

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: Ballyduff Upper - An Baile Dubh Uachtarach	Ref: 1072
County: Waterford	Mark: 301
Category: B	Date(s): 01/07/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	37	40
Streetscape & Public Places	80	37	39
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	42	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	21	23
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	13	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60	62
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	41
TOTAL MARK	550	285	301

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! Your strong community spirit is very evident -on the page of you competition entry, on screen on your social media posts and on the ground in lovely Ballyduff. You are clearly pulling together doing things for yourselves. This is reflected in your volunteer numbers which at 27 regulars is fantastic for a village of 307! Another important component is your strong links to the younger citizens of Ballyduff through playschool, primary school and Foroige. Thank you also for a well put together entry form with lots of helpful before and after photos and a clear Action Plan.

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

The streetscape of Ballyduff is very charming indeed and gave a great impression of being well loved. The library stands out as it is so unusual in the Irish context with its mix of brick and plaster and a beautiful big window – so important to let light in for the readers! There are so many different examples of vernacular architecture in your small village that altogether make for an interesting walk-through. The outdoor seating fits in very nicely onto the street and gives it back to the pedestrian from all the cars and trucks! The Old Storehouse sounds like a wonderful community-based project that will be a model for many other Irish towns and villages when it's completed. We look forward to hearing of its progress next year – it was covered in scaffolding on our visit! A small point here was that we noticed the bike rack along the Green Area wall was completely inaccessible due to a car parked up against it – perhaps the rack could be moved or that parking space be included in the adjacent yellow box? The various wall art projects add vibrancy and a personal touch to Ballyduff's streets with your community's sense of humour coming through! The beautiful old school building beside St Michael's church needs some attention before important vernacular features are lost. Perhaps help with funding for its conservation may be sought from interested bodies such as the Heritage Council?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

We were hugely impressed with your sensory planting bed of herbs and other herbaceous perennials in the Green area opposite the Storehouse. The plant information notices made for fascinating reading although they were suffering from weather damage! These signs are so informative they deserve a more long lasting medium – maybe your local authority could help here with pointing you towards appropriate funding streams for this. You show great awareness of our pollinator species needing our help as their habitats and food plants are dwindling across Ireland.

The Biodiversity Crisis is so bad and TidyTowns can help in many ways and ensuring you use as many pollinator-friendly sustainable plants as possible and tell people all about it so that they can follow suit in their own gardens. Locally sharing the brilliant information freely available at www.pollinators.ie is another great role for TidyTowns groups. In particular the Pollinator Planting Code provides really helpful lists of pollinator friendly perennials, bulbs and annuals for all types of gardeners. We particularly noted that plants were allowed grow to form a lovely green fringe along the steps and railings and not sprayed into an ugly brown fringe – this is brilliant – all part of how we need to look upon ‘weeds’ differently for their own value rather than needlessly putting noxious chemicals into our local environment. That said, needless herbicide use was noted in other parts of the Green area, especially at the base of a hedge which is prime bumblebee nesting habitat – see www.pollinators.ie for help with explaining locally why its use in these instances is not recommended. The Mocollop Walking Trail picnic site was visited and was much admired. The mowing regime here is perfect with areas of both short (with lots of selfheal and clover flowers) wildflower and long wildflower meadows. It is wonderful as it is so while we look forward to your walking trail development please don’t change the picnic area too much!

