

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Roundwood - An Tóchar** Ref: **246**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **331**
Category: **B** Date(s): **20/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	48	50
Streetscape & Public Places	80	41	42
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	36	37
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	35	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	35	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	40	41
TOTAL MARK	550	320	331

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.

Firstly, congratulations on becoming a registered charity as there is a significant volume of work & time involved in such an undertaking. Your small core committee has a fantastic band of subcommittees & volunteers to call upon. The support you receive from other local community groups, agencies & businesses is amazing. These relationships are critical to open communication, funding streams, feet on the ground & expert advice. Being part of the umbrella organization, RDCC creates such a cohesive unit within a community as everyone's interests are represented.

It never ceases to astonish what a small community group can achieve while at an institutional level progress is slow. What an amazing response from Roundwood to effectively set up a home for a refuge family of five & then embrace them into the community fold through education, sport & social contacts. The Road to Lough Dan initiative epitomises what an Irish welcome entails – assistance with how Irish bureaucracy works, transport, social gatherings & an introduction to Irish cultural activities. How wonderful that the community are benefitting from their respective skills.

There is no doubting the use Roundwood make of social media & the Internet to create awareness, inform & provide a platform for residents. Judging by the number of followers you have an engaged audience.

The involvement of the local school in Tidy Towns categories is essential. The school is to be congratulated for achieving 5 Green Schools Flags to date & working towards their 6th, Global Citizenship: Litter & Waste. In each year's submission, do keep us updated with the school's progress in this area. Transition Year students working towards their Gaisce awards are an invaluable source of ideas, energy & technical knowhow. Delighted to see one is involved with a design project.

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

The village's linear layout presents an attractive vista to the visitor with the lovely stone walls & mature trees. The many examples of 19th century architecture make a positive contribution to the streetscape and the village has quite a number of buildings listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Inventory. The numerous business premises are predominantly well presented although less clutter on the pathways would improve the view. The parish church dominates the village & those involved in its upkeep deserve praise. It is such a pleasure to visit a village where

there is not a plethora of overhead cabling.

The mural was receiving attention on adjudication day & is a stunning art installation. The playground was in constant use during the visit & we note your comments on the nearby Athletics Club development. It is hoped that all the ancillary works to the road frontage of the facility, footpaths into the village & pedestrian crossing will be completed in time for next year's submission. There is definitely scope to improve this long street frontage from the start of the playground to the end of the club's new entrance.

The Health Centre occupies a prime site & its façade would be enhanced with a little TLC. The large green area surrounding the building has potential as a wildflower meadow with edges mown, an edible front hedge or perhaps even a mini orchard as you indicated, endless possibilities. Check out "DC for Bees"
<https://www.hostinireland.com/dc-s-for-bees> - this is a corporate initiative to allow communities create mini orchards. It is great to see the old bus depot retained & put to an alternative use. The Garda Station with its well maintained front garden & trees softens the built surroundings. The Parish Hall & Centre appear to be missing half their overhead signage. The school was looking particularly colourful with its façade & multi coloured railings.

Who would have thought that us Irish would take to al fresco dining so readily? Many of the hospitality businesses have created lovely outdoor spaces for clients. It is a lost opportunity that some choose to infill areas with concrete rather than use them as infill planters & soften the hard landscaping.

You are very fortunate to have so few unoccupied or derelict buildings. Even those that are unoccupied have facades that are well presented. It is great to see that all property owners are cognizant of their responsibilities to the community.

We note your comments on the development site in the centre of the village. It would be hoped that once the cosmetic changes are approved the development will proceed. It is heartening to hear you have a good relationship with the developer & they are taking on board some of your suggestions in relation to the public spaces. Well done to the Historical Society on taking drone footage of the old sheep sales yard.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Roundwood is fortunate to be surrounded by nature & the mature beech trees close to the southern end of the village are simply majestic. The village is very fortunate to have an active gardening group who can provide expert knowledge & they are, as you say, generous with plants & their time.

A lot of work has gone in to Synnott's Corner in the past & the stone seating areas present a lovely spot for resting walkers, hikers or cyclists. It would be hoped that the access required to the site for a sewage link will be short lived & the site returned to its present condition.

