

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Edenderry - Éadon Doire** Ref: **550**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **314**
Category: **E** Date(s): **06/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	50	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	47	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	41	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	34	36
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	19	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	47	48
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	31	32
TOTAL MARK	550	305	314

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.

Edenderry is one of the larger towns in Co. Offaly participating in the TidyTowns competition each year for over thirty years; you have a strong TidyTowns committee although you have lost some members in the past few years. It is somewhat disappointing to hear that you have such a small group of dedicated volunteers, given the population of the town and the amount of work to be done each year; hopefully your efforts to expand the group will encourage some more people to volunteer and help spread the workload. It's good to see that the residents' associations assist by maintaining their own areas. Your engagement with the schools in terms of school gardens and green flags will hopefully yield some energetic young volunteers in the future and perhaps the TY students will continue the fine tradition of helping out. Over the years, your group has developed productive links with Edenderry Municipal District, the local authority, and many other local and national organisations to support your activities and projects to the benefit of the town. The improvements works at Main Street and at the Town Hall and O'Connell Square are a significant enhancement to the town, creating wider, safer footpaths with pedestrian crossings at regular intervals, and providing a great space for the community to gather for various events, suitable for use even in winter thanks to the canopies and seating at the square. Sponsorship and support from local businesses provides valuable financial and practical support to carry out projects each year. The outcomes of these collaborations are apparent as soon as you arrive at Edenderry as these improvements greatly enhance the area.

As dictated by the recent restrictions during the pandemic, like so many other community organisations, your group had to find new ways to communicate to keep local people engaged with your activities; you embraced social media, local radio and the traditional local press to keep your message and activities to the fore in the locality – well done! While in-person meetings can take place again, many of the social media methods can still be used to minimise printing leaflets and newsletters, meeting agendas, etc., improving sustainability in a practical way. Having workers on the CE scheme reduces the workload on the committee and volunteers and provides ongoing labour to keep Edenderry looking well during times when the committee and volunteers might not be available.

You have many projects for the future which will further enhance the town; the latest TidyTowns handbook on the website has a wide range of activities and ideas that your group could consider for the future, some with considerable outcomes for easily executed actions.

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

The footpath improvement works carried out on Main Street have significantly enhanced the town as pedestrian space with wider footpaths, seating, multiple pedestrian crossings, designated parking spaces, and bollards to

prevent illegal/obstructive parking on the footpaths. The redevelopment of O'Connell Square with new paving, seating, canopy, and trees and other planting has created a fine space suitable for public events and shows off the Town Hall very well.

There are many fine buildings in the town maintained to a high standard and there are plans to improve some of the other buildings which need some work to restore them again; the removal of the derelict store and the planned developments at that site should further enhance the streetscape in terms of public spaces and amenities. The inner relief road at Blundell Avenue provides a safe space for pedestrians and cyclists and the new road near Tesco offers an alternative route around the town without using the Main Street.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

There are a number of green spaces within the town, including Blundell Park, the Pitch and Putt course, the greenway at the Grand Canal and the recent planting at the improved entrances to the harbour. The tree planting in the town and at O'Connell Square will enhance the streetscape even more in years to come and the planting at the Town Hall is maturing well, creating a pleasant barrier between the seating at the performance area and the car parking area. The tree planting at Fr. Paul Murphy Street combined with the wildflowers is growing well; perhaps some of the plant growth immediately around the trees could be trampled occasionally to allow the trees to grow with less competition from the other vegetation growing there. Having the Grand Canal Greenway so close by offers plenty of opportunities for leisure and recreation, providing a safe setting for walking, jogging or cycling since access for vehicles was removed. The garden at the Youth Café is a fine space for the younger residents of the town to enjoy.

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

Edenderry has been busy carrying out projects to enhance the fine natural spaces around the town and adding new areas as appropriate. There is a good mixture of managed grass area/planting and less frequently maintained areas such as at the housing areas around Sr. Senan Court and Avenue, along the approach roads and along the canal; the longer grasses and wildflowers provide food and shelter for insects and wildlife. Similarly, at Monasteroris graveyard, the decision to only cut a few paths through the long grass provides a sanctuary for wildlife; the future plans for researching and restoring this site will greatly improve it as a heritage feature in the town for generations to come. The native trees and wildflowers at Fr. Paul Murphy Street provide a fine refuge for wildlife and insects and plans to continue with replacing the poplars with more native trees will further enhance the area for biodiversity; be vigilant to ensure that noxious weeds such as ragwort and dock don't become too established – removing them before the seeds are scattered will help keep numbers in check. Within the town, there are some areas for wildlife too such as on the way down to Dunnes Stores. Planting crab apple trees at O'Connell Square will help improve biodiversity there as native trees support many more species than non-native trees. Your engagement with the school children in Scoil Bhríde will encourage them to take an interest in nature and in improving the habitat around the school.

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

Sustainability may seem to be a difficult challenge for communities but your engagement with the residents' groups and the schools to provide composting systems is an example of a simple but very effective step in the right direction; using the compost in the planters and beds reduces peat usage and demonstrates the circular economy very well. It is disappointing that there have been abuses at the sites but no doubt, you will find solutions to resolve these issues. It's great to see that the local Men's Shed are involved in the project – did they recycle materials to make the compost bins? Your local authority has changed the streetlights to LEDs which is a great help in raising awareness of sustainability – as well as being a very practical sustainable action – and the use of LEDs in the Christmas decorations will further increase awareness in the town. Edenderry has been promoting the Carbon Challenge for a few years now – how much of a response has been received? How many premises have availed of the schemes? Reductions in grass mowing, combined with clover in the grass margins and the planted wildflower areas are great for raising awareness locally, encouraging others to participate – many small actions can build up to a significant progress to a sustainable town.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Edenderry has been very active in collecting litter on a regular basis and in providing new bins to reduce the amount of litter being discarded around the town; you campaign and efforts appear to be working very well as the town was found to be very tidy with little sign of litter during the visit. Indeed, there were black bags of litter awaiting collection during the visit. Did the proposed BigBelly bin arrive yet? Delighted to see that the transition year students were volunteering as well to spread the workload a bit too and hopefully this will continue. Achieving a balance in managing weeds without spraying herbicides is difficult, particularly on brick/mono-block footpaths and your group has been succeeding in this difficult task; there were some weeds here and there around trees and along kerbs, but 'herbicide-free' means extra physical work; luckily you have some CE scheme participants to help with this onerous task. It appeared that herbicides may have been applied around lamp posts, trees and two seats on the green area at the junction of St. Francis Street with Gilroy Terrace – this may have been carried out unannounced to the committee. Some of the utility boxes along the streets have been decorated with some fine artwork, disguising these often less-than-attractive but required street furniture. The Mutt-Mitt dispensers were noted – there was little evidence of dog fouling found so well done!

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

The housing areas and residential streets around the town were largely tidy and well-kept. Many of the residents

and businesses of Edenderry obviously take great pride in their premises, with clean and freshly painted buildings and many gardens very well-maintained. Many of the housing areas have been adopting the reduced mowing regimes, with some regularly mown areas combined with longer grasses and wildflowers, providing refuges for pollinating insects and wildlife. There was some attractive planting at Parkview and one or two areas that appeared to be taken over with wildflowers/weeds – although maybe this was planned. The recently developed facilities at Blundell Castle (pitch and putt, skate park) are a great addition to the town and were found to be tidy during the visit, as was the local playground.

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

The Edenderry approach roads are appropriately maintained and tidy, keeping in mind the need to protect insects and pollinators; as recommended by a previous adjudicator, the roadside margins are mown with wider areas left to grow through the season. The planters at the bridge over the canal on the Tullamore Road were looking very well and colourfully announced that the town was nearby. The new inner relief roads will considerably aid traffic flow through and around the town and were well-maintained; there may be opportunities for tree and shrub planting along these in future years. Your efforts to have the hedges maintained appropriately are noted and this can be an issue for groups with the restrictions on hedge-cutting during the nesting season. The new planting of native trees and wildflowers on the way to Fr. Paul Murphy Street will in time mature to be a very attractive approach to the town.

Concluding Remarks:

Edenderry TidyTowns group has been busy improving and maintaining the town to the benefit of the local residents and visitors alike; many projects have been completed and no doubt many more will be completed in the future. We look forward to seeing your progress in the 2023 TidyTowns entry!