area of grass to grow and planting wildflowers - the entrance to the Mountain Bay Farm and Allotments and outside the first house in Railway Village are both stunning examples.

The Meadow is shaping up to be a lovely space with extensive wildflower planting and trees. Here also the trees will need some maintenance. A radius of 1 meter should be kept clear around the tree to avoid any strimmers or mowers damaging the trunk as well as allowing the tree to thrive without competition. The stakes and ties need to be regularly checked to ensure no damage to the trunk. It is heartening to hear that many residents would like to replicate the wildflowers in their own gardens. This will greatly increase your contribution to biodiversity as well as assisting in creating wildlife corridors which are so important and serve as 'travelling avenues' for wildlife species between two similar yet fragmented habitat areas, and provide important sources of food and cover for many species.

One of the objectives of the new 2021 – 2025 AIPP is to encourage more land to be managed for biodiversity and to establish a 'Pollinator Trail' as well as monitor pollinators on public land. You are encouraged to use pollinator friendly plants in your planting schemes. There are many examples on the pollinators.ie website. Please ensure also that you use only Irish grown wildflower seeds as certified by the Dept of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and imported wildflower seeds can be contaminated with species which 'pose a threat to agricultural production in Ireland.'

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

You have already started your path to improved sustainability by using solar lights at your name signs. There are many other areas that you are probably also working on as a committee, a community and individually.

Tidy Towns Committees often find it helpful to divide this category into the four headings of waste, water, energy and food enabling them to identify and break down each area and the projects/work planned on each one.

The Tidy Towns Handbook has many helpful suggestions for improving sustainability in the community and you are encouraged to refer to this.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On adjudication day, there was no litter spotted in Lordship, Mountbagnal or Gyles Quay. This is testament to your hard working volunteers and they are to be commended.

In general there was clear indication that you have been working hard at making the area look cared for, well maintained and a nice place to live in and to visit so well done.

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

It is good news that the two derelict houses close to the school have now been renovated. There do seem to be

some other houses on the main road that may need a little TLC.

In the main the houses in all three townships were extremely well kept with good planting schemes. Some of the older houses have great character and the newer ones are sensitively finished and blend in with the surrounding landscape very well.

The residential estates also were very well maintained. Railway Village has many different styles of gardens, each with their own merits and altogether making a lovely setting. There were some large stretches of neatly cut grass that could possibly be considered as an area that could be allowed to go wild and not have the grass cut.

There are also two new estates being built and this is the perfect opportunity to engage with the developers to ensure that a high level of planting, particularly trees is included in the scheme. It is hoped also that the name signs for the new estates will be bi-lingual.

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

Lordship, Gyles Quay and Mountbagnal townlands are situated on and just off the main road from Dundalk to Carlingford and as such, can experience quite heavy volumes of traffic. The traffic calming measures in place appear to be very effective even if there are myriad different speed signs (50/60/80/100) in the space of a few hundred metres. Nevertheless, the area is a rural one with a seemingly relaxed pace of life and a definite community feel to it.

The new bi-lingual name place signs for Lordship and Mountbagnal are very striking and strategically placed with colourful planting at the Lordship sign. Hopefully you will resolve any outstanding issues and have the Gyles Quay sign in place very soon.

The approach to all three townlands was attractive. The approach road from Dundalk immediately shows the visitor that this is a village beginning its journey to increase biodiversity and feed the pollinators. The road signs are clean, the welcome signs new, bi-lingual and nicely planted underneath. There are mature trees, grass allowed to grow wild with verges cut for ease of vision and access. The village itself has an array of houses in different styles, including a lovely thatched house, all well-presented, many with lovely stone walls or recently painted walls. This pleasing impression continues as one travels along the main road and into the smaller, side roads and is a delight to see.

Concluding Remarks:

Although this adjudicator has passed through Lordship in the past, this is the first time to actually stop and visit and it was a pleasure to see. Good luck in the Tidy Towns competition and we look forward to seeing your progress next year.