

Tidy Towns Competition 2021

Adjudication Report

Centre: Birdhill - Cnocán an Éin Fhinn	Ref: 587
County: Tipperary(North)	Mark: 343
Category: A	Date(s): 05/08/2021

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	53
Streetscape & Public Places	60	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	40
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	41
TOTAL MARK	470	343

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

Fáilte Chuig Comórtas na mBaile Slachtmhara Super Valu 2021. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht an hiontrála a chur chugainn. Go raibh maith agaibh as ucht bjur dtacaíocht le linn na paindéime. Lean leis an dea-obair.

Birdhill Tidy Towns set up a support group to help their neighbours, if required. You did not tackle any major new projects in 2020 but you managed to carry out the usual maintenance. Zoom became the buzz word in 2020-2021 when face to face meetings became impossible. You organised a "Family Quiz" on 19th June 2020. Participants made a donation to Newport Day Centre which provided meals to the elderly. You held a concert to mark Culture Night on 18th September, focussing on local talent and highlighting songs, poetry and music. An Open Air Exhibition was born in 2021 and artist, Melissa Ryan, put in place an exhibition in July/August. 50 entrants signed up and began work on their submissions. The theme is "At one with nature".

Thank you for your entry form, maps and photos. You will have noticed the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. They look like stamps. These Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015 as a universal set of actions to help combat poverty, protect the planet and improve our world for future generations.

The number involved in your committee is 18. Number not on committee but who volunteer is 30. Your AGM is in October. In winter you have monthly planning meetings. In Spring you continue to meet and in Summer on Monday nights. New residents are welcomed by the delivery of the Tidy Towns Welcome Pack. Noted the compilation of a New Plan. "Nurturing a Rural Community" embraces all elements of Tidy Towns in one plan, rather than separate documents such as biodiversity, litter management, etc. as heretofore. It focuses on actions for the future.

Your supporters include Tipperary Leader, Tipperary County Council, Department of Rural and Community Development. You had a worthwhile sale of work in February 2020. Your goal of €5,000 was exceeded by your Gofundme page. You list a lot of contacts, but it is not clear if all are supporters. If they are then well done. Your channels of communication include WhatsApp, Nenagh Guardian, your newsletter, an online services directory, Facebook, Instagram, website.

You gather the community several times a year for educational workshops e.g., bat workshop, cooking demonstrations, flower arranging, health and safety updates. You engage well with your school. You have a Tidy Towns group attached to the school. You run regular competitions for the pupils. In October 2019 seven TY students joined you as part of the working in the community element for the Gaisce Award. During the Easter holidays a number of teenagers helped with painting. Your Instagram page is maintained by a 17-year-old who compiled your St Patrick's Day video sending greetings across the world.

following their training each Sunday. They come to paint, collect litter, etc. Well done to all involved. Thank you for the colour photo. Identify a specific project where a particular effort was applied? Summer 2019 play and recreation

– run/walk 5km, pilates, yoga, etc., dog show and teddy bears picnic, tug of war, treasure hunt. We do not have the time and space to deal with over a page of events such as swap shop, coffee mornings, sale of work, essay competition, attend the stations of the cross, etc.

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

Information on your trails is available online and can be used using QR codes. There are diminishing stocks of paper leaflets. You designed and erected a new map on the gable end of Matt the Thresher (2020). QR codes for all of your trails. Also, a leaflet to bring on the trails or going on a walk around Birdhill. Tarring 250 metres of paths in the Community Park (April/May 2021) has improved access for wheelchairs, prams/buggies, elderly, indeed all. Some paving was laid on the path into the Railway Garden in February 2020. Branches in the Park and Wood were cut in February 2021. You carried out resurfacing/filling pots holes on the Pollaghs Road in May 2020 and May 2021 to improve conditions for walkers and joggers. You await developments for more work. In May 2021 you made a simple memorial to mark the centenary of the Irish Independence. Good photo, thanks. April 2021 new signage was erected in the village giving directions to the church, school, hall and orchard. In 2019 signs were erected at Cleary's Cross. In May 2021 signs for trees were erected in Village Wood.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You reduced your volume of summer annuals in 2020, sowing pollinator friendly perennials in outlying areas and at the Railway Station. You are waiting for clearer plans for the site. Having removed 25 containers from poles in 2019. You also got rid of hanging baskets in 2020. Businesses continue to put up baskets in the village in summer. Each year you replenish your wildflower areas with seeds from the County Council. Areas in the Park, high bank on Limerick Road, under the tree canopy in the Railway Garden and on the bank of the Link Road. You have changed your grass cutting schedule for 2021. High bank on Limerick side of village – cut every 6-8 weeks, low cut margin kept on kerbside. Bank between speed signs on roads opposite side left uncut. A strip left uncut on edge of wood from bus stop to phone kiosk. Three regimes for grass cutting in Community Park.

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

Many trees were pruned for safety reasons in February 2021. The composting compound was emptied in 2019 and 2020. The leaf composter was soon filled again. A small amount of grass was collected. Many saplings had to be replaced in the park, February 2021. You created an earth bank for ground nesting bees. Slí na Coille and Literary Trail was closed for most of the winter for safety. Some trees were topped, and others removed. Repairs in March 2021. Nest boxes, bat boxes and bird feeders erected in March 2021. Flowers planted in open areas in the wood in March 2021.

