

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## ***Adjudication Report***

Centre: **Ferbane - An Féar Bán**

Ref: **621**

County: **Offaly**

Mark: **323**

Category: **C**

Date(s): **09/07/2022**

|   | <b>Maximum<br/>Mark</b> | <b>Mark<br/>Awarded 2021</b> | <b>Mark<br/>Awarded 2022</b> |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80                      | 52                           | 53                           |
| Streetscape & Public Places               | 80                      | 43                           | 45                           |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping              | 80                      | 40                           | 42                           |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality  | 55                      | 37                           | 39                           |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less     | 55                      | 18                           | 21                           |
| Tidiness and Litter Control               | 90                      | 48                           | 48                           |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas       | 55                      | 39                           | 40                           |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes           | 55                      | 35                           | 35                           |
| <b>TOTAL MARK</b>                         | <b>550</b>              | <b>312</b>                   | <b>323</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 mó.

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.

Ferbane has been active in the TidyTowns competition again for the past eleven years and you have been fortunate to get some new volunteers to help your committee recently; it is good to get new people with new skills and some fresh ideas to revitalise the committee and spread the workload a bit further. You have developed strong linkages with the local schools working together on many sustainable projects within the school grounds and in the wider community, which is of great benefit to the town now and hopefully for many years into the future. It's great to see the Mary Ward Heritage centre up and running and the involvement of the St. Hilda's Service Users is a great example of social inclusion at a local level. Exploring your heritage through the medium of music in the form of the Brosna Suite performance is an interesting and distinctive project – well done! Your engagement with the local authority, the local development company and many other local and national organisations and bodies ensures that Ferbane receives its fair share of funding for the projects that are being carried out in the locality. The 'Chat & Chill' development encompassing both a space for the community to gather and relax combined with the sustainable raingarden project is a great example of leveraging funds to improve facilities for both the local community and the environment. Your compatriots in Geashill TidyTowns have been working on a similar project and no doubt many other towns and villages will follow suit in future. Your group also benefits through sponsorship from the local businesses, and the residents' groups strongly support your efforts too; your committee works diligently to keep residents and local businesses abreast of developments and projects through a range of media, meaning everyone can participate if they wish.

Thank you for the detailed map to guide the adjudicator to the various new and maintained projects. Your updated five years' plan has many interesting projects for the town in the future but don't forget to have a browse of the latest TidyTowns handbook on the website which has a wide range of activities and ideas that your group could consider for future projects.

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

Ferbane has some fine older buildings in the town and some nice traditional business premises, including a lovely thatched pub in the centre of the town. The various footpath improvement works and the new pedestrian crossing at the 'Chat & Chill' improves the safety of pedestrians in the town; keep on campaigning to have the remainder of the footpaths replaced or repaired. Projects such as the An Siolán will help restore the fine building and bring it into use for the benefit of the community – hopefully you will be successful in your funding applications to complete the project over the next few years. Your other projects are helping to enhance the fine heritage in the town such as the

old bridge; also St. Mary's Hall will be a fine asset to the town if your plans succeed.

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

Ferbane is privileged to have some fine green areas around the town such as the Fairgreen, along the Relief Road, at the Cowpark and there is great potential to develop the river banks as a walking trail in years to come also. The choice of planting at the new 'Chat & Chill' project is sustainable and should mature nicely in the future, adding a fine resource to the centre of the town which would otherwise have become a carpark. The repainted planters on Main Street bring a bit of colour to the footpaths where it wouldn't be possible to plant into the ground; the area at Higgins' Corner is maturing well and the additional planting adds considerably to it. Unfortunately, some of the trees in the town have been quite badly damaged and may need replacing as the bark has been badly damaged over the years; there are a few along the N62 Athlone Road that should be brought to the attention of the council if it hasn't already been done in case they would be damaged in stormy weather. There are some trees that should have their support stakes removed as the stake is possibly smaller than the tree.

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

The choice of planting at the 'Chat & Chill', Higgins' Corner and at the Cowpark already has and will continue to improve sustainability in the town. The Food Forest project at the Cowpark Woodland is an excellent project, both in terms of habitats and as a learning tool for the schools; it's great to see that a number of organisations were involved in this project and that professional advice was taken too. It might be a good idea to trample some of the grass and weeds growing around the newly planted trees and bushes there to give them a chance to get well-established; as mentioned in your application, don't let the strimmers near them! The community is engaged in testing the water quality in the river Brosna and evaluating the biodiversity aspects of the river and its tributaries; as your plans for the river walkways develop, keep in mind the use of pollinator-friendly plants and habitat creation when carrying out the work.

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

The choice of planting around the town and at the Food Forest demonstrate a good understanding of sustainability and should further encourage the residents to do similar themselves; these plants support many insects and wildlife species. The reduction in mowing around the town, the rainwater harvesting, and the mulching of the trees all improve your sustainability through recycling and reducing the use of water around the town. The 'Wildlife Hotspots' posters explain the importance of the habitats to visitors and locals alike, allowing them to observe the creatures and plants nearby. The use of peat-free composts and the reduction in herbicide application are both commended. The Ferbane Bog SAC is a great addition to the sustainability of the town and the works carried out to improve access will allow more people a chance to visit this great amenity.

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

The town was found to be very tidy during the visit so your efforts to maintain and enhance the area have been succeeding; the various initiatives to reduce littering including moving the bring banks to a more suitable location have yielded results. Engaging with the schools for initiatives such as the Spring Clean increases awareness of the issues with littering and will yield results in the future as the students will help with maintenance and litter control. The CE scheme workers and the local County Council worker help reduce the workload on the committee and the volunteers, and the 'Adopt a Patch' idea has been a great success in bringing more volunteers to your group. It's great to see the St. Hilda's group managing the Mitt Mutt programme – there was very little evidence of dog fouling during the visit – well done to all involved!

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

It is heartening to see that the local residents' associations are actively engaging with your group and working hard to maintain their own areas; there are many well-maintained gardens and common areas around the various residential areas in the town. The reduction in mowing in appropriate areas helps to raise awareness of biodiversity among locals and will yield further sanctuaries for wildlife and pollinators around the town. Hopefully some of the unused properties in the town can be got back into use soon also.

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

The approach roads to Ferbane are very well cared for and create a great impression as one approached the town. The old water pump painted in the county colours definitely stands out! The improvements to the footpaths add greatly to the safety of pedestrians and will hopefully be continued into the future. The Relief Road is well-maintained and certainly offers locals and visitors an opportunity to take exercise around the town.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Ferbane is a town with a great past and ambitious plans for the future in your five years' plan; keep in mind that big plans take time to reach completion. No doubt your enthusiasm for improving your area will provide many projects for future adjudicators to enjoy! We look forward to your 2023 application!