

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardmore - ArdMhór** Ref: **647**
County: **Waterford** Mark: **358**
Category: **B** Date(s): **27/06/2022**
29/07/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	52	53
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	46
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	46	47
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	41	42
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	25	27
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61	62
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	44	45
TOTAL MARK	550	349	358

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. We thank you for compiling and sending us your entry, and wish you every success in your future work. Good luck! You have a very impressive number of committee members and volunteers for a small village, however, we presume and hope that many of your volunteers are the lucky folk who have holiday homes in beautiful Ardmore and want to show their appreciation for how well it is looked after! You also have an impressively long list of agencies, bodies and businesses who support your work. It is great to see so many environmental NGOs on your list too – this is so important with Ardmore hosting so many special habitats and species. You missed one though! The Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (BSBI) of which the eminent botanist Paul Green is the recently retired recorder for Co. Waterford and we're delighted to see you have been out botanising with him – 175 plant species is a fantastic result reflecting the wonderful variety of natural habitats in and around Ardmore. Who knows maybe it will inspire a local botanist to take over as BSBI VCR for Co. Waterford? Well done on grasping new technologies as a force for good in Ardmore TidyTowns. It is interesting how you have found that online meetings have allowed for more members to have their say and spread awareness of the many valuable talents that lie within your local community.

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

The streets of Ardmore are charming as ever with lots of well painted and maintained buildings. You have a long list of amendments and improvements to your streetscape over the last year. The new benches at the seafront look great and we especially liked the fun candy stripes on the tables and benches beside The Sandcastle Tourist Office building. The Sandcastle building itself was gorgeously painted with artistic depictions of local sea creatures. It's lovely bright addition to the sea front here. Your hopes for a remote working hub is a great idea and one that could enable more people to live in Ardmore all year round thus reducing the number of empty homes outside of the summer months. This is an acknowledged problem for so many communities in tourist areas all over Ireland. Indeed your adjudicator noticed a big difference between a personal visit during the height of the tourist season last August and the adjudication visit this June demonstrating how the busy season really is only about two months long for Ardmore. Assisted living accommodation for older persons is another great plan – the way forward that all of us would wish for, to spend our older years integrated into our local communities. Future adjudicators can look forward to seeing the development of your Water Sports Activity Centre down at what is now the beach car park. You have a noticeable sprinkling of a few words as Gaeilge through your facebook page. It would be great to see your plans for having the Irish names for your local townlands and streets on plaques – so important to preserve these for future generations not least because they often tell us a lot about a place be it about the natural or social history. There are lots of fascinating information boards dotted around the village. It's a shame that the two framed natural history

boards on the wall of St Declan's church are obscured by the new board about the Cliff Walk. We hope there are plans to move one or other of the signs as they all deserve to be read – maybe the flat top of the sea wall opposite might be a good spot for the nature information boards?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have lots of flower beds all around and all are planted with a great mix of perennials with plenty of pollinator-friendly plants. It was lovely to see the short wildflower meadow lawns at The Round Tower Hotel grounds with lots of clover in flower. Too often the frontage of hotels are just hard, grey landscapes whereas the soft green of the lawns here is easy on the eye! We thought there was a good opportunity for some colourful pollinator-friendly perennial planting perhaps along the east-facing stone wall at the edge of the hotel car park especially as this is quite prominent as you leave the village centre. Your before and after photos of the old petrol station were most helpful as it unrecognisable as such now! The weeping form of the trees is lovely but they may need potting on soon as the barrels won't be big enough for them – or could they be managed as dwarf forms? Otherwise maybe tall windowbox shape planters might work better along the path here maybe planted with herbs as a continuation of An Sruthán project perhaps or even a colourful show of nasturtiums each year scrambling up the fence? If the trees get too big for their pots they will no doubt be happy in another location in the village. Works were ongoing at the Cul na Scoile site on adjudication day so we could not see the landscaping project there. We took a quick peek at your Rocky Road nursery – it must be so helpful having this facility. Well done to all the green-fingered folk who work here as these places take a lot of maintenance. Well done on all your pro-active communication with local businesses, sports groups and farmers. In future entries we would love to hear if these interactions have resulted in long-term changes for the better. You promote the All Ireland Pollinator Plan well on your website. Have you shared the pdfs of the specific plans for sports grounds; schools; businesses etc?