An explanatory information board was erected alongside. An information board for the ferns in the wood was made in March 2021. Also, in May 2021 labels were attached to trees. The Literary Trail continues into the Railway Garden where quotes invited attention. The Railway Garden path brings a visitor to an Alphabet Garden to a variety of plants. Planters at the Railway Station contain pollinator friendly shrubs. Terry's Eco Trail opened on 21st June 2019. This is an interactive online trail using QR codes to access information. An observation hut was built in September 2020 for observers to see the Pollaghs. You drew up a leaflet in 2020 showing 32 pictures of birds found in the Pollaghs. You erected an owl nest box in March 2021.

The Community Orchard is doing very well. A path is mowed regularly. Mulch was applied to the trees in November 2019 and 2020. Apple trees pruned in March 2021. You planted more trees in 2020, some fruit, others nut. In March 2020, as part of National Tree Week, TY students were invited to plant a tree and their names are recorded on name plates. The adjoining field has crops for wildlife sown each year and left unharvested over winter. You hope to hold an Applefest in September. People report sightings e.g. first cuckoo heard, barn owl, etc.

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

You have been part of the Crisp Packet Recycling Scheme offered by Terracycle. You also joined the Confectionery Recycling Scheme. Your contact goes back to August 2019 and February 2020. You give us two very detailed reports on each of these. They make very interesting reading. Your adjudicator does not have the time to explore both with you, unfortunately. I must say "very well done". The Little Community Pantry set up in the Information Kiosk in November 2020. People donated non perishable food and it was available to anyone. The venture stopped after four months.

In March 2020 you launched your Birdhill Repair Directory. In June 2021 you launched your Services Directory. It has been circulated to the community and is on your website. Very well done for both directories. In December 2020 through your social media pages, you promoted a "Tipp for Christmas" campaign. In April 2021 you ran a "Conserve Water" campaign with the school. The students were invited to enter a "Paint a Stone" with save water messages competition.

In April 2021 you joined up with Refill i.e., to reduce the amount of, and your dependence on, the consumption of drinking water using single use plastic bottles. A location has been chosen beside the Village Green where a non-contact water dispenser will be installed later this summer. Funding has also been allocated for a Bicycle Repair Station. Birdhill Tidy Towns committee acquired and distributed ten Energy Monitors to homes within the community. Once Covid restrictions have been lifted you will remove the Energy Monitors from the 10 current homes using them and install them in different households.

You launched a new social media campaign to support your plans to inform and educate under the following headings: Reduce food waste, Promote a recipe a week, recycling, etc. This social media campaign aims to build knowledge, capability, commitment, ownership and responsibility.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Life changed for everyone in February 2020 with the emergence of Covid 19. Birdhill's "Litter and Tidiness" sub committee did a walk about assessment of necessary work to be done in May 2019, March 2020 and January 2021, the latter with individual members working separately. A recheck of the work listed to be done was carried out in May 2021 to a positive conclusion. In April 2020 you held a modified version of the annual Spring Clean. For 2021 you held 3 community litter picks throughout the year to date. You endeavour to segregate litter after clean ups as far as possible.

The Bring Bank is widely used. The 2 clothing bins support the Irish Cancer Society and NCBI. In 2019 the school got a clothing recycling bin. The Primary School's year was curtailed due to Covid. However, staff and pupils kept the school and roads litter free. In 2019 the school introduced a policy of reducing litter waste from school lunches. School gathers toners and cartridges for recycling. Batteries are sent to a charity. Unused paper goes to animals for bedding.

Major renovations carried out in the church in the Spring of 2021. For dog owners you placed mutt mitts at 4 locations. Litter rotas on roads during the summer. Applegreen collect litter on Link Road. Businesses to keep premises clear of litter. TY students most helpful with cleaning. Soccer club girls do litter pick-ups. Work schedules are drawn up annually for the maintenance tasks in busiest months.

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

The 3 main buildings in the village centre continue to be well presented. You also maintain the front of the old Council Store in the village. The Information Hub is now a valuable focal point and an ideal location to make leaflets and information available for visitors. The 13 residences within the speed limits conscientiously maintain high standards of presentation of houses and gardens. Residents become involved in litter picking and clean ups and many chip in when help is required with major projects. The Village Gren has become a major focal point since the opening of the Old Barracks Coffee Shop.

The Community Park has grown in popularity over the past 3 years as a recreational and educational resource. The Children's playhouse and Autism Friendly play area attract many visitors, families and special school groups, who enjoy the unique variety of a diverse environment. You help local charities and look out for the marginalised individuals and families in your community.

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

A new stone wall was built at the entrance to the Pollaghs. Providing access to the Kyle burial ground was carried out in August 2019. A path was laid, and walls were repaired. An Information Panel detailing some of the history was erected. You continue to maintain the burial ground. The "new" graveyard, to the rear of the church, is well maintained. The Community Recreation Facility has finally been developed with 2 pitches. The next step is changing and parking.

The Killaloe Road has a different appearance since the removal of trees and setting out new boundaries in March 2021. Resurfacing the O'Brien's Bridge Road was completed in June 2020. Roadside margins are maintained on all approaches. You mow a narrow strip on the margins of the road from the church to the village and the roundabout to Lacken. Areas close to the village centre and at the Railway Station are mowed regularly.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to adjudicate Birdhill. Hopefully, our paths will cross again.