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

You clearly have terrific local knowledge of biodiversity on board with the Green Man! We loved your plant folklore series on your social media pages. This is a wonderful way of getting people engaged with their local biodiversity. Ballyduff is sitting right in the middle of the wonderful Blackwater valley and you are surrounded by habitats and species of interest. Perhaps you might consider getting a professional Biodiversity Action Plan carried out. There are currently several sources of funding for such projects available to community groups. Your Local Authority Heritage and Environmental Awareness officers will have information on these. Another point worth mentioning that as you’ve already shown, an important role for TidyTowns groups is to ensure that their wider communities are aware of any local conservation areas and in Ballyduff you in prime territory with the River Blackwater and its surrounds designated both as an SPA and SAC – habitats of international importance. Check out the maps section of www.npws.ie for more details. On adjudication day it was fantastic to see housemartins very busy at their nests in the eaves of St Michael’s church. We counted 41 nests!! This is a fantastic biodiversity gem right in the middle of your village. These birds and their cousins the swallows and sand martins are in general decline and need all the help they can get from us. They feed on small insects as you probably know – many of which are human pests such as the dreaded midges! However, herbicide use was noted in the surrounding graveyard which not only kills plants but also insects so perhaps this regime could be amended? The presence of these beautiful birds could be turned into another Ballyduff gem and celebrated with a community bird walk and talk maybe? The invasive alien plant species Himalayan balsam was noted on the banks of the Glounagad stream at the back of the church. Seek the guidance of your Local Authority Community Water Officer (www.lawaters.ie) in dealing with this plant as its seeds will be flowing on down to the nearby Blackwater and causing more trouble for Ballyduff’s local biodiversity! We very much enjoyed a walk down the lovely Barrack Lane which has a whole host of native Irish woodland plants. We saw many ferns, hogweed, elder, ivy, enchanters nightshade and lords and ladies amongst other woodlands herbs. It must be lovely in springtime with the wild garlic and bluebells. We also saw the uncommon but very interesting parasitic plant the Ivy broomrape. There was evidence that lots of fairies live on the lane and we noted how they very kindly have not nailed their doors into the trees thus not causing any unintended tree damage! This must be such an ideal spot for easy biodiversity education and again a place where the informative signs need a more weatherproof set up.

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

Your bulb recycling is a very sustainable project and fascinating to hear of the old variety of daffodil. While daffodils have a huge role to play in cheering us humans up in early spring, unfortunately they are generally of no use to the starving bumblebees emerging from hibernation at that time. So we recommend that if possible you intersperse your daffodils with crocuses, snowdrops and grape hyacinths. This could be a gradual project over the coming years and an added benefit is that it will prolong the period that you have lovely blossoms in spring. The recycling clothes project with your school is most helpful and well done for having such an active role in it. You demonstrate a good awareness of sustainable issues and how they pertain to your local community. The TidyTowns Handbook will also have more ideas and guidance for you. As for many biodiversity issues, a lot of this category is about creating awareness of the issues in your locality and making locals feel enabled and empowered to make a difference.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Ballyduff was clean as a whistle on adjudication day so well done here as we know that lots of work goes into getting a village to look so well. Also keep up your efforts in relation to your dog fouling campaign as the message must be hitting home. This is a difficult issue for groups all over Ireland but being proactive is really important.

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

As mentioned above, all Ballyduff’s residential areas looked very well on adjudication day. Reaching out to homeowners as you do and being a support is the way to go and it adds for more community spirit and the whole ‘rising tide floating all boats’ ethos!

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

We loved the simplicity of re-using old bicycles with planters at your approach roads. Just make sure to use pollinator-friendly plants and you’ll be ticking both sustainability and biodiversity boxes. Your care with local gates is noticeable and your awareness of letting ivy be where possible because it is of such huge biodiversity value. Where it is potentially causing a top heavy problem for a wall etc then a ‘short back and sides’ haircut is alright outside the

nest season – and making sure there are no hibernating bats! We loved the different examples of wall art around Ballyduff and particularly appreciated the humorous photos in your competition entry! Good luck with the proposed road calming project – another example of where TidyTowns groups can be of invaluable help to their local communities in a lobbying and informing role with their Local Authorities.

Concluding Remarks:

We were so impressed with our visit to Ballyduff Upper. You clearly have a fantastically strong community spirit inclusive of all from the youngest to the oldest. You also show great awareness of the other part of Ballyduff's local community – the wild part and all your plant and animal residents too! TidyTowns groups like yourselves can play a huge role in how we at the grass roots can play our parts in reversing our Climate and Biodiversity crises. Keep up your great work and we look forward to our next visit!