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

We really loved the lane leading from the beach back to the village which you call An Sruthán. Indeed, it was only while reading through the excellent community noticeboard that is your facebook page that we read the lovely tributes to the late Mr Bernie Stilwell, the man you fondly call 'Mr Ardmore TidyTowns' and how this whole area was his project. Your tributes show how he absolutely personified the generosity, care & kindness that is at the heart of our greater TidyTowns community. May he rest in peace. The newly painted blue fence at An Sruthán looked great with the herb names along each section. Such a brilliant idea! You really have put a huge amount of work into this area and it is packed full of information – we particularly loved Simon's Cat and the hedgehogs! Also we wondered if you hold any community events in An Sruthán? Swapping herb recipes for cooking and/or home remedies/household tips etc? We noted on your facebook page that you are thinking about having a Biodiversity Action Plan done for Ardmore. This would be a most useful project for you. You already have done a lot of biodiversity work but it is always good to have the advice of a professional ecologist that is specific to your area. Waterford Co. Co. may be able to help with funding or there is the Environment & Nature fund of the Community Foundation for Ireland which has helped fund dozens of BAPs for community groups. It's really interesting how you are able to quantify in litres and euros how much you have saved on diesel by mowing less for biodiversity reasons. This needs to be shouted from the rooftops! Lovely to hear of the school children learning about local habitats. We are hugely impressed by all the research and work the pupils and teachers of St Declan's N.S. have put into their Save the Bees School Award project – even down to finding out that painting bee hotels is not a good idea!

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

We note your awareness throughout your competition entry of the UN SDGs. You are clearly putting a good deal of thought into how sustainable practices can be implemented all across your activities. The newly updated TidyTowns handbook has a lot of helpful guidance and information – each of the sections have been written by professionals in each field who are very aware of the work carried out by TidyTowns volunteers. Often in this particular category it is about spreading awareness of the issues amongst the locals and visitors. You are doing just this at the recycling centre in the beach carpark with several helpful information signs. We noted your colourful composting section in your Rocky Road nursery. This facility is enabling you to be much more sustainable in relation to your planting plans, well done on all this work. Have you ever held workshops here to promote more sustainable and biodiversity friendly gardening practices? How about a plant swap event?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Being such a busy tourist spot, you have an awful lot of work for a small village in this category. We can see from your competition entry and your facebook page that you carry out many litter picks and clean ups amongst a plethora of other actions. It is terrific to see how Ardmore's younger generation have clearly been inspired by your work and are now using their own initiative and getting out doing their own litter picks too – fair play! Everywhere looked very well-looked-after on adjudication day – clearly as a result of all your hard work both as a group and as a joint effort with local businesses and organisations. The perennial problem of dog fouling is something that bothers you according to your entry but it certainly wasn't a problem on adjudication day so all your efforts here are working. We note your commitment to no herbicide use which has meant a bit more elbow grease in relation to kerbside weeding etc. but this is so important for the health and well-being of ourselves and our environment around us as well as giving onlookers some food for thought. The tables are turning in relation to how we look upon 'weeds' too as we realise the value of many of them and sometimes the benefits of turning a blind eye!

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

The pride that local residents take in Ardmore is clearly evident on all the streets and lanes of your village. Some

great colour choices have been made whether with a bold colour on walls or bright colours to highlight lovely windows. Also there are plenty of beautiful gardens setting off their owners homes so well they make a wander around the streets and lanes of Ardmore very pleasant. Have you been making people aware of the scheme to pledge your garden for pollinators with the AIPP? Their website has lots of inspiration for small projects that could be carried out across the domestic gardens of Ardmore from FIT counts to making space for wildlife – mini ‘Hare’s corners’ if you like in gardens.

