

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Enniskerry</b>	Ref: <b>255</b>
County: <b>Wicklow</b>	Mark: <b>288</b>
Category: <b>C</b>	Date(s): <b>02/07/2022</b>

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	47
Streetscape & Public Places	80	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	41
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	27
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	11
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	33
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>288</b>

### **Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:**

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 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 keep up the great work.

Enniskerry are most welcome back to the competition after a hiatus of 6 years. It is always a pleasure to see the return of a centre that has a rich history of participation in the competition. It is clear to see you have continued work apace in the intervening period. Your committee & volunteers are well supported by the local business & general community in addition to accessing funding & advice from public bodies & agencies.

It is wonderful to see that the Parochial Halls are used for many community activities ranging from clubs to classes to meet ups. Your focus on accessible access for all to the village & its amenities is commendable.

Engagement with the next generation is critical to so many aspects of the work of the Tidy Towns. Thus having secondary & primary students involved in projects & experiencing nature at first hand is well worthwhile. Your involvement with the Shaking Bog Festival & Fighting Words provides a great shared experience. Are any of your schools involved in the Green Schools program? Having sports organizations involved is a great way to achieve a lot with a large group in a short period of time.

Social media is an excellent forum for getting your messages across & regular use of both your Facebook & Instagram ensures a wider audience. These media are excellent at determining whether your message is reaching the community & having an impact.

Community events are a great opportunity for the residents to mingle especially now post pandemic lockdowns. Well done on the Santa Claus drive through, Valentine's Day competition, performing bands & other events. The photos on social media show how much these events are enjoyed by the community.

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

As a designated Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), you are fortunate to have a number of protected structures. The shop fronts are of a high architectural & aesthetic quality & positively contribute to the town's landscape. The support of the business community is critical & mutually beneficial. The Shop Front Improvement scheme has assisted small independent businesses sensitively restore & refurbish their shop facades which enhances the streetscape & make them more attractive for shoppers & residents. It is good to see local businesses support one another. On the day of adjudication, it was clear Enniskerry is a destination for visitors, cyclists, cookery lesson

participants, dog walkers & hikers and the businesses were busy with customers.

The Clock Tower is a wonderful focal point & the replacement of the existing surface with native granite will, once completed, be more appropriate. Your installation of low-level lighting for nighttime illumination is best practice. The plans for the sympathetic restoration of the Clock Tower as part of the Village Renewal Scheme, given its high visual value, will be most welcomed by all as no doubt is the new chiming mechanism.

Street infrastructure in the form of railings & light poles are often overlooked & it is clear from the work you have undertaken the impact of these when they are maintained to a high standard. Certainly the before pictures supplied attest to the hard work involved & during the adjudicator's visit they were gleaming. The public convenience with its striking Fair Trade poster was spotless. What are your plans for the old telephone kiosk?

Your active involvement with the Village Renewal Plan cannot be underestimated & the completion of the project next year will be eagerly anticipated. The availability of free parking & the relocation of the bus terminus to the Bog Meadow must ease the pressure for parking within the village centre. Although on the day of adjudication, it was obvious many visitors missed the sign for the parking, as there were a lot of cars parked on the roads leading out of the village. The plan to upgrade footpaths is welcomed as cracked & broken areas were apparent.

Families will welcome the plans that are afoot for the playground at the Bog Meadow site due for completion next year. A walking trail & outdoor play facilities are an excellent combination. The sports grounds as you indicated have plans afoot for development & as seen on adjudication day the funding "test tube" is climbing steadily towards the 100k target. The Staghead willow hut at the entrance is remarkable & was well used by congregating teenagers to shelter from the rain while the adjudicator visited.

The History & Nature Walk map is a great resource for visitors as the suggested route encourages further exploration. Despite some inclement weather, your adjudicator enjoyed the trail & the ease of access from it to the Knocksink Nature Reserve. Within a few meters you are taken away from modern life & immersed in greenery with the sound of running water – blissful. The viewing platform over the river offers a most unusual vista under Enniskerry Bridge – a wedding photographer's dream backdrop. With all the additional enhancements, the map will need updating to avoid missing out. Your plans for bilingual signage are welcomed & good signage is essential for all your visitors.

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

Enniskerry is fortunate to have within the village environs Knocksink Woods SAC & the Bog Meadow to which residents & visitors have ready access. These public green spaces no doubt were eagerly visited over the past 2 years in particular. The planned community garden, Dixons Meadow, from the design sketch supplied will become an important public amenity & legacy for the community. We look forward to its maturity over the coming years.

