

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tallow - Tulach an Iarainn** Ref: **1043**
County: **Waterford** Mark: **272**
Category: **B** Date(s): **01/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	35	36
Streetscape & Public Places	80	34	35
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	41	42
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	17	18
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	10	11
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	39
TOTAL MARK	550	264	272

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! Thank you for your three year plan. The Church of Ireland graveyard project sounds most interesting and has the capacity to make a huge difference to the quality of life in Tallow with such a beautiful historical place made accessible. For your future TidyTowns competition entries, it will be most useful just to draw up a simple table for each category of the competition and your plans – it might only be one line and then an indication of what year you would like to achieve this or if it's maintenance then it might be ongoing. The TidyTowns Handbook will have lots more helpful guidance for you.

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

The streets of Tallow feature many examples of beautiful, different styles of vernacular Irish architecture. Many of these buildings hark back to a busy, interesting past. Convent Street and the Main Square open out into a lovely wide vista from Barrack Street. The Irish streetscape, however, can be a bit grey and some softening with green landscaping can make a world of difference! Has consideration ever been given to the possibility of sacrificing just three or four half car parking spaces to allow for trees to be planted? The proposed Church of Ireland graveyard project will cover a few categories of the TidyTowns competition. The wrought iron gates and railings are an important part of the streetscape on Mill Road. They are absolutely beautiful but in need of a lot of refurbishment work. However, going on the experience of other such projects, it is absolutely worth all the effort when they are restored to their original beauty. The dragon sculpture is very dramatic and impressive in Sean Hyde Park! What is the story behind it? Is it carved from a tree that used to stand there? What is the dragon link to Tallow? Please make sure to pass on a bit more information in your entry next year! We have come across several of these impressive wooden sculptures all around co. Waterford. Have you thought of getting together with the other towns and villages and forming a sculpture trail?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The Kingfisher mural is stunning eye-catcher and a very fitting place to have it. The orchard area in front of it would make a nice area to let the grass and wildflowers grow longer and just mow some grass paths through the area. The fence behind the dragon sculpture in Sean Hyde Park was looking a little empty after tree clearances. This might be a good spot to plant native hedgerow extending from the lovely hedges along the Ramp Boreen? Or you could extend the community orchard idea and have an edible hedge here planted with fruit and nut trees? It's such an accessible area, it would give great scope for community events incorporating the fruit harvests in the future. The

old church and graveyard project has huge potential to add to the quality of life for all in Tallow. Get all the professional help you can! We trust that the funding secured includes the completion of a comprehensive specialist study plan incorporating the history, landscape architecture and ecology of the site? No doubt your Waterford Heritage Officer is on board to guide you here. The beautiful, mature lime, copper beech, elder and hazel trees form an integral part of the character and beauty of the graveyard so ensure you have the correct type of tree expert on board to advise as the lopping and chopping of mature trees is a very delicate business that can easily go wrong from aesthetic as well as ecological perspectives! We look forward to the progress of this wonderful local project over the coming years. While colourful, the planting in pots and various beds along Tallow's streets were disappointingly all filled with annuals of no use to pollinators (Begonias, Pelargoniums and Petunias) and no sustainability value either. The Pollinator Planting Code mentioned below will have lots of suggestions for a good mix of bulbs, sustainable annuals and perennials for your future planting schemes. Our Biodiversity Crisis needs to be tackled in all areas of our lives – not just certain designated areas!

