

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballyboy - Baile Bui** Ref: **615**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **291**
Category: **A** Date(s): **08/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	44	45
Streetscape & Public Places	80	41	42
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	39	40
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	28	30
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	49	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	29	30
TOTAL MARK	550	282	291

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 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Thank you for your entry and for your endeavours and commitment to your improving your community. Best wishes for the future.

You have a good-sized group of people on your committee and a good number of volunteers as well and the work completed is evident on a visit to the village. The ambition in your group is evident from the purchase of the derelict hall in July 2021 with proposals to develop a fine community facility currently in planning. You have developed relationships with Offaly Co. Co. and many other local organisations and state bodies and no doubt these will be of great help to you in the future as you develop the new community facility. With new families moving to the area, such a facility will be central to the continued development of the community around Ballyboy.

You have developed strong links with the local school and the young people are involved in your activities; their awareness of the importance of the environment and the habitats around them gives hope for the future. The sessions on the archaeology digs would give the children a real sense of the history right in their community.

The latest version of the TidyTowns Handbook is available on the website - it includes plenty of suggestions for suitable projects to consider for future years.

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

A trip through the village shows that your group has been active and successful in improving the streetscape and public areas. The buildings are well-maintained and the public places are tidy and cared for; the area in front of the old church is kept tidy and hopefully this important historical site can be preserved for future generations. The tall stone walls in the village are in good condition and well-maintained. The thatched pub harks back to yesteryear and credit is due to the owners for the high level of care shown to the building and its thatched roof – something that is becoming very rare in rural Ireland. The picnic area and the playground along the river provides a welcome amenity for the community; the movement of the water and the shade provided by the trees creates a very pleasant place and it is no surprise that it is used by the school as an outdoor classroom. The Jacksons Mill buildings are impressive and it would be good if they could be redeveloped or preserved to avoid them falling into disrepair. The site of the medieval castle of Ballyboy provides another link to the rich history of the area and it could add greatly to the tourism potential of the area if public parking and access was available (subject to suitable agreement with the owners/nearby landowners, etc.)

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

As mentioned in your application, Ballyboy is a small rural village and is fortunate to borrow strongly from the rural

landscape around it; indeed, the local farms reach into the centre of the village. The green spaces and landscaping are well-maintained and the variety of planting along the wall opposite the school is interesting and includes perennial plants which help sustain biodiversity; the raised planters bring some colour and seasonal interest to the footpaths where it would not be possible to create planting pits in the ground. The green space at the famine commemoration offers an opportunity to remember the past and it is indeed fitting that a former member of the community is remembered there too. There are a couple of picnic seats on the approach roads to encourage locals and visitors to stop and enjoy the scenery of the area. The new green space which will be provided at the planned community centre will offer an additional space for the community to use and enjoy.

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

Ballyboy is lucky to have the Silver River as an amenity at the heart of the community and the presence of trout and crayfish is a testament to the quality of the water in the river; the wider community is commended for their actions in protecting such a valuable resource. The use of the area along the river as an outdoor classroom educates the school children about nature and the importance of caring for the environment; the awarding of the fifth Green Flag for biodiversity and the planting of so many native trees in the school grounds shows that the children are responding to what they are learning about nature around them and providing for their own futures. The use of wildflowers and perennial plants which grow back each year in the village planting scheme reduces the need to purchase annual bedding plants; these bedding plants may be heavily dependent on peat in the production cycle and can be costly and somewhat difficult to manage, being subject to drying out quite quickly during dry spells. The nesting birds at the old church and the presence of species which prefer undisturbed habitats is an encouraging sign and will need to be carefully considered during remedial/preservation works at the church.

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

The use of river water for watering planted containers is a very sensible approach as it preserves valuable drinking water for other needs/uses; fortunately the river water appears to be very clean at present but caution is urged in case any issues would arise should the river become contaminated at some stage. Rainwater harvesting is one way to avoid such a problem and could be incorporated into the design of the new community facility. A community garden could be incorporated into the green space at the new facility and this would provide opportunities to offer classes/courses such as Grow It Yourself for fruit and vegetables to encourage the community to grow some food for their families; this year, your colleagues in Geashill Tidy Towns introduced window boxes with herbs and strawberries in them, demonstrating that food can be grown in very confined places. Geashill TT have also established a community composting area with plans to use the compost in the planting schemes in future years, lowering costs and reducing the need to use peat-based composts. The incorporation of more energy-efficient public lighting and in the Christmas lights is another step in improving the sustainability of the local area. The collection of scrap for recycling during the winter helped to improve the appearance of the area and minimise the risk of such materials being dumped in the area.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The village and its hinterland were found to be very tidy on the inspection date. Your litter-picking activities have been a success and the village was found to be pristine. No litter or evidence of illegal dumping was observed at the recycling/bring centre. The wooden planters were all in good condition with no evidence of litter being hidden in them.

Managing weeds and other unwanted plants without herbicides contributes a significant amount of work for Tidy Towns committees – your efforts in this regard were noticed during the visit as the footpaths, paving and road edges were found to be largely weed free. The regular street sweeping aids in removing silt/soil deposits that can become fertile growing grounds for weeds.

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

The residential gardens were found to be tidy and it is obvious that the residents take pride in their community. The improvement work carried out by a number of householders has enhanced the appearance of the village and it is very positive news to see older properties being renovated for residential use again, saving them (and the village) from suffering dereliction and possibly demolition. Traditional buildings in villages such as Ballyboy demonstrate the history of residential development in the village and provide another link to the past. There are some very attractive and well-kept gardens in the village and these add considerably to the visual amenity of Ballyboy.

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

The approach roads to Ballyboy are welcoming with well-maintained road margins, wooden fences and stone walls, all in good condition. The drainage improvement works carried out by Offaly Co. Co. will be valuable in time to come as we appear to be prone to storms and flash flooding. It is noted that you have been making representations to get the damaged stone wall at the corner repaired. Perhaps the stone name signs at the edges of the village could be given some attention to brighten them up and make the name of the village more visible.

Concluding Remarks:

Ballyboy is a pleasant and attractive village and evidence of the efforts of the Tidy Towns committee is clearly seen throughout the village. The projects completed to date have enhanced the village and you have big plans for the future. You are wished well in your endeavours to plan and build the new community facility and we look forward to seeing the progress and the completed project in the coming years. We look forward to receiving an application

from you again in 2023.