

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: Carrickmacross - Carraig Mhachaire Rois	Ref: 586
County: Monaghan	Mark: 356
Category: E	Date(s): 16/06/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	47	48
Streetscape & Public Places	80	49	50
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	48	50
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	40	41
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	43	44
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	45	46
TOTAL MARK	550	347	356

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... Many thanks for your entry and continued support in the competition. As you have mentioned, the last two years have impacted on your long-term plans but by and large you have kept going in an effort to maintain the mental health of the community. Your revised plans recognise the importance of green spaces for people and the priority now is to upgrade and develop outdoor areas for activity. Your achievements over the years are impressive, a result of continuous effort that has inspired great projects. This has been achieved through the tremendous dedication of over 100+ volunteers and supported by partnership with a wide range of agencies/stakeholders, local students and many other community groups. Well-co-ordinated in terms of media utilisation. Nice to see students involved in environmental projects and getting hands-on. The Calendar is going from strength to strength and a brilliant fundraiser. The Local Awards is highly commendable and fosters a 'sense of pride' in the locality. The adjudicator supports the 'simple' approach your committee has adopted in 'Going Green' and your focus now takes account of the needs of the community, the visitor, businesses and the environment - who will all be the stronger for it. The resilience and ability of the Irish people has been tried and tested during Lockdown and given a committee that is experienced & well organised, I remain confident that you will achieve your 6 major pillars in the coming years. Keep up the great work.

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

My visit coincides with market day so it's a very busy main street. Displays of orange begonias in the tiered planters are welcoming. From last year's pictures, the hanging baskets are missing and I'm sure they would light up the main street with a riot of colour. The Lime trees have been nicely trimmed. Street furniture and litter bins were plentiful and would benefit from repainting. Information boards all over are very informative. Wall inscriptions are maintained well. Shirley Arms Hotel, Supermac's, Macaróil, Evelann's, Hughes, to name but a few are very well presented. An unsightly building has been used in a creative way with a stunning mural of Patrick Kavanagh. Wonderful artwork. This should really help the heritage trail & boost tourism. The Workhouse looks great and funding for the rear will enhance this historic building. Many new builds like Ctek, Train Station, Respond, Civic Buildings and the new Apartments have been developed to a high standard and now cater for all users. The Market square was filled with gorgeous floral displays, well maintained inside and out. A street signage audit is needed to eliminate safety issues and ensure high standards as I found worn signage and others not visible due to overhanging branches. The installation of new LED lighting on chapel lane is welcome and any future plans should include the extensive overhead wirescape.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Remarkable effort has been put into the greening of the town during the year. Tullanaskagh Linear Park has been converted into a green oasis connecting different neighbourhoods and providing a range of benefits that enable recreational activities and biodiversity. The students of Patrician High School horticultural class have crafted bird, bat & bug hotels for the site. Lisanisk Park is a lovely walkway along the water, sensitively managed for wildlife. Quigley park has now thirty new trees and wildflowers patches. Fifteen hundred hornbeams were planted in the new Doggy park which is due to open later in the summer - a well-designed space enclosed by eco-friendly wooden picket fence. The highlight of my visit was the community garden, a shared endeavour by many volunteers who have improved the local environment, producing fruit & vegetables and thousands of plants for the towns floral displays. Superb work done. Picnic area on Castleblaney roundabout was well kept. Wooden sculptures on the convent walk made it very interactive. A lot of effort goes into winter bulbs and no doubt they create a cheerful, seasonal display. Green space is essential for good health. We all enjoy a walk in the park. The WHO recommends universal access to green space 300 metres from every home. While providing opportunities for exercise they also improve ecosystems and mitigate climate change. Too often they are not close enough to where we live so people don't get the benefit. Continue to focus on reclaiming urban land as these spaces are simply precious. Excellent.

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

The focus again was native tree planting and several greenways, and these will offer huge benefits in the future. Natural areas left undisturbed like Bully's Acre to attractive insects and wildlife promoted by setting up bird and bat houses. Grass verges set aside for biodiversity. Student involvement in many initiatives. 'Save the bees' and 'We're feeding Carrick's Bees!' promote pollinator friendly planting and is backed up by support and advice on Facebook. Consider the merits of introducing more annual pollinators to partner the begonias? We understand that they make a fantastic display, and we love them, but begonias contain almost zero nectar. While there are many pollinators friendly options to consider, here are just a few easy to grow flowers and herbs for maybe a new project in the polytunnel: Cosmos, alyssum, calendulas, antirrhinums, zinnias, thyme, and oregano. Single varieties of these beautiful plants are attractive to human and insects and then we can be happy we have done our part to protect the bees. Could we aim for 10-20% in next year's schemes? Again, plant bulbs that flower over a long season, including early flowering crocus, late flowering fritillaria, camassia and alliums.

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

The committee was first to introduce the idea of reverse vending and reward system and Inver College proudly display their Regional Award for same. The project ran for 22 weeks and involved 8, 554 users amounting to 3.9 ton recycled. A great measure for a cleaner environment and sharing your success with other groups and helping third level students with their thesis, offers a valuable learning opportunity. Success reached government level and has influenced National policy and now forms part of the Governments Waste Action Plan for the Circular Economy (CE) which is due to be implemented in the Autumn of 2022. This was marked by a visit of MEP, Mairead Mc Guinness and government ministers. The community is now involved in VOICE Ireland 'Return for Change' campaign to raise awareness on how the scheme will work. The Green schools' committees continue to work on various projects: Junk Kouture, St. Louis girls' plastic bottle greenhouse and Inver College water bottle filling station. Throughout your work, I can see the awareness and everyday examples in action of the Circular Economy with the reuse of poles, pipes, peat, street furniture, plastic, the allotments and almost all public lighting now LED. The Local Authority and several businesses like Outdoor café now follow a Sustainability Plan and have set targets. Recycling is a part of daily life, in every home, school, workplace and town. Now the system is struggling there is an opportunity for change. There is help available from SEAI mentors to help you deliver your goals. Check out <https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/sustainable-energy-communities/> for more information.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhairacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your approach to litter involves a lot of hands; students even going at lunch time. Partnership with Oak Environmental is very helpful for sign cleaning. Continued support of National Spring Clean. Very little litter found. Smart Dog Fouling Posters and Doggy Park a good initiative. We are happy a concerted effort was made to persuade the council to reduce the amount of chemical spray, and this can be promoted further by a campaign. Provide people with the knowledge needed to make good decisions on pesticide use. For example, details of 'Spray Safe' Campaign can be found on Cork County Council's Environment Facebook page @CorkCoCoEnviro. The business awards raise standards and contribute to the communities 'pride of place'.

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

Many residential areas are maintained to a high standard. Cloughvalley is picturesque. Beautiful red salvias flowerbeds, blue geraniums, marigolds, and picnic benches in Rock Daniel. Plenty of nice residential gardens. Drummond Radhairc, limestone bolder nameplate and shiny copper beech trees. The town has welcomed many international residents and continues to thrive even through the Covid. Be sure to invite them to take part, as volunteering is a great way to get to know the town and make new friends. All avenues have been explored to address unfinished sites.

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

My first impressions is of a well-kept town on all approaches. Grass verges are managed, roundabouts seasonally planted and sponsored by local business, dressed in annual floral displays, and managed by their staff. Winter Bulb planting scheme continues yearly. Many volunteers enjoy preparing the summer displays to transform the town with fabulous blooms.

Concluding Remarks:

The committee has adopted a Greening Programme and the recent crisis has strengthened their plans to address sustainable tourism in a more meaningful way. Well done and keep it up.