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

Your wildlife area at the Ramp Boreen is beautiful and it was alive with birdsong the evening we visited. The River Glenaboy here featured many lovely plants indicative of high biodiversity value such as water crowfoot, water mint, water parsnip and some lovely forget-me-nots growing along its banks. The only disappointment in this area was the needless use of herbicide along the base of the wall and around the base of the fruit trees. TidyTowns can play a great role in helping to inform the public about the misuse of these poisonous chemicals in our local environment. This wildlife area is overlooked by the most resplendent kingfisher who you tell us was seen by the artist on the first visit here. Kingfishers are at the top of the biodiversity tree along Irish rivers and streams – indicative of a healthy ecosystem but the use of herbicide in the vicinity is completely at odds with such a healthy environment. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has a helpful leaflet 'Straight A's for Amenity' on their website with guidance in relation to weed control in amenity areas. The first course of action is to think are these actually weeds and do they need to be removed? The grassy edges at the base of walls, hedges and ditches are in fact very valuable nesting habitats for many pollinator species – so there is actually a little less work needed in this lovely part of Tallow – good news for precious TidyTowns volunteers' time! It also struck us that the this area of grass around the orchard could be managed as a short wildflower meadow i.e. mown once a month or so in order to allow the shorter wildflowers such as dandelions, clovers, selfheal etc to flower but still short enough to walk over. Or some parts could be left to grow into tall wildflower areas and have attractive grass paths mown through? You feature some absolutely beautiful wildlife photos on your facebook page – you clearly have an eagle-eyed, very talented wildlife photographer in your midst. Your calendar using the photos must have been a very popular buy. The Biodiversity Crisis is at a critical juncture in Ireland but TidyTowns can help in many ways including sharing on local social media the brilliant information that is freely available at authoritative websites such as: www.pollinators.ie ; www.epa.ie; and www.npws.ie is another great role for TidyTowns groups. Indeed, an important role for TidyTowns groups is to ensure that their wider communities are aware of any local conservation areas and in Tallow, the River Blackwater SAC extends back to Sean Hyde Park and on up the River Glenaboy – this means that this area contains habitats of international importance that are protected under European Law. Check out the maps section of www.npws.ie for more details. You make no mention of an awareness of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan but you have a few areas that you manage for pollinators and some others that are in planning. Remember to refer to and use the many helpful and freely available guidance and information at www.pollinators.ie and to spread the word about it to your wider community in Tallow via newsletters and social media. The really helpful Pollinator Planting Code being a great case in point as it provides really helpful lists of pollinator-friendly perennials, bulbs and annuals for all types of areas and gardeners! Perhaps the kind sponsorship offered by the new fuel station could be used to print pollinator friendly signs and guides for use in the community. Several sign templates are available for use at www.pollinators.ie also you could organise for a bird or bat expert to visit Tallow and run a community bat walk and barbeque for example?

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

You demonstrate a good awareness of sustainable issues and how they pertain to your local community. You list a variety of projects on the sustainable theme that you are working on in your locality. 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. The solar powered public lighting system sounds very sustainable with just one word of caution re. your plans to light walkways – if this means the nature walk area of the Ramp Boreen, you also need to take cognisance of photophobic wildlife such as bats and how strong lighting at night has negative impacts upon wildlife such as birds and insects as it confuses them. Do your research to find a solution – it may even be as simple as lowering the height of the light standard or even ensuring the light is not on constantly but responds to a motion sensor. In the Biodiversity Crisis battles that we are fighting, this is an increasingly more important issue as we realise the importance of dark skies for biodiversity. We're delighted to hear about the Foroige garden – please include some photos for next year's entry.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

All your hard work on keeping Tallow tidy and litter free has paid off as it was looking very well on adjudication day. We know this takes a great effort with contributions from many different groups across the town including the local Tus and CE scheme workers. Many towns and villages across Ireland now have poster-free status but having the one central board is another practical approach to this particular litter problem. The bottle cage for recycleables was noted across several towns and villages and it appears to be a great success.

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

The Alms houses are a beautiful introduction to Tallow as one approaches from the Youghal Road. Their distinctive architecture is beautifully set off by the lovely gardens which we know were planted by Tallow TidyTowns. We noticed some lovely areas of clover-rich short wildflower meadows in green areas of housing estates but some also had herbicide-sprayed edges. Also there is potential for lots more trees to be planted in green areas of housing estates, road verges and at Hyde Park. Have you come across the charity 'Trees on the Land'? They work with many Irish community groups distributing free native Irish sapling trees. Having a free tree giveaway for residents can be a great way of holding a community event that spreads awareness of the crucial environmental work that TidyTowns does.

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

You have some lovely grass verges on your approach roads to Tallow. The central bed beside Tallow Bridge does need a more impactful central feature marking the approach to Tallow. Perhaps another wooden sculpture? Or a lovely feature tree? We noticed the wildflower area at the Youghal approach. The long grass verge at the fence line is perfect bumblebee nesting habitat so this is great to see – hopefully a good example to follow for other verges on approach roads which had been sprayed. It is fantastic to hear of how you are keeping a close eye on the accessibility of Tallow and how all paths will be wheelchair-friendly by July 2022. This is a terrific achievement that other towns and villages can follow.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done to all concerned in looking after Tallow. It is such a beautifully situated town along the meandering Blackwater river and featuring so many beautiful historical buildings. You also have lots of great plans for the future and we very much look forward to seeing their progression on our next visit!