The planting of 500 trees within the village environs is quite an achievement. Were these given to individual householders or planted in communal areas? Your adjudicator could not see the native trees planted at the playground. It is wonderful to see areas left unmown as were the margins as one walked out to the GAA club. The pedestrian access is a great amenity.

Bertie's Triangle is a busy spot with all the signage although the bank of flowering foxgloves presents a stunning backdrop & the planted bed a wonderful burst of colour. The drive on the road behind the triangle was very scenic. Your plans for Holt's Lane will add an additional amenity for the community.

The new sign for the community herb bed was in situ & looking well. However, due to the warm weather the herbs were looking peaky. The site is very dry & would benefit from additional composting material & mulching. It is a missed opportunity to leave the lovely planters outside the Parish Hall & Centre devoid of plants. The Roundwood Inn is to be congratulated for their predominantly perennial planter windows boxes – the best your adjudicator has seen on their travels.

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

Like many villages in Wicklow, Roundwood is situated in an idyllic setting. The mountainous setting with wonderful views of the Vartry Reservoir is truly attractive. It is great news that you have formed a dedicated subcommittee with a focus on biodiversity. The group was fortunate to avail of the Biodiversity Training run by Wicklow Partnership in the latter half of 2021. They certainly have not let the grass grow under their feet. The planting of 500 native trees is a significant undertaking, well done. What a legacy for future generations. They join the Mens' Shed in this wonderful work.

Walks & talks on the various biodiversity topics are a great way to engage the community particularly the provision of advice on the changes each of us can make to ensure we are protecting our local ecosystem. Many times community members are overwhelmed by the problem & breaking it down into small actions that can be built upon is the best strategy.

The sub committee's plan to collaborate with the relevant organizations on the installation of swift & owl boxes is an exciting project. This is an ideal opportunity to get the school involved. We will watch with interest the progression of this project & do include updates in each year's submission. There are so many areas where the school can align curriculum based subjects with both nature & biodiversity. The resources available on the National Biodiversity Data

Centre are outstanding. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/>

As you have a very active Roundwood Garden Facebook group, sharing the “Gardening for Biodiversity” document with them would allow them, with their expertise, to assist the subcommittee when devising their Biodiversity Plan for Roundwood. It is heartening to see you get the message out about lawn maintenance & its impact on pollinators. While it takes time you have traction.

[https://www.wicklow.](https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/adam/Content/AjnpGM3Oj0S_kZAVH3l8Jg/Link/Garden-Wildlife-Booklet-WEB-17MB.pdf)

[ie/Portals/0/adam/Content/AjnpGM3Oj0S_kZAVH3l8Jg/Link/Garden-Wildlife-Booklet-WEB-17MB.pdf](https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/adam/Content/AjnpGM3Oj0S_kZAVH3l8Jg/Link/Garden-Wildlife-Booklet-WEB-17MB.pdf)

The Vartry Reservoirs are an incredible habitat for plants & animals with such diverse habitats, from wetland to heathland to woodland. Do you have a timeframe for its designation as a Natural Heritage Area? The interpretative panels are a great way to educate visitors & locals alike on the area's natural science. There is a great need to mitigate the spread of invasive species so your vigilance is commendable. An awareness campaign highlights what residents when out & about can look out for & then report.

With all the sightings of wildlife, do constantly encourage residents & visitors to report these on the National Biodiversity Data Centre. You could move Wicklow from No. 3 in the County League to No.1!

<https://records.biodiversityireland.ie/record/>

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

This is an area in which you excel, as there is an in-depth understanding of the various facets & their impact on life within Roundwood. The example shown by the Mens's Shed in the areas of repurposing materials, rainwater harvesting, installation of rainwater butts at residences, GY, food sharing, composting and car pooling, is inspiring. The school's ethos is similar in the areas of clothes recycling, reduction of waste generated & the installation of a playground created from recycled materials.

It is heartening to hear that the Local Link bus service is in demand & it would be surprising in view of the current situation if there were a shortage of customers. Indeed, the car sharing facility via the village open forum is yet another great approach to reducing car usage. It would be interesting to conduct a survey on those using these facilities & see if they are foregoing individual car usage. Well done on ensuring an electric car charging point will be installed in the new development & hopefully, in time, the village will see one too.

Social media has provided a great platform for the transfer of items one no longer requires or items one is seeking. The book exchange at the Parish Hall is yet another good idea. Some GAA clubs are now involved in boot & helmet exchanges as children grow out of these so rapidly. Some schools too hold uniform exchanges & sales.

