

# Tidy Towns Competition 2021

## Adjudication Report

Centre:	<b>Castlecomer - Caisleán an Chomair</b>	Ref:	<b>389</b>
County:	<b>Kilkenny</b>	Mark:	<b>326</b>
Category:	<b>C</b>	Date(s):	<b>16/08/2021</b>

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2021</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	44
Streetscape & Public Places	60	49
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	42
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	49
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	39
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>326</b>

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

Fáilte Chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 2021. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn. Go raibh maith agaibh as ucht bhur dtacaíocht le linn na paindéime. Lean leis an dea-obair. Welcome to the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Thank you for your entry and for your commitment to your place in these difficult times. Keep up the great work.

- Many thanks for attaching a map of the town and the three year plan to 2024. It is clear you have considered the need to plan your projects over a period of time.
- Your community of 1,502 population has a 6 member committee with another 20 volunteers who help when needed. We note you have been a participant in the competition since the 1960s and feel that the experience has been good for Castlecomer.
- Your twice weekly meetings have changed because of social distancing requirements.
- The long list of supporting agencies as well as individuals indicate a high level of connections within the community.
- Local media for communications is further enhanced by social media and we note you have followers in other countries.
- Links with the schools was changed because of Covid restrictions, so you used letters and emails to inform them of your activities. Having a junior TT group is very important to secure the future of Tidy Towns and we note you plan to work with them on Green Flag initiatives. The biodiversity project was interesting and well done.
- Since 2019, you have focused on renewing the flower beds on the square, including replacing some rose varieties. I wonder did you change the soil because new roses do not thrive where roses were previously growing. It is called rose sickness. The roots leave chemicals in the soil which prevents the roots of new roses from growing. The usual remedy is to change the topsoil.
- The Tidy Towns Handbook has been revised and you can download it from the website. It includes plenty of suggestions for suitable projects to consider for each criterion.
- Please note the icons for the 17 sustainable development goals which are printed on the application form. These are intended to assist you in considering future projects that relate to them.

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

Items mentioned under this criterion include the clean-up of the local convent building pending its redevelopment. The work entailed painting the doors and cleaning a paved area. With an artist in residence, some buildings were enhanced with murals that depicted aspects of your built, cultural and natural heritage. Another area cleaned was the paved area outside the creamery house. You have plans to have new signage in Maryville and approach roads.

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

Well done on the redesign/renewal of flower beds in various places. We are pleased to note that the edges are simply the lawn and not some type of timber or stone surround. You have done a good job on these and we note the use of perennial plants, especially near the Discovery Park.

The Discovery Park is an important asset for Castlecomer. Does your group have any role in its usage or maintenance? If so, please let us know. Lime trees on both sides of High Street are the most significant landscape element in Castlecomer and are unique. Does your group do anything to conserve them or use them for educational purposes? Do you have plans for street tree planting elsewhere in Castlecomer.

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

You have listed many projects under this criterion.

- Well done on checking the NBDC portal to check what records are available for Castlecomer and using it to establish a baseline survey and we note the project is ongoing.
  - The Community Biodiversity Action Plan with the first principles of 'Do no harm' is noted as are the nine important habitats.
  - Surveys on swifts managed by Birdwatch Ireland were planned for 2021
  - Since the NBDC has no information on fish species in the Castlecomer area, you have arranged for EcoFact to undertake one this year.
  - Other projects include creating two bee banks on the bank above the graveyard and above the pitches at Prince's Ground.
  - You are planning to have resident associations adopt a changed mowing regime to encourage wildflowers and you are developing a guide to wildflowers.
  - The provision of composting facilities at several places in the community is noted. However, in regard to grass, we suggest there is no need to collect the mowings unless a reduced mowing frequency system is in place. If mown frequently, grass can simply be left on the ground where it will dry out and decompose.
  - The spring clean operations were done on Tuesdays in March.
  - You plan to collect wildflower seed locally in Castlecomer for seeding within the locality. That is a novel idea and well worth the effort.
  - You actively participate in themed events, and you plan to make Castlecomer 'Peat Free' by 2025.
- Thank you for attaching the table at the end of this section highlighting the projects. It is a good idea, but we suggest that in future less information is provided on the actual projects.

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

With the use of a reclaimed polytunnel, you have reused plant pots for growing seeds which saved buying new ones. Remember to always sterilise pots to ensure that the new seedlings don't get the 'Damping off' disease. You also obtained farmyard manure for the roses and no doubt they were very pleased! You now choose perennials and pollinator friendly plants. You are planning a campaign on reduction of single use plastic and used the Facebook page to promote various events on aspects of the environment.

Well done on these various initiatives. For more helpful tips and case studies from other Tidy Towns entrants please take a look at <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/>

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

You are fortunate to have TUS and Community employment scheme workers to help with maintenance of Castlecomer. Litter picking is a task done by two ladies on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Well done to them and to others who helped with the spring clean-up. Your next project is to focus with KCC on dog fouling and promote it on social media.

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

estate. We note the purchase of wooden barrels for the green area. There is little point in using them when the plants can be put directly into the ground. You are only adding to maintenance tasks. Instead, they should be placed on hard surfaces. We note that an 'L' shaped bed was made for daffodils and suggest that they are best planted directly into grassed areas where the foliage can die down and then be mown. Hydrangeas are a good choice as they provide delightful floral displays in summer. The proposed meadow could be part of the daffodil planting.

At Marymount Estate you have renewed a pollinator bed that was overgrown. We assume that this is the same bed that was mentioned in the 2019 report. You are now planning a second bed on the same green. What is the situation regarding trees on the green or in private gardens. They should be the first landscape element to consider in all areas before you think about flower beds.

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

Your plans for improvement of the approach roads include reseeding to develop meadows. We wonder why this approach when you may only need to change the mowing regime? Redevelopment of raised beds at the Discovery Park is noted as are the summer bedding planted outside the Church of Ireland and on the Clogh and Kilkenny approach roads.

## **Concluding Remarks:**

Well done on completing the online application for this year and we commend you for doing your efforts to keep Castlecomer looking its best. We look forward to receiving your application in 2022.