

Tidy Towns Competition 2021

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Inistioge - Inis Tióg** Ref: **394**
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **350**
Category: **B** Date(s): **16/08/2021**
04/09/2021

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	51
Streetscape & Public Places	60	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	53
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	44
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	39
TOTAL MARK	470	350

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.

- The small village of Inistioge has a population of 282 people and you are a participant in the competition for 58 years. Your committee of 7 members has another 20 volunteers who provide help when needed and you estimate that 800 hours per year are completed by your group.
- Strong relationships exist with KCC and the various officials with whom you work throughout the year. You regard Woodstock Gardens as part of your community.
- For communications you avail of local and social media and have a WhatsApp group. Children from St. Colmcille's School volunteer with their parents on projects and the school garden established in 2018 is still maintained.
- Projects completed since 2019 include participation in the 2019 Pride of Place awards, printing a calendar each year, an outdoor movie night in 2019, Daffodil Day coffee morning, a Christmas market and ball run.
- You did a wonderful job in setting out the application form but there is one big problem. With 99 pages it is far too much and is about four times the size of the average application. Also, there is far too much text, and the font is too small and squeezed into part of a page. All of that means that an adjudicator can become weary in reading through such a big document. Therefore, for next year, we suggest you reduce the application by at least 60%. This can be done by removing the top and side bars from each page, reducing the amount of information and using a numbering or bullet point system to make it easier to read.
- Thank you for attaching a map of the village and also Woodstock Gardens with a legend, but please make the legend bigger next time. There is sufficient space on the page for that. Thanks also for the Development Plan but it is almost impossible to read the text in the columns and rows because it is too small. Fortunately, we have the facility on the computer to enlarge the page, but that should not be necessary if you make the text larger and fill the page. We are sorry if these comments disappoint you, but please consider that an adjudicator has to read perhaps in excess of 40 applications and the easier you make that task the better.
- On a more positive note, we liked the inclusion of good quality pictures throughout the application under each criterion. They are a big help in learning about your projects.
- 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.
- 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.
- Finally, well done on achieving a gold medal in Entente Florale Europe environmental competition in 2018. That was a wonderful success for which you can be very proud.

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

The following projects were listed under this criterion.

- Stabilising works of the Medieval three-storey Fortified Townhouse (a Protected Structure) and enhancement of its curtilage for which you have been grant aided to an extent of €26,000.
- Conservation and reinstallation of granite cross at St Colmcille's. It is fortunate that you had saved the pieces of the cross which are now being used for reinstallation.
- Public Realm Plan and associated works on the Village Square which included specialist cleaning of monuments in the square, reinstatement of waterflow to the fountain, conservation/cleaning of granite bollards and refurbishment/replacement of iron chains around the Square and fountain. That was very important work which no doubt you were delighted to have done.
- Public Realm Plan and associated works surrounding the Village Square are awaiting plans. Associated works on the River Park were completed when there were fewer visitors in the village.
- Resurfacing and drainage work on the Point Road. We note that some works were completed, and more improvements planned.
- New Bilingual Street Signage which were installed in June 2021.
- Completion of Water Supply and Waste Water Treatment Works which was completed in 2019 and we note the several archaeological findings discovered during site works.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Under the heading of formal and informal planted areas, you have listed several actions, including pollinator friendly plants such as lavender, cornflower and many more that you are now using for floral decoration in the village. The addition of 4 lime trees planted on the square is noted and the 5 alder trees at the boat slip.

- The community garden with its polytunnel is a valuable resource for growing plants and training purposes.
- The community herb garden beside the river is accessible for everyone.
- We have noted the selection of unusual trees planted in Woodstock Garden & Arboretum, mostly to commemorate 20 years since the estate was restored.

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

Barrow, Nore and Suir in your community. Added to that is the wonderful Woodstock estate with its rich biodiversity and the Natural Heritage Area (NHA), Site Code 000837, the flood plain on the Western side of the River Nore. You have also mentioned species which add greatly to biodiversity in and around Inistioge.

- You are following Inistioge's Pollinator Plan at formal sites and manage wildlife corridors at the river bank,
- St Colmcille's National School Biodiversity Plan
- St Colmcille's National School has its own biodiversity plan and a gardening programme to teach children how to grow vegetables. We note the lovely mural which commemorates their involvement in the programme for Entente Florale.
- The story of the Bee Hive Initiative is noted, and we hope you will be able to have it returned to the former site with the volunteer's involvement.
- The Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum Biodiversity Measures are noted. It is a wonderful location to grow wildflower meadows, even though the formal gardens of the past century would have looked much different.
- Since 2016, you have been changing the Garden at St Colmcille's Well to include more pollinator friendly plants and it has been very successful.
- Since 2015, you have controlled laurel growing on the banks of the Grove site on the road to Woodstock and the natural vegetation of bluebells, cowslips and dandelions have returned.
- Well done on the transformation of St Colmcille's and St Mary's Graveyard by ceasing to use herbicides and sowing grass that is strimmed just once per year. We can remember when all vegetation was suppressed by weedkiller.
- You have reported very good progress on eradication of Himalayan balsam the invasive plant along by the River Nore and we note your prompt action in advising KCC of the location where Japanese Knotweed was found for them to take appropriate action.
- The projects on encouraging Nature Exploration in Woodstock are noted.

