

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ballylongford - Béal Átha Longfoirt** Ref: **326**
County: **Kerry** Mark: **321**
Category: **B** Date(s): **28/06/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	43	44
Streetscape & Public Places	80	43	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	42	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	33	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	63	65
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	33	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	35
TOTAL MARK	550	312	321

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 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 and thank you for your application form, which included photos, a map and your 3 Year Plan Summary 2019-2022. You will need to update this plan for next year and we assume by now this has commenced based on the implementation of the projects/activities of the previous plan. We see that you have gained an additional three volunteers – hopefully more will join you. It is an excellent way for new residents to become involved in the local community. You have listed state and semi state agencies in addition to local business and community groups who support your activities. Social media in addition to newspaper notices etc is vital and we love the idea of a TidyTowns presence on the main street with your activities on display in one of the shop windows. Your involvement with Tidy Towns now sees the major initiatives which were commenced over the past few years now 'bearing fruit'. We are delighted to hear this, as the completed projects should not only add to the beauty of an area but also benefit the local community. This is a competition to assist each community to improve itself and bring out the individual strengths associated with that particular area and local community.

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

You are a rural village with a mix of vernacular single and two-storey buildings and these with the topography of the village, the long narrow bridge over the Ballyline River, and the crooked crossroads in the centre, gives your village its character. The dominate buildings in the village are St. Michael's RC church, the five-storey warehouse (which we hear is to be converted in a community building), and the adjacent fever hospital. We admired the three-storey building set side-on to the main street, with its replacement Wyatt windows. We loved the uniqueness of the decorative plaster quoins, architraves, pilasters, consoles, raised lettering etc. found on many houses and shops. The area around the church – garden with trees, playground, picnic area, seating with the old Irish prayers, etc. is quite pleasant. Some improvements might be to reduce the openness of the carpark areas by dividing it into parking bays with trees as dividers. You have honoured those who brought fame to your area – The O'Rahilly, and Brendan Kennelly. We thought the grey gravel chipping around the colourful seat near the playground was unsuitable – hopefully this is a temporary surface. The stainless steel replica of the window at Lisloughlin Abbey is well executed. Well done on engaging with the owners of buildings within the village and having some of these renovated/painted has improved the appearance of the village. Aghavallen Cemetery with its flat iron gate and beautiful circular gate piers was well maintained. The uniqueness of the beautiful seat on the eastern side of the town didn't go unnoticed. The grotto was neat (some weed growth was noted) but the ivy will need attention so that it doesn't engulf the structure. We were delighted that we took the time to visit the remarkable Carrigafoyle Castle

and we admired the timber sculpture en-route beside the blue painted galvanised roofed sheds. We encourage the retention of the shop names when the premises are being converted into residential units – these are part of the social history of your village. Any chance that those which were removed could be reinstated?

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

There are no large green open spaces in the village but the area around the church, school, parish hall and playground although small, is quite beautiful. Here we find a central grass area with a border of lavender and surrounded by mature trees. Some of the lavender has failed and needs to be replaced or an alternative border plant used which can withstand the shade – hostas or ligularias? The area near the playground with the polytunnel is probably better used by parents with small children as it has picnic areas /seating areas. Within housing areas there are communal open spaces which are used by the residents. You also have the GAA pitch area within the village which is accessible to all. Trees have been planted on approach roads with colourful planting beds full of pollinator friendly flowers and shrubs. We noted suckers on quite a number of trees – these should be removed using a sharp knife or secateurs. We feel the village streets lacks trees. We suggest that you discuss the possibility of providing build-outs along the streets and planting trees in these. This would transform the village and in addition to providing shelter for humans they would also be roosting sites for birds and habitats for a wide variety of insects.

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

Drystone walls, hedges, mature trees, and the River Ballylinie, all set in the rural landscape, provide your village with a haven for all our wildlife. Reducing the grass cutting and leaving strips unmown on all roads into the village has favoured the local Biodiversity. We are assuming that you have a mulching machine and that you cut the grass strips regularly so that the grass is cut into small clippings which then break down and provide nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus to the grass. You have undertaken workshops in Biodiversity and hopefully you have spread the information gleaned via your Facebook page and other media channels. We note that you have identified 3 stone walls in the village to launch an ecology project. Don't forget that ivy is damaging to natural stone structures (walls, bridges and buildings) – the roots penetrate and destabilise the structure leading to its collapse. Best of luck with the Weedhex machine – weeds are very unpleasant (and give an appearance of an area being unkempt) along walls, kerbs etc and should be removed. The wild life study was an excellent project in 2019 – delighted to see that it is still being used/ referenced.

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

This is a category that most communities find challenging. You have undertaken some new activities/projects – the purchase of Jerry cans and reusable plastic cups for use in community events, the Picker Pals schools project, the purchase of a mobile watering unit etc. Where is the rain water harvested which is used in the mobile watering unit? We spotted one taking water from the galvanised shed roof but we're guessing there are more? The polytunnel was visited – we loved the wildflowers growing along the side. Is there a book swap initiative in the school? This is something that's easy to arrange. During Covid quite a number of state and semi-state organisation organised Webinars and many were on subjects which relate to this category. Did you take part in any? Some are still available on-line. We suggest that you contact your environmental officer and he/she will assist you. ESB fast charge points for electric cars are becoming a normal sight in our towns and villages – do you know if one will be installed in Ballylongford?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The village was virtually litter and also weed free when we visited – please commend your litter and weed control volunteers. Weeds are always a problem in Ireland due to our climate and we noted that you purchased a Weedhex Machine which removes even the most stubborn weeds. You also use a combination of salt, vinegar and washing up liquid on larger areas and also the traditional spade and hoe method to remove individual weeds. The bridge had been freshly painted and added to the appearance of the village. Individuals had painted their premises and some had added flowers and shrubs to add to the beauty of their buildings. Encouraging family units to litter pick has resulted in an increase in the number of volunteers. This is a wonderful idea and if each family takes ownership of a small area near where they live the litter and weed growth can be easily removed. Ivy was noted on the ruined church in the old cemetery. While ivy is a wonderful habitat for insect life it should be removed from natural stone walls, bridges, etc. (see comments above). Natural stone constructions are in themselves great habitats for insect life and also very beautiful in the streetscape. The clothes bring banks were clean and had been recently emptied.

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

The houses on the approach roads are a mix of farmhouses with yards and outbuildings, bungalows and closer to the village we find two storey houses. All were well maintained and some of those with gardens had colourful floral displays with great varieties of pollinator friendly planting, trees and shrubs. We noted that a number of the houses in the village are unoccupied, but these, in the main, were presentable. We applaud the many home owners and occupiers of the houses in the village centre who clearly take pride in their premises and maintain the buildings, gardens and boundary walls to a high standard. The houses in the Radharc na hAbhainn estate were particularly well presented – please commend the residents. The roadside boundary wall had been recently painted – white with a grey capping. We were delighted to read that the residents of Rusheen Park have implemented a 'No Mow May' ... but advise them that clover and wild violet grow in June /July. So maybe just mow less often during these months too.

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

A row of mature trees interspersed with planting beds, and a neatly trimmed grass margin and footpath greets the visitor entering the village from the east. We loved the white painted post and rail fence along this approach road which added to define the entrance to the village. On the opposite side of the road the sign for Ballylongford was unfortunately partly hidden behind tall grass and weed growth. Signs should always be legible – particularly a sign indicating the name of the village. This margin should be kept trimmed to emphasis the entrance to the village. The road surfaces in the village are mixed – some in excellent condition with clear road markings and signage. In some areas however the road had collapsed and the tarmacadam was in very poor condition – broken into small sections. The Main Street was being resurfaced when we visited and so we assume the other areas where the road has failed will be repaired as part of these remedial works.

Concluding Remarks:

We enjoyed spending time in your village. While you made a slight reference to the Sustainable Development Goals by adding the logos into the application your references were minimal. Tidy Towns in conjunction with Limerick City and County Council ran a webinar on the SDGs in 2021 and the presentation is worth reading as it will be helpful for your application next year.

The link is : [https://www.limerick.](https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf)

[ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf](https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf)

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2022 competition.