

Tidy Towns Competition 2021

Adjudication Report

Centre:	Ballinamore - Béal an Átha Mhóir	Ref:	422
County:	Leitrim	Mark:	321
Category:	C	Date(s):	18/08/2021

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	48
Streetscape & Public Places	60	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	26
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38
TOTAL MARK	470	321

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

The 2019 report was fulsome in its praise for the work undertaken under the 8 categories and this was reflected in a rise of 5 marks.

This adjudication is different for reasons well documented but the adjudicator will be objective and fair in his assessment based on what has been submitted.

As there is large body of information the adjudicator will not be able to comment extensively due the brevity of the end report but feel assured that the town will be judged fairly.

Well done on your “Staying Together While Apart” – work during the worst of the pandemic.

Without repeating it all back to you the adjudicator was very taken with some of the activities including printing of homework for people in the Direct Provision Centre and homes with limited technology.

Credit to the citizens that took older residents to hospital appointments to Sligo and Galway.

The adjudicator has nominated you as one of the top entrants in the county for this award.

At this moment it is appropriate to mention The Sustainable Development Goals that are at the heart of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

These goals address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change and other key environmental issues. In 2021, Tidy Towns has adopted these goals and has integrated these into the competition which now asks participating groups to demonstrate which goals their projects and actions help to meet.

The Committee structure seems to be at the same level it was in 2019 with possible other support when needed.

Good to note that you have developed a policy of social inclusion and one was impressed with the name of the new running club “Sanctuary Runners”.

Methods of communication are good and appropriate and it is noted that someone in the committee must have reacted positively to the lack of a social media presence in the 2019 report.

The NEW Facebook page was visited and it is bang up to date with pertinent information and a nice shot of the Leitrim Genealogy Centre

You have an impressive list of public bodies, other support agencies and local businesses and organisations that help you achieve targets that you have set and that need to be converted into actions.

Credit to the committee in developing working links with the National Schools and Community College and Foroige these links will foster a strong interest in Tidy Town and this will augur well for future years.

Thanks for the list of impressive new and planned projects and also for assigning the relevant sustainable goals to each one.

36 years is a long association with the competition so well done on achieving that milestone.

Thank you for the strong endorsement of the competition and its impact on the wider community of Ballinamore. An additional mark is awarded for your efforts over the last few years.

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

The 2019 report gave a very detailed report based on the adjudication walkabout where the presentation of buildings, streetscapes, footpaths, street lighting and public parks were observed first hand. A different process is involved this year and the adjudicator is very much dependent on the honest and open input that you have put together.

Mention was made of unoccupied buildings in the 2019 report and some of these have been made good during the period since then as part of the public realm enhancement programme.

The committee has been involved in an impressive body of work during the last two years.

These are outlined in the narrative and recorded in a pictorial collection that included before and after scenarios.

The brevity of the overall report does not allow for extensive comment but there are a few standout items that took the adjudicator's eye.

Well done on your involvement in a walk ability study in conjunction with the County Engineer and other members of the community.

The remedial work from this was noted and this will mean safer walking for all.

The notice boards purchased with T&V Grant money look well in the photograph but more importantly they are relevant and needed as you will have a large visitor influx in the future when all is back to near normal.

Leitrim is being promoted extensively as a popular staycation destination for the future.

You have done an immense amount of maintenance work in the form of refurbishing older buildings some public and some private.

The transformation that a creatively well applied coat or may two of paint can achieved is depicted in a number of your photographs.

You are wished well with your deliberations with relevant parties in trying to resolve issues pertaining to the ownership of the courthouse.

It would be practical if you can obtain a lease on ground to house your Tidy Towns Depot

One empathizes with you on the problem with derelict sites and unoccupied buildings as this is problem that is so prevalent around the country.

Legal ownership of some long time unoccupied buildings can be a nightmare and often there are legal disputes in families for decades that have never been resolved.

They say a picture paints a thousand words and in the case of Ballinamore a few actually show how refurbishment of a building or provision additional information signage can have such a positive impact on the town.

An additional mark is awarded for an immense amount of work that has taken place during very restrictive times.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

It seems from both the present submission and the report of 2019 that work done in this category has certainly increased two fold over the last two years.

The creation of an outdoor garden space in collaboration with the local Mens Shed is an alternative space for people to engage in various activities that otherwise would have been either restricted or cancelled because of Covid.

The importance of good partnership is seen by the fact the Committee has been able to leverage grant monies that were well apportioned to various mini projects within this category

The town does need an overall plan but a 3 year plan might be better as it is of shorter duration and the projected actions might have a better chance of being completed or re assigned over three rather than five.

This is just a personal opinion and indeed it's up to the Committee and the appointed consultants to decide what is best for the development of the town into the future.

The adjudicator understands your disappointment in not getting the go ahead to lease land that would enable you, in conjunction with your partners ,to develop a Community Facility.

Well done on your collaboration with Waterways Ireland in maintaining areas around the waterway and canal bank walks.

The completion of the stretch of the cycle/greenway will mean an additional facility for the local community as well as visitors who may want to avail the chance to do some cycling.

With all the greenway development there are opportunities for bike hire and no doubt that Ballinamore has such a service.

Overall the standard of what was submitted was very good complemented by the set of photographs that backed up the narrative.

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

The essence of this category is for a community group such as Tidy Towns to be aware of the nature and biodiversity in their locality and understand how they can be best managed.

In this way you can communicate the importance of the bio diversity of an area to the local community by way of information evenings or links to relevant online websites

The Committee is indeed lucky to have members of the Bee Keepers Association, the Hedge Laying Association, the Bat Association and a dedicated bird watcher in your midst to help you to devise bio diversity plans for the future.