Your employment of an ecologist is reaping real benefits as seen in the planting schema undertaken at the Clock Tower, Monastery Cross & the Church Road planters. There is an opportunity to infill the area under the 2 red robin trees at the Clock Tower. The lavender was in full bloom & the dahlias were just about to flower. The wildflower areas at the Bog Meadow car park will take time to flourish. Where did you source the wildflower seed mix it appeared some were non-native? Here is a link to research on unregulated wildflowers & it is interesting <https://pollinators.ie/the-elephant-in-the-room-wildflower-seed-mixes/> There may be an opportunity to sow pollinator friendly spring bulbs there this autumn. Your semi-natural woodland settling is complimented by the Town Clock planted beds, the planters & residents gardens. The stone troughs outside the Spar shop were striking in colour & the cosmos attracting lots of insects. Is it planned to replace the planters outside the Parochial Hall & across the road with planters similar to the ones near the Clock Tower? A coordinated approach works best in a small area.

Trees provide form & character for our urban areas thus your plans to seek tree preservation orders on mature specimens is a good strategy. Your local Environmental Awareness Officer will be able to assist & the Trees for Ireland website is a good source of information [www.crann.ie](http://www.crann.ie) You have a good plan in place for the maintenance of newly planted trees. There are so many opportunities to source trees for planting – Easy Treesie (<https://easytreesie.com/>) your local council during national Tree Week & "DC for Bees" (<https://www.hostinireland.com/dc-s-for-bees>) who supply fruit trees to establish mini orchards.

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

Enniskerry is a nature oasis situated as it is between 2 rivers & within mountain foothills. Since your last entry, it is welcome news that Knocksink Woods was granted a Special Area Conservation (SAC) status. The creation of a Biodiversity subgroup who will work with an ecologist will allow a focus on this area that otherwise can become peripheral to other work. The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) analysis completed will provide a framework for progress in the area. The focus on pollinator friendly planting schema is in line with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) & it was lovely to see so many perennial & pollinator friendly plants.

Your plan to engage with the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) on reopening the educational site there is worthy of pursuance given the increased demand for access to nature. Once again appropriate signage is essential & we look forward in anticipation to completion of your plans.

It is such an asset to have local rivers where the water quality is deemed pristine when the latest water quality data shows 47% of our surface waters are in an "unsatisfactory" ecological status. Your neighbours in Delgany &

Greystones have completed significant work in this area & before commencing any surveys or studies it would be beneficial to meet with them.

The Bog Meadow new planting scheme will take time to mature however in time it will create habitats for biodiversity. Soft landscaping of car parks is often overlooked so it was a pleasure to see extensive planting around its surrounds – fruit trees, pollinator friendly flowers & shrubs & native wildflowers. There are a lot of plans afoot for the Bog Meadow & with the completion date timetabled for next year, we will await with interest to see how your plans progress. We wish you success in your application for a grant to erect information boards on Bog Meadow's Nature Trail to highlight the biodiversity there.

With areas of wildflowers planted, you will be in a position to save your own seeds for future planting. Wicklow Libraries has established a Community Seed Ark, which is available to communities to draw from & contribute to. It is always best practice to encourage local wildflowers to germinate & thrive. We have referenced in the above section the importance of sourcing the wildflowers. The provision of signage for the wildflower area at the bank outside Millfield would be beneficial.

Invasive species monitoring & reporting to the local County Council is imperative as they have the means & methods with which to deal with the problem. Again your policy of not using herbicides to treat weeds is in line with the AIPP.

The Tidy Towns updated handbook is an excellent source of inspiration as is the National Biodiversity Data Centre & the website [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie) There are great opportunities to engage with the local schools on monitoring surveys – garden butterflies, spring flowers, bumblebees etc. The Flower Insect Timed (FIT) count is very popular with children & a lovely family activity as is the New Year Plant Hunt [www.bsbi.org](http://www.bsbi.org)

Residents with gardens have such an important part to play in the biodiversity challenge facing us. There is an excellent publication on Wicklow County Council's website entitled "Gardening for Biodiversity" which provides guidance for gardeners. They may also be able to provide cuttings & plants that could be used in planters & beds.

Consideration of your uplighting to minimize nocturnal wildlife disruption is so important & excellent to see this was considered at both the Bog Meadow & the Clock Tower.

If there is infill space between your spring bulbs do consider adding in more pollinator friendly bulbs like crocus, grape hyacinth & snowdrops as daffodils unfortunately provide little food for hungry bees. Have you plans for any landscaping around the Recycling area – if yes, do leave some exposed bank for mining bees.

It is great to hear you have a healthy local bat population. Have you had the opportunity to engage with Bat Conservation Ireland to identify the species residing in Enniskerry? If you have the option, do organize a bat walk & introduce the community to these amazing mammals while expanding the collective knowledge. We wish you success on our grant submission for a bat mural on Kingfishers Café's wall and your plans for a bat study. The wall & fence murals at The Pantry provide a lovely backdrop for coffee stops.

It would be marvelous to identify your oak tree butterflies & note their existence on the National Biodiversity Data Centre. It could be the rare Purple Hairstreak!

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

You are indeed fortunate to have a local business, Poppies Café's who "walks the walk" re sustainable practices in their business - rainwater for flushing toilets, spent coffee grounds offered to gardeners, purchasing from local suppliers, solar hot water, segregated bins etc. A partnership with this business on engaging other local businesses in the Green Hospitality program may be worth considering. Do your group use rainwater for watering plants & containers?

Choosing to buy from local Irish companies who specialize in making products from recycled materials i.e. recycled planters, new benches & seating is mutually beneficial. This is an example of the circular economy at work. Your support for other local businesses is commendable. The wooden sculpture at the entrance to the Nature Trail is striking & very much in keeping with its location & an apt choice of material.

The sharing of resources between community groups makes financial sense as well as using resources more efficiently. The segregation of waste reduces the amount going to landfill & although it is not a pleasant task, it is worthwhile. It would be interesting to survey on a trial basis what are the most frequently littered items & when waste is segregated, how much can be either recycled or composted.

The decision to choose uplighters on the Town Hall & Parochial Hall that are low energy was a sensible option as is the plan to upgrade the street lighting to low energy.

The location of bike parking at Bog Meadow offers visitors & residents alike the opportunity to leave the car at home & get on their bikes. Many times it is the absence of such a facility that deters people from cycling. We note the Powerscourt Hotel has an electric vehicle charging point. Are there any planned for the village?

The creation of your Climate Action program this year will assist you in achieving your goals. The Tidy Towns updated handbook has a wealth of suggestions in this area so do delve into it for ideas and use your social media to

create awareness.

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

The adoption of the Pure Mile Project is an excellent way to cover all areas & make the task manageable. Well done to each of the 5 teams. The segregation of waste is important in order to divert items for recycling & composting & reduce the amount of waste heading to landfill. Your strategy of doing this as you litter pick is sensible & time saving.

The provision of 6 "Bin the Butt" bins offers no excuse for cigarette littering. A number of those seen on adjudication day needed emptying. It is most helpful that the council take responsibility for the Big Bertha & recycling bins.

Unfortunately, while most dog owners are responsible, a small minority spoils it for all. The erection of 8 "Pick up your Dog Poo" signs at the walking trails will remind those lax owners of their responsibilities. Is it intended to provide a dispenser with waste bags?

The panorama of an urban area is enhanced when overhead electrical cables are invisible & this is certainly the case in Enniskerry. Also the absence of billboards & other advertising paraphernalia is most welcome & creates such a clear vista. Your local businesses are to be complimented on adhering to this policy.

Some footpaths & kerb sides on the day of adjudication were in need of weeding e.g. Church Hill. While cobblestones are very attractive the maintenance involved in maintaining them to a high standard is intense. We note you plan to liaise with Wicklow County Council on repainting current poles. The work you have completed on the railings & other poles to date stands in stark contrast so well done.

The village centre had some litter at the seating areas at the Clock Tower despite a litterbin nearby. There was also littering around the Bog Meadow car park, on the Nature trail again despite the provision of litterbins. The Recycling bins were impeccably maintained & easily accessible for all.

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

Enniskerry residents & business owners obviously have a great sense of pride in their abodes & premises & there is a high standard of maintenance. It is quite unparalleled to have almost 100% of properties freshly painted unless a US President's visit is impending! During the visit, it was lovely to see the old archways beside residences retained with pedestrian access.

The standard approach to estate name signs displayed on stone creates a uniformity that works well in a village environ. It is encouraging that estates are leaving areas unmown. It is encouraging that estates are leaving areas unmown. They may be open to having a mini orchard located in a portion of their green common areas, always worth asking.

The establishment of a playground will be most welcomed by families & well done for progressing the plans & fund raising to realize the project. Hopefully the project will make the final hurdle.

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

The maintenance of 10 km of Heritage granite walls on the approach roads is no simple task. The photos supplied show how much work is involved in this work. While ivy can, if left to get a hold, damage a wall, it is best to trim it back where it has gained a foothold or where small, remove the shoots. Stonewalls are home to a variety of wild plants & animals that do no harm to the walls. Your planned study of your heritage walls with the assistance of the local Heritage Officer will determine what action, if any, is required.

The pedestrian crossing, while faintly marked, appears to be no longer in use as cars were parked on both sides. Is this the case?

The wild red stag willow & wire sculpture at Monastery Cross is superb & its location amongst mature birch & growing Acers is the most wonderful backdrop. It is the epitome of what Enniskerry embodies.

Having read your submission & workplans for the future, it was not apparent if you have plans for the approach road signage. It may be worth consideration.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It was a pleasure to revisit Enniskerry after many years & there is no doubting its attraction for visitors & potential residents. Your future plans are inspiring & based on your achievements to date, these too will come to fruition. The hand drawn map was very easy to follow, thank you. Your submission was very informative as were the many accompanying documents. You may find liaising with other Tidy Towns groups like your close neighbours, Delgany & Greystones provides you with additional insight on how they complete their submissions. There is much to be gained by Tidy Towns groups meeting up & sharing experiences.