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

The new pedestrian crossing at Quinn’s Cross was used by your adjudicator several times on adjudication day. It’s so important there at what can be a very busy junction in tourist season. Another pedestrian crossing is potentially needed down at the sea front where it can get very busy with quite a wide area of road to cross near the roundabout there. The sculpture at the roundabout is a handsome one with its fisher theme although unfortunately a closer look is not really possible with the traffic! However, apart from the warm colour of the wood, this is quite a grey area of the village that needs to be ‘broken up’ – normally some tree planting would work but we understand this can be difficult in an area like this exposed to the salty sea winds. If the roundabout were returned to green grass this would immediately solve the greyness! The planters on the roundabout had nice grey and blue planting but were too subtle to have an effect from afar. Maybe this might be a good spot to have a few containers of bright coloured nasturtiums straggling around the sculpture at the centre of the roundabout? Or maybe several Geranium ‘Rozanne’ might be more appropriate with their long-flowering blues representing the sea under the boat? Your approach roads looked well on adjudication day with their neat mown edges but taller grasses and wildflowers to the back keeping both humans and other wildlife happy! Your comment about bird-proofing the bins is one we have heard before. We did come across another community group who have found that when their bins (the same as your black Litter bins with two opposite openings) were swapped for models with just one opening, the bird problem dramatically decreased as the bin contents were not as visible and the birds were inhibited from delving into the dark insides of the bin after the contents. It might be worth a try at Ardmore?

Concluding Remarks:

Ardmore has had the ultimate success in the TidyTowns competition with your national overall win in 1992 and thirty years on the legacy of this is still very evident in your beautiful seaside village. You still have the magic formula with highly committed volunteers working for and with each other and your strong community spirit spills out of the pages of your entry form. Well done on all your endeavours and we wish you continued success and enjoyment of the TidyTowns spirit and community.

Second Round Adjudication:

We were very happy to carry out a second-round adjudication on your lovely seaside village. It is wonderful to hear that a new generation of Ardmore residents have stepped forward to carry on your villages long and distinguished history with the competition. Once again, the presentation of streets, individual homes and buildings in the village were second to none with the beautifully maintained thatched cottages a particular delight along Main Street. How great to see building work ongoing at the seafront cottages and we hope they will be occupied for next year’s visit. The focus you are putting on longer term and more biodiversity friendly planting was admired. A fantastic wildflower meadow was seen in a private garden as we strolled along the Rocky Road on the way to visit the Round Tower. As was mentioned by the first-round adjudicator, the An Sruthan Project is a joy. What could have been a disused, hostile laneway is now a haven for biodiversity and a fun place to visit and travel through. The buddleia bushes the end of the lane were alive with butterflies, too many to count. And the Samson propeller at the start provided a lovely splash of pollinator friendly summer colour. The new crossing at the bottom of Tower Hill is a great addition to improve pedestrian movement around the village. Is one planned for the Dungravan Road to safely connect the An Sruthan walkway to the village core? Businesses in the village seemed to be doing well and we enjoyed a snack at the Shipmate café with its focus on local produce. As was noted by the first round adjudication, dog fouling was not evident on the day of our visit. The dog fouling sign under the brown Tidy Towns sign was very dominant on the approach to the village and you may have found more subtle ways to enforce this message? The Ardmore aerial photo and the boat planters are located a fair distance from the village. Would an inner gateway planter be appropriate at the 50kph sign at the Fire Station to further slow traffic as it approaches the school? The roadside Hydrangeas looked beautiful here. The coastal view from the upper roads and laneways were breath-taking and we particularly admired the beautiful planting to the front of the Ardmore Pottery and Gallery. From the crisp whitewashed walls in the village to the newly painted Visitor Centre, Ardmore was looking so sharp and well looked after. We very much enjoyed our second visit and fully endorse the recommendations of the first-round adjudicator.