You would be the envy of most places with such a wealth of knowledge in your midst.

The draft Pollinator Plan was read and in fact the adjudicator learned quite a lot of information that was new to him - so the old adage one learns something new each day holds true

The ban of harmful chemical pesticides is now the near normal for most councils one would imagine. On foot of that it is good to note that you are creating an atmosphere where more pollinating plants can be grown thus providing a habitat for smaller biodiversity species to survive and thrive. Credit to the local Mens Shed for becoming involved in a practical way to make a nesting space box for sand martins or An Gabhlan one of the smallest species of birds. You are correct in saying that are vulnerable to predators and as you say hopefully these boxes will give them protection. You are wished will with the forthcoming Swift project as threatened species of bird and there were a number of initiatives a few years back to help in curbing their decline. Good to note that you have strong links with the bio diversity section of Leitrim County Council whose officer no doubt will have an input in the completion of your Biodiversity Plan. What you have submitted shows a commitment to the ethos of this category and number of mini projects that you have completed or have planned is very varied. An additional mark awarded for work well done and also for a deep understanding of the subject matter. Do still link in to www.biodiversityireland.ie and www.pollinators.ie for more up to date information and bio diversity preservation tips.

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

One of the main objectives of this category is to consider practical actions that will make a village or town more sustainable and to promote the concept of stopping the production on unnecessary waste at source. It was a category that created some difficulty for Tidy Towns groups when it was first was introduced but with some refinements groups became more comfortable with it and now some great mini projects related to energy saving, transport and climate action are put forward each year. Will the Community Charter idea to apply for an Energy Master Plan be revived when some normality returns and who will be the lead partner if it does? The Lahard Estate residents association are to be commended for taking the initiative to apply successfully for a Rainwater Harvesting and Composting Grant. The adjudicator maybe somewhat out on a loop on this one as it's the first time he has encountered individual householders being the recipients of individual rainwater barrels effectively for free. This grant was administered by Leitrim County Council one presumes. Will the results of the fuel usage survey resulting from the public meeting moderated by the North Leitrim Good Energy Alliance be published or what was the main objective of such a meeting? The remainder of what you have submitted although tailored to your particular needs has been replicated in other centres around the country. One comment that was meant for a previous section is to credit the committee for sourcing excellent benches made from recycled materials. These looked very well in the photographs supplied. As was the case in 2019 do link to the following www.localpreventoin.ie for further project ideas. www.sustainableprocessing.ie is another website to consult. An additional mark is awarded for the content submitted backed up with excellent photographs.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The report on this category in 2019 was positive and complimentary to the work of the committee in promoting the need for best practice in the areas of general tidiness and litter control to the wider community of Ballinamore. This same ethic and commitment applies judging by your submission and the adjudicator. One understands your predicament re the non use of public bins because of people abusing privilege and putting domestic waste in them. Quite a number of towns and villages around the country are faced with the same issue but have remained with the public bin option. The leave no trace concept is very worthwhile if it works and it has to be promoted strongly and regularly if it is to be effective. It looks likes that you put the message of Leave no Trace out there in the public domain on a regular basis. How does one get that message to the visitor who is probably used to seeking out a public bin to get rid of waste? It is something that has probably been addressed at meetings of the Leitrim Litter Management Committee. Well done on the bread and butter of litter control the litter pick as done with regularity by dedicated volunteers. It is just a pity that the adjudicator had not the benefit of a walkabout to observe for himself the standard of tidiness in the town and the outlying areas ie the lack of clutter and issues such as graffiti and unsightly over head wires if they exist. But all that is for adjudication. On the basis of what you submitted an extra mark awarded.

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

The 2019 report in this category was quite detailed based on an onsite visit which took the adjudicator to a cross section of housing developments private, social and older local authority. No such luxury this time but the adjudicator will base his assessment on what you have submitted. If there was any positive about Covid it was the fact that householders all over the country used the lock down period to do a bit basic maintenance by way of painting houses and boundary walls and tidying up side areas. It is more than likely that residents of Ballinamore did the very same and one has to take this at face value without being able to see for oneself.

Well done on using grant money to paint buildings that were in a state of bad repair.
Also the committee members that undertake the upkeep of communal properties such as the playground are to be commended for their consistency of effort.
Overall the standard and content of work submitted deserves an increase of one additional mark

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

This is certainly one category that really benefits from the adjudicator being able to drive to the extremities of a town or village and to judge entrances from the given boundaries.

It was easier to observe best practice for the management of grass margins and the attractiveness or other wise of entry signs and planting arrangements.

Well done on the collaboration effort with the Town Steering Group in getting funding for the specific footpath and lighting project that has made such a huge difference in safety terms.

One very pertinent comment that stood out for me in this category was the one that states that by forming a good working relationship with the Area Engineer much more can be done for the community as a whole

Good working relationships with public bodies are the key to success for any community oriented group such as Tidy Towns.

The RSS scheme personnel deserve special mention for all the hard and necessary ongoing work that they do in Communities and Ballinamore is no different.

Japanese knotweed a nightmare if not treated and contained and you are correct not to touch it if you haven't the expertise or indeed the permission of Leitrim County Council to do anything with it.

No suggestion on how you can get those uncooperative Fermanagh people to adhere to your request to remove a sign, maybe ask to meet on a one basis and send out your best negotiator.

Thank you for the excellent photographs of work done under this category.

Concluding Remarks:

The adjudicator was in Ballinamore on one or two occasions in the past and was impressed with the history and heritage of the town.

Another visit back to the County of Leitrim is on the cards and Ballinamore will be part of the itinerary.

You have worked very hard over the last few years to get things done and indeed you have been very successful and Ballinamore no doubt is a better community for your involvement.

You are wished well for the future.