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

Projects mentioned under this criterion include

- New LED street lighting, a heat controls system in Cois Abhann, rainwater harvesting in more than one location.
- You are proud to have the only EPA Master Composter site in the county and you organise training. It is a functioning demonstration composting site showcasing 4 types of composting methods. Well done on this success.
- You are maintaining a chemical free and peat free village where grass cutting is done with a mulch mower. Weed control is mainly by manual means and in Woodstock Gardens, knapsack spraying has ceased and if necessary, weed wipes are used.
- The community gardens activities are already noted, and St Colmcille's Primary School participates in the Green Flag programme
- You have an active recycling programme and plan to visually improve the bring bank
- The improvement work done at Woodstock Tea Rooms is noted.

- There is an emphasis on supporting sustainable arts and crafts with a local weaver, the Mermaid Gallery and Gift shop and the Christmas market.
- The Fairy tale Festival was run on 'green' principles

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Projects mentioned under this criterion include

- Power washing of all pavements and unoccupied houses in village centre. This is an annual activity which helps to keep the village looking fresh.
- Directional and tourism signage cleaned to ensure they present a good image of Inistioge.
- The ongoing task of regular litter picks on a weekly basis from April onwards. You are fortunate there is not a litter problem in your community but much credit for that is due to your vigilance, especially for keeping an eye on dumping incidents. It is surprising that you collected 41 bags of rubbish within a 5 km distance from the village. Well done.
- The improvement on Point Road is noted.

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

Essentially, the entire village is a residential area and is maintained by your volunteers assisted by the CE workers as well as some residents.

- Maintenance of grassed areas is delayed until dandelions cease flowering to support pollinators.
- The Inistioge in Bloom Awards for the private gardens in the village has been running since 2014 and is very successful in raising the standard of private gardens.
- Ard Aoibheann estate was an award winner in the Keep Kilkenny Beautiful Tidy Estates Competition in 2018. You are working towards encouraging another estate to participate in that competition.
- Your response to the Adjudicator's Comments in the 2019 report are noted.

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

The biggest task on approach roads is litter control which you do very well. Other works include cleaning of signs and on the Thomastown Road, you are very proud of the collection of agricultural machinery which is placed within the edge planting. Your management approach is minimum intervention and encouragement of wildflowers. Closer to the village your focus is on reducing the visual impact of the recycling bins, which is correct. Is there a less prominent part of the village where these bins could be relocated?

Concluding Remarks:

You have a beautiful village, and it is great to see such a proud and active community doing its best to have Inistioge looking its best. We look forward to receiving your much reduced application in 2022.

Second Round Adjudication:

The approach road from Thomastown is impressive and we admired the old painted farm machinery on the left side as we entered the village. This is eye catching, colourful and welcoming. The medieval three-storey building in the village is a significant feature of the village and we were impressed with the seating area/garden next to it. We liked the stone work (white marble?) on the wall of this garden. The elevated location is ideal providing full view of the beautiful village and its surrounding landscape. The outdoor seating provided in this area is kept to a high standard and we admired the squirrel design on the iron seating.

The shop fronts in the village have eye appeal such as O'Donnell's pub. The box planters outside this pub are colourful and eye catching. We were impressed with the planters outside several of the village houses. The colour scheme of the houses is also eye catching such as Roisín's cottage and the orange door of the residence opposite 'The Anglers Beach'. We liked the community garden next to Woodstock Heritage museum and we can see it is kept tidy and clean including the storage area and polytunnel. The pump and flower display outside the museum have eye appeal and we liked the colour scheme here also.

It was a pleasure to visit the recreational area by the Riverbank. We commend the work completed in this area in addition to Woodstock. The paths, picnic tables and seating area are completed to a high standard. The view of the village, bridge and landscape from this area is majestic. The display and information board is well presented. We noted the restoration work completed at the monument on the village Square. The granite cross and stone boulders surrounding St. Colmcille's Well are presented to a good standard. Well done to St. Colmcille's school on receiving the biodiversity mural. We were delighted to hear that the concept of the mural came about from a workshop that was facilitated with the pupils.