

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Knockbridge - Cnoc Bride** Ref: **497**  
County: **Louth** Mark: **351**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **29/06/2022**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2021</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	54	55
Streetscape & Public Places	80	50	51
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	43	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	43	44
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	22	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	57	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	40
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>351</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... Thank you for your 2022 entry to the Tidy Towns Competition with accompanying map. Your entry form was very clear and well laid out. Thank you for identifying the Sustainable Development Goals that each project aims to address. The numbering of your projects with the colour coded new and maintained listed made it easier for the adjudicator to identify the key projects but please do not start each category at 1 rather follow through sequentially. The map was clear and easy to read but none of the projects were marked and the numbering on the map did not correspond with the numbering on the submission which was quite confusing.

Although you are a small rural community, you have a good core committee of 10 including sub committees and 45 additional volunteers across a range of age groups.

The forming of five Residents' Associations to work on the environmental presentation of key housing estates is welcome. Perhaps the five Associations could form an umbrella group together with the Tidy Towns Committee to help inform and agree a cohesive plan for the overall community.

It is good to know that widespread consultation takes place as it is always helpful to get consensus and buy in from the those involved when planning for the benefit of the whole community. The local businesses are clearly supportive of your work and the agencies who support your activities including SOLAS, AWARE, POBAL amongst others as well as the local schools, parish and Men's Shed indicate that there is a large and supportive collaboration in Knockbridge.

Your varied methods of communication ensure that all members of the community are aware of events, plans and updates. Your work with the Green School Committee on the Green School Programme is to be welcomed and the school is to be commended for achieving its 8 Green Flags.

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

This was a first time visit to Knockbridge for this adjudicator and it was a pleasure to visit.

Your key project in this category was the refurbishment of the farmyard and outbuildings at the crossroads and it was certainly looking very good on adjudication day. It is often a good idea to include before and after photographs so that the improvements can be clearly noted.

Likewise the development works at the St Bride's GFC complex are noted and will without doubt be a great benefit to the local community.

The completion of the graveyard mapping scheme jointly funded by Knockbridge Tidy towns and the Knockbridge Cemetery committee is an excellent development and will certainly be appreciated by local residents as well as those further afield.

The redesign and widening of the entrance to Stephenstown Pond Amenity Park is very good news and we look

forward to hearing about its progress in the future.

Surprisingly the path leading from the houses in Lisheen Park to the lovely benches and the shop was very overgrown and almost obscured. It is areas such as these give which structure to a project and it is recommended that this be cleared back to the edges with the grass to give a better appearance and make it more user friendly.

The library was very sweet although the post office box beside would benefit from some paint.

The notice board with information about the village was clean and neatly presented. It is a shame to see that Wolfe Tone Hall is unused and hopefully it can be let and returned to its former glory soon.

Overall your work in this category shows at every turn in the village with your annual painting programme and your work with the local branch of the IFA to advance whitewashing of farmyard walls and painting of gates. There is an air of a caring community which shows also in the way the premises display their frontage especially MacNamee's Pub and Tomas MacConmide's. Congratulations to MacNamee's Pub for their Shop Front Award in 2021 Louth Looking good campaign.

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

The church grounds and its surrounds were being lovingly cleared on adjudication day and the effect was excellent as they were clean and tidy and a pleasure to visit. So too, the school which has lovely open spaces with excellent planting. The pencils amongst the shrubs at the entrance were particularly admired.

There were a number of empty plastic pots and wooden containers around the Marian Shrine and it is suggested that some permanent perennial planting is considered here. Colourful pots can be added for special occasions but these should then be removed or they become an eyesore.

The corner beds at the crossroads with yellow roses, whilst well kept, were a little sparse and this is an area where more planting of perennials amongst the roses could be considered. It is such a key focal point in the village that it deserves some visual impact.

Nicely painted containers along the wall would benefit from some plants. Rather than annuals on their own, why not plant some trailing rosemary or other evergreen to give a longer lasting effect. There were some tell-tale signs of herbicide use along the edge of footpaths and under trees and the use of herbicide should be discouraged insofar as possible.

Some planters were quite bare, especially opposite the Wolfe Tone Hall and this was a pity. A continuation of the lovely perennial planting of nepeta and roses would be lovely here and would give a cohesive appearance to the village centre.

Some shrubs were at the end of their lives, especially beside the Ballybarrack Ogham Stone and should be replaced.

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

The refurbishment of the Milk Churn Feature is effective but as previously suggested, one wonders at the necessity to have the plant pots, which were void of any flowers at the base. The feature speaks for itself.

The planting in and around the village green at Lisheen Park is really attractive and shows how effective perennial planting can be. The community herb garden and Fairy Fort with its new sign were all looking lovely too.

The continued planting of native Irish trees both within the school grounds and at Stephenstown Pond is to be welcomed. The strategically placed hanging baskets in the village were a lovely pop of colour and do compliment the permanent perennial planting well.

Well done to the volunteers for the construction of the memorial seat at Stephenstown Pond Amenity Park. It would be interesting to know what wood was used for the seat.

Caution is advised in the use of environmentally friendly weedkillers. Saltex is mentioned and it would be good to know how much and where it is used. All weedkillers contain some chemicals even if only acetic acid or sodium chloride both of which ultimately will influence the Ph of the soil and therefore the balance of the natural environment.

It is good to know that the chestnut trees have been pruned. A full tree survey and tree maintenance plan is suggested to ensure all trees are properly maintained.

Your continued plan to leave areas unmanaged and to plant swathes of wildflowers is very welcome and it was a lovely to see the pockets of natural landscape as well as the areas of flowering plants throughout the village and in Stephenstown Pond Nature Park.

Your liaison with landowners in the community seeking support to supplement existing hedgerows with additional native hedgerows is increasing year on year so well done for persisting with this valuable and very worthwhile project.

The Stephenstown Pond Nature Park is an amazing amenity to have and the planning, care and maintenance of it undoubtedly takes a lot of volunteer hours. As previously mentioned have you been able to increase community interaction in the monitoring and management of the park? The whole area is teeming with wildlife and one wonders if a habitat map or ecology survey has ever been carried out here? The playground was being well used on adjudication day as was were the paths around the pond. Some of the information signs were a little faded or in need of a spruce up and it was a shame to see some signs had been nailed to tree trunks. This is not a practice that is recommended. Nevertheless it is a lovely natural area and we hope to hear more about the new entrance gates next year.

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

You have a considerable number of maintained projects in this category and some new projects also. Well done for partnering with St Mary's National School for your clothes collection day. 1,5 tonnes of clothing and accessories is an amazing result. Where did the clothes go to? The Park and Ride facility is a wonderful new facility and your research indicates that it facilitates car pooling. You also organised a Farm Plastics Collection Day and in excess

of 100 tonnes was collected.

It would be important to try and quantify the successes and results of your initiatives. You have carried out some research and it would certainly raise awareness if you were able to put some figures in terms of saving, diversion from general waste streams and increased recycling figures as a result of your projects. Once some base figures are established, then the aim would be to increase the amount of reductions, reduce the general waste and estimate the savings in terms of costs, labour and environmental damage.

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

In general the village was extremely clean and there was little or no evidence of litter to be seen on adjudication day. Litter bins were clean and washed. Have recycling bins been considered particularly outside the Spar shop? This could help with early segregation of waste and these days, as most people are used to separating their recyclables at home, it is likely that the vast majority of people would use them correctly. Some fresh litter around the Marian Shrine was probably removed within minutes of this adjudicators visit. All of the road signs were clean and nicely presented. However the Pugwash Bay Childcare sign is in need of a bit of a makeover. Congratulations for retaining your Gold Status for 2121 in the Louth County Council Litter League.

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

Loughantarve was very nicely presented with good planting, a clear bi-lingual name sign and some lovely features including the sculpture of the Bull of Cooley. It is important to ensure that the trees are properly maintained. Many had stakes and ties that were damaging the trunks of the trees and this needs to be rectified.

Lisroland also has some excellent planting schemes and it is clear that work has been carried out here. Here too there are trees in need of some maintenance especially with regards to the ties. There are also some Ash trees suffering from Ash dieback and these should be replaced with other native trees as soon as possible.

Knockattin was also a pretty sight with lovely mature trees, well planted shrubs and bursts of colour from the flower beds. The newly refurbished seats looked very inviting and I am sure get a lot of use. It is no longer recommended to use spare tyres as containers although these had been nicely painted. Perhaps long term, a planting scheme could be incorporated into the ground under these trees.

Cloonanna also presented very well with mature trees on the entrance road.

As you rightly state, the roadside location of Newtown Heights is ideal for the local floral displays that new feature as a result of your partnership with the residents. We look forward to seeing further planting schemes in the strategic location.

Many of the houses were also beautifully landscaped with excellent planting. Some in particular that caught the eye were the house with masses of hydrangeas and dahlias and beside it a house with wonderful containers of lillies.

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

The upgrading works on the approach road from Dublin are a great improvement and you are to be commended for the continued challenge you face with the maintenance of the Grange Road/ Louth Village Road. It is indeed difficult given the narrow and twisting nature of the road.

The approach roads give a welcoming and relaxed feel with nicely cut strips on the grass verges and longer grass left to go wild towards the hedges. This is a very pollinator friendly management of entrance roads and one which is to be commended.

Village names signs were also well presented, clean, easy to read and the perennial planting in your entrance beds was eye catching.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Well done for your 42nd entry to the National Tidy Towns competition. Knockbridge is a lovely rural village with a big community spirit. Good luck in the Tidy Towns competition.