Sustainable energy for running our homes will feature on many people's agenda this coming winter with the dramatic increase in fuel costs. Your engagement with the Laragh/Glendalough SEC group is essential & all would welcome a campaign highlighting energy tips. <https://www.seai.ie/home-energy/energy-saving-tips/> There is a Home Energy Saving Kit available on loan from libraries in Wicklow & those householders who have availed of the kit have made savings. <https://www.codema.ie/think-energy-home-hub/what-is-the-home-energy-saving-kit/>

As you have several tourism businesses in the community, it may be worth bringing the Green Hospitality programme to their attention with its focus on environmental sustainability. <https://greenhospitality.ie/>

If you need any more ideas, check out the updated Tidy Towns handbook.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Wicklow's Pure Mile initiative is one that needs to be rolled out to all counties, an excellent example of a bottom up approach to dealing with the issue of littering. The Adopt a Spot scheme is a great way for residents to tackle a small area at a time of their convenience while taking social responsibility & contributing to their community. Delighted to hear recyclables are segregated & diverted from landfill.

A regular litter pick is essential to prevent any drop in standards & any area becoming a black spot. Residents & visitors are less likely to discard unwanted materials in a clean zone & also people are likely to voice their displeasure at such action.

The village on the day of adjudication was presented well with footpaths & kerbsides free of litter. Unfortunately, the green area at the Health Centre was strewn with quite a bit of discarded rubbish, as was the narrow laneway by the side of Break Time. The Recycling Bay had quite an amount of rubbish located between the last receptacle & the wooden fence. A coat of paint to the steel barrier in front would improve the visual impact. On some footpaths & kerbsides weeds have taken root e.g. outside the industrial unit, playground & near the interpretative panel. There is significant maintenance involved in keeping weeds at bay however the resulting improvement is dramatic.

A survey within the village speed limits on “vacant” poles would be beneficial & any of those deemed unnecessary could be removed in consultation with the council. Some of the poles require cleaning & maintenance. Compliments on the spotless standard of your public conveniences, the very best your adjudicator has visited to date – both a pleasure & a relief!

Is it envisaged over time that a uniform approach to business signage will be developed? The mix & match of

designs & styles detracts from the first impression of Roundwood. Perhaps this is an area the council has considered as has occurred in Enniskerry.

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

Vartry Heights & Ashwood are favoured in having a number of green areas. It was lovely to see children playing hopscotch on the roads, cycling & playing. Both these estates have potential for further tree planting, either native saplings or a mini orchard. "DC for Bees" is an initiative to create mini orchards in communities. <https://www.hostinireland.com/dc-s-for-bees> It will be interesting to see the plans for the site that is marked sold as one enters the estate.

Djouce Meadows has a lovely entrance avenue with mountain ash lining the paths & a great bank for biodiversity with gorse, brambles & willowherb. The wildflower meadow at the rear was wonderful to see as were the addition of new tree saplings.

Engagement with residents associations is essential as there is much synergy between them & yourselves at Tidy Towns.

The residential properties within the village are maintained in the main to a high standard. There was a great display of hanging baskets & window boxes & encouraging to see many are planted with pollinator friendly perennials. It is great to see those that were unoccupied or in a semi derelict state now being restored to their former glory. Once a few of the residences complete work on their boundaries, there will be a seamless flow to the panorama.

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

The approach roads to Roundwood present a wonderful vista of mature beech trees, dry stonewalls both exposed & green clad and flourishing hedgerows. The drive in from the Upper Vartry Reservoir presents a lovely vista & though narrow, was busy with hikers.

The road to Laragh/Glendalough will be looking its best once the Roundwood & District Athletics Club training area entrance & road frontage is completed & resurfaced.

Pedestrian access on some of these approach roads is indeed required for safety & also to encourage residents to leave the car behind & walk into the village for provisions, education & religious activities.

Concluding Remarks:

This was your adjudicator's first visit to Roundwood & it was a most pleasant experience. There is no doubting the community's commitment to the village & it was a delight to see a village with such a high standard of presentation. As stated earlier, you are very innovative in the areas of sustainability & biodiversity, which is heartening to see, & with all the projects planned you can achieve even more. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.