

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

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| Centre: Oldcastle - An Seanchaisleán | Ref: 1098 |
| County: Meath | Mark: 306 |
| Category: C | Date(s): 24/06/2022 |

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2021 | Mark Awarded 2022 |
|---|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80 | 42 | 43 |
| Streetscape & Public Places | 80 | 38 | 41 |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping | 80 | 38 | 40 |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality | 55 | 32 | 34 |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less | 55 | 24 | 27 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 50 | 51 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 55 | 36 | 38 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 55 | 31 | 32 |
| TOTAL MARK | 550 | 291 | 306 |

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. Oldcastle is welcomed to the Supervalu Tidy Towns Competition 2022. Thank you for your application, map and plan. Oldcastle has a committee of ten members and forty volunteers working diligently to develop and enhance the village with various projects. The committee hold their AGM in May and have regular committee meetings. They meet every Sunday all year round and also on Tuesday evenings from March to September. Taking part in An Taisce spring clean creates awareness and encourages the community to get involved. The community are also encouraged to take part in the Meath Pride of Place. The committee and the Brownies also meet for work and social evenings. After planting and weeding there is a picnic and this is commended. The scouts also do a project every year. There is great engagement with all agencies and businesses who give advice and funding to the group. Supervalu gives excellent support to the group. Communication to the wider community is via social media, newsletter/newspaper and word of mouth through your presence on the streets. The ICA have also planted a fruit hedge corner this year. Foróige is the junior Tidy Towns committee and it is great to have them included in your work. One person from the committee liaises with the schools on projects. Since joining the competition there has been a noticeable increase in volunteerism, with the community coming together to improve the area making it a better place to live, work and visit.

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

The town of Oldcastle is rich in history and heritage with many buildings in the town dating back to the 18th century and before. The buildings are protected and any work carried out is done under professional guidance. The square is the centre point of the village even though as you mention in your application it is a triangular area. All roads lead to this point. Market House which is the focal point is a superb building and it is good to see that it is occupied and busy. The Church adds its own splendour to the square. The trees along the streetscape were admired. Some of the planters in the square need attention and could be removed. St Bridget's Church is a well-maintained building. The Church contains two Harry Clarke windows. The Peace garden provides a great peaceful walking area where one can just meditate and relax. This garden is commended. The Parochial house, Parish centre and grounds are very well maintained. Gilson school and surroundings is another important part of the town's heritage. This building can be used for all standards of education and it is a great facility to have in the town. The old railway buildings are being used as a co-op today. The number of unoccupied buildings are reducing which is positive and this is due to your constant work to improve the streetscape. Traditional shop fronts were noted and it is good to see that these are being protected. There is a number of recreation areas for walking with more public spaces being developed.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The town of Oldcastle has many areas of good planting and green spaces. The town in 2021 completed a Natural Heritage and Greenspace plan for the town. There are a number of walks, most notably harvest walk, which is the most used greenspace. Primrose lane which has good green spaces, trees, shrubs and fruit trees was admired and commended. The Crane garden is also a fine tranquil spot to sit and relax. The trees along the streetscape soften the buildings and enhance the town. Ground planting of trees is good as trees grown in containers need a lot of attention and if not maintained take from the area. Planting at the base of trees is also not encouraged. The trees need their own space to survive and they provide their own beauty to the streetscape. Planting at the Church in the square was admired. It is good to see more perennial pollinator friendly plants included in landscaping. Planting of fruit trees is also commended.

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

In this category groups are asked to show how they manage and appreciate biodiversity in their area. You have obtained professional help and completed a biodiversity plan which will steer you in the right direction. The natural setting of the town in rural countryside is bordered by the river Inny, mature trees, hedging and stone walls. This natural setting is complemented by the good landscaping throughout the town of trees, hedging, fruit trees and perennial friendly plants. The planting of wildflowers and leaving grass areas un-mowed for wildlife is encouraged. There are many good walking areas in the town, where hosting talks and walks could be held. This would certainly give more understanding and appreciation of the species and their habitats that live in the locality.

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

In this category groups are asked to show how the efficient management of their resources can reduce waste generation. You are doing good work in this area with many projects in reusing/recycling being done. Encouraging people to use the local library which is accessible to all is good. Other ways of saving include, shopping local, eat local as well, as growing your own vegetables and composting. These are measures that the wider community could all do. Harvesting of rainwater is also another good project. The community resource officer organised knitting using pre used wool. You are also encouraging businesses to save on water and electricity by ensuring there are no leaks and using energy saving bulbs. Cutting down on unnecessary journeys is certainly encouraged now with higher fuel prices.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The town has a good plan in place in the control of litter. Taking part in An Taisce spring clean and the anti-litter league create awareness among the wider community and helps to get more people involved. The community are also encouraged to take part in the Pride of Place competition. There are organised community clean ups in April/May and daily litter picks thereafter. There were some areas of untidiness noted, such as bollards needing straightening and painting. Weed growth along kerbs and some rubbish at the bring bank. Some bins needed emptying. All signs not being used should be removed.

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

The town of Oldcastle has different builds along the streetscape of the town and approach roads. The committee work closely with all residents in the estates and encourage them to take part in the Pride of Place competition. Mount Dutton estate has been a regular winner in this competition. The committee also work with owners of rental property to ensure all properties continue to be maintained. The residents are encouraged to attend meetings. Help and support is available to all estates in the maintenance of their areas. All residents throughout the town and along approach roads are commended on the presentation of their homes with neat gardens and hanging baskets. The estates have good green areas and landscaping. The playground is an important amenity for the town and it is also well maintained.

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

The first impression to any town is important. Oldcastle gives a good first impression to the visitor with good entrance signs, an abundance of trees, good hedging and landscaping. Verges are neat while leaving a corridor for wildlife. Some road surfaces need attention.

Concluding Remarks:

Oldcastle was a pleasure to visit and adjudicate. The committee are doing great work enhancing the town with the many projects they continue to develop. Keep up the good work and you are wished well in the future.