

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tinahely - Tigh na hÉille** Ref: **245**
County: **Wicklow** Mark: **319**
Category: **C** Date(s): **06/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	47	49
Streetscape & Public Places	80	43	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	42	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	38	40
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	35
TOTAL MARK	550	309	319

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 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. Thank you for your entry and keep up the great work. Your adjudicator is quite amazed at what has been achieved over the years by a small community for its residents, remarkable. By coming together under the auspices of Tinahely Community Area Projects (TCP) a whole of community response is achieved with common goals & strategic planning. Although your committee is small clearly you can call on significant resources to accomplish projects. The active engagement with other organisations is significant as judged from the supplied list. The village website is accessible & full of information for local & visitor alike. It is encouraging that you continually seek out residents with specific skill sets to add value to the group rather than maintaining a closed clique – new members keep an organization energized & challenged.

Tinahely's natural environment's future is secure with the next generation involved in amazing national school programs involving the whole school population. The embedding of the Tidy Towns in the