

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Knockananna - Cnoc an Eanaigh</b>	Ref: <b>247</b>
County: <b>Wicklow</b>	Mark: <b>331</b>
Category: <b>A</b>	Date(s): <b>07/07/2022</b>

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	45	47
Streetscape & Public Places	80	46	47
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	45	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	30	31
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	33	34
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>331</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.

How wonderful to hear of a community where volunteerism is vibrant & healthy. We have all come to realize how much we need our community & isn't it amazing that once you create a forum, the weekly coffee morning, residents gravitate there. The organic nature of the weekly gathering sounds like it could morph into a Repair Café with the passing on of knitting & sewing skills.

Many groups find the annual financial burden of running the Tidy Towns operation burdensome so your monthly car boot sale is a great way to raise funds while once again providing a community meet-up. Your engagement with so many other community groups & agencies reflects how well the community works together to achieve project completions. Shopping local has provided you with great support from local businesses amid more difficult times for them.

Your visibility as you engage in your work in the village is the best communication medium. What better way to demonstrate your ethos. The fact that you can call on so many to assist & others who take on responsibilities for specific areas provides amazing support to your group. As many families are time poor, social media extends your reach & your following is close to four times your population, well done.

Your close connection with the school is commendable. The involvement of the children in local projects & work provides them with an opportunity to take part, contribute & leave a legacy. It always helps when there is a fun element & although all the fairy doors were not in situ on the day of the visit, those that were demonstrated the childrens' artistic talent. Knockananna's youth are to be commended for fund raising for village Christmas lights to lift everyone's spirits. What a lovely memory to relive annually.

Your collective engagement on the Ukraine crisis & in the wake of Aisling Murphy's death are reflective of a quote of Coretta Scott King "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members".

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

Knockananna is fortunate to have the heritage centre, Blanchelle Centre, recorded as part of Ireland's architectural

heritage. It is fantastic to see in your 2024 plans that you intend through fundraising & a heritage grant to restore its windows. They will make an important contribution to the visual character of the building. The church next door with its fresh façade was well presented. The church graveyard with its stone walled enclosure has such interesting & unusual headstones. The church grotto area & path leading to it would benefit from some maintenance.

You are fortunate to have fields that open onto the main thoroughfare of the village & the field beside the forge with its newly installed gate with sheep grazing presents a lovely pastoral scene.

The Holy Year grotto & 1798 monument with the restoration & enhancements to the former present well-maintained areas with no shortage of seating, perfect for meet-ups.

The Community Hall is looking resplendent after its final upgrades have been completed & ideal that parking could be provided on site. The location of a school within a village is such a bonus & the standard of presentation was excellent. The old forge with the cartwheel displayed outside is such an iconic image & wonderfully maintained as is the colourful village pump. How unique, a Credit Union housed in a thatched cottage.

Ongoing engagement with the local council on issues relating to speeding, footpath upgrading, lighting and bicycle parking bay is essential. However it takes time & perseverance to achieve results. Based on your achievements to date, there is no doubt your end goals will be attained.

The provision of seating within a village is important as a stopping point & an opportunity for social interactions. Those in Knockananna were in good order & complemented their surroundings. Poles, signposts & bollards were also in good condition.

The business premises in the village maintain their buildings & exteriors to a high standard. Unfortunately the Health Centre in contrast is looking down at heel. Are there plans for the building & general site as it has quite a length of road frontage within the village?

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

The landscaping within the village is simply beautiful with lots of colour & variety. You are fortunate to have retained mature trees within the village. The stonewalls add a wonderful backdrop to the perennial flowers, hedging & shrubs as do the planted stone troughs on the church perimeter wall. The rockery has matured well with a great variety of flowers & shrubs on display. The planting in green areas rather than containers is encouraging to see as this reduces maintenance & water usage. An assessment of your existing containers, their location & quantity would be worthwhile e.g. beside the seat between the old forge & school, at the Holy Year grotto, under the white roses at the Community Hall etc. The inbuilt planters at the Credit Union provide colour & the move to more perennial planting is encouraging. The mature roses at the Community Hall entrance & at the 1798 memorial were bursting forth with blooms & scent. The colourful planters at the front of the Community hall softens the hard landscaping & the photinia will provide great all year round colour, are drought resistant & if allowed to flower are magnets for bees.

There is a great sense of satisfaction in having reached the stage where you can split existing plants & shrubs & save seeds instead of purchasing additions. The cotoneaster & grisilina hedging are thriving. The lawned area behind the library was covered in clover & the perimeter planting of hollyhocks softens the wall behind. Thriving clover was on display once again in front of the Holy Year Cross area.

The contrast of the old & new graveyards with the different maintenance plans works well. The range of wildflowers on show on adjudication day was impressive & a good idea to use notices to remind visitors of the reason this area is left largely untended. It is lovely to see the presence of the protected old yew trees.

The Community playground with its natural surfaces & perfect location is a fantastic local amenity & well looked after by all.

The Community Garden is so accessible & there was no shortage of produce - rhubarb, strawberries, gooseberries, courgettes & blueberries. Kyle Park's mini orchard with its apple & plum trees was flourishing.

Your new Sensory Garden is a remarkable project for a community. Its accessibility for all members of the community irrespective of their ability, age & mobility is commendable. Your adjudicator's head was spinning with all that there was to see, smell & touch & the backdrop of the meadow with resting cattle & swooping swallows was idyllic. No visitor, irrespective of age, could be overwhelmed by the space. One can only imagine how the trees & shrubs as they mature will infill the space & make the seating areas more enclosed & protected. The fact that all the work was carried out by the community is a tribute to your collective spirit. Well done on an excellent job.

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

We are all on a learning curve in this area & it is exciting to hear you are planning for year round pollinator planting to ensure no fallow periods. Once you begin to pay attention it is incredible what you notice so well done on identifying the predominant bees residing in Knockananna & especially involving the children. As you will be aware, there are many surveys & monitoring schemes that you can carry out through the National Biodiversity Data Centre. <https://biodiversityireland.ie> & on [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie)

What a wonderful project for the school to have the children complete a summer flower & animal survey while on

holidays & then share the results on their return to school in September. Your plan for a pollinators project with the school during the 2022/2023 year is a great idea & we look forward to the results next year.

As referenced in the previous section, the wildflower area in the old graveyard is an oasis for biodiversity as indeed are the yew trees. The pollinator friendly perennials are so important & it is encouraging to see you move increasingly in this direction. It takes time to bring everyone with you & making some space for annuals that are nectar rich is a good compromise.

It would be interesting to hear next year if your bird & bat boxes were occupied & by whom. Also which bat species is residing in the football field ivy covered walls? Bat Conservation Ireland hold Bat walks & talks in communities & it may be worthwhile reaching out to them as your participants clearly enjoyed the one held in Altamont Gardens. The annual Garden Bird survey run by Birdwatch Ireland offers a good opportunity to monitor visiting birds & record them. While crows & magpies can overtake bird tables & feeders one has to admire their ingenuity in gaining access to feeders. As you report seeing more bird species, there is an online bird recording portal, BirdTrack where you can store sightings & is a year round scheme.

When nature is impacted by disease, it has repercussions e.g. foxes losing their food source as a result of myxomatosis. As deer have no natural predators due to the extermination of wolves, their population continues to increase. Good news though to hear hares & badgers have been sighted returning to the area.

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

Your library is one of the best stocked libraries your adjudicator has visited & giving responsibility to the children for its stocking levels is a great initiative. Is there any reason it remains incognito in the telephone box?

Rainwater harvesting off the Community Hall roof is such a good use of this large surface area & much better for plants than chlorinated water. You will have no shortage of water with 2 IBCs in addition to the existing ones elsewhere! Is the village pump working & if yes, is the water potable? Some communities have worked with Refill Ireland to install water taps although you may not need to if your water supply is suitable. It would be worth checking with the local council.

You garden in a very sustainable manner – homemade feed, horse manure, leaf mould, seed saving, plant subdividing, focus on perennial plants, infill planting & rain water for watering. The demonstration of these skills & methodology to other community members is a great practice. The availability of these additional plants for sale to fund Tidy Towns activities is an additional bonus. The availability of a polytunnel allows you to grow more & for an extended period of time. On adjudicator day, there was a plethora of vegetables in various growing stages in the raised beds, in the polytunnel, along the fencing & in tyres. You are certainly maximizing the space for produce. There is a significant amount of work & maintenance involved in this area & the results are incredible.

Your monthly car boot sales are an ideal forum for sales of items no longer required. Well done on using unwanted material to create cushion covers & using the apples & plum tree harvests to make jams for sale. You have the foundations of a great Repair Café with the addition of a volunteer learning the skill of clothes upcycling.

Your approach to TNR (trap, neuter & release) of the local feral feline population is the epitome of responsibility & you have the added benefits of reducing harm to the wild bird population & ensuring a healthy cat population.

Any opportunity to reduce car usage is to be encouraged & if you can provide a facility for car-pooling by local residents it will be welcomed for both economic & environmental reasons.

As you have plans to upgrade the Community Hall heating system that will reduce fuel consumption as a result of a more efficient boiler & zoned heating, it may be an opportune time to share via social media tips on energy conservation. Check out [www.seai.ie](http://www.seai.ie) & the updated Tidy Towns handbook for further information.

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

The village centre was litter free, footpaths & kerb sides were weed free & drains clear of debris. It is clear that the regular litter patrols work well & a relief to hear Knockananna is noticing a reduction in litter collected. It would be interesting to evaluate on one or two litter picks what percentage is diverted to recycling or compost. Some communities have found between 70% & 85% of the litter they collected could be diverted from landfill.

Street furniture was clean & well presented. It would be worth conducting a survey of “vacant” poles within the village & if there are any redundant ones, liaising with the council to have them removed. Less clutter.

The recycling centre, now relocated, provides safe access & parking. However, on adjudication day there were items strewn about under & in front of the receptacles. Are there development plans for the areas close to the recycling bay as the initial impression on driving in is remarkably different to that of the village itself?

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

Village residences are presented to a high standard & the gardens & flowering containers provide great colour & interest. The thatched cottages in the village can only be described as picturesque.

Knockmullan Drive is fortunate to have such a large green space with some trees & a wildflower bank. They have great potential to add an edible hedge, mini orchard or more trees. Check out "DC for Bees" who are seeking communities in which to establish mini orchards. There are a number of initiatives for tree planting – Easy Treesie [www.easytreesie.com](http://www.easytreesie.com); Neighbourhood Scheme through Teagasc & the Tree Council's National Tree Week. The footpath access to the village & its amenities is ideal & a tidy up of the kerb sides would enhance the appearance.

Kyle Park is situated in a lovely woodland glade & it was great to see they have adopted a less intensive mowing regime allowing wildflowers to thrive. Their mini orchard is flourishing. The stone signage for both developments is very much in keeping with the landscape.

It was disappointing not to be able to use the Mass Path as there was some debris at the entrance & a latticed gate at the exit to the field. It did not appear to be readily accessible.

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

The new signage creates a good first impression & there is quite a variety to the landscaping surrounding the signs – wildflower meadow, short cut verges & stone planters. You are fortunate to have beautiful tree lined roads with ivy clad & exposed stone walls on many of your approaches.

The Tinahely Road with the screech hedge, fruit trees & memorial flowerbed set off against the minimally cut verges & healthy hedgerows presents a wonderful vista. The pathway closer to the village, from the memorial up to the playground, would benefit from edging & in September the overgrowth cut back for easier access. The vegetation was obscuring the caution children sign.

On entering the village from the Moyne direction, it would appear there are some road works still to be completed close to the Community Hall. Once the road is repaired & the verge leveled, the existing hypericum will once again be to the forefront.

How lovely to see local man, Jimmy Byrne, immortalised with a miniature cottage & planting scheme on the hill road.

The creation of a 6km looped walk on a quiet approach road that joins the Wicklow Way is a fantastic amenity for locals & visitors.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It is quite outstanding what Knockananna community has achieved to date & within the past 12 months. Your collaborative spirit in completing projects to a high standard always with the needs of the community at the core attest to how & why the village & its environs look so well. It was your adjudicator's first visit to Knockananna & it was a pleasure to see all the village had on offer.

We look forward to seeing the maturing of the sensory garden & the outcome of your pollinator project with the school. There is no surprise in hearing that many people wish to reside in Knockananna. Close engagement with Wicklow County Council & prospective developers will be essential in ensuring the village benefits from the changes & the environs are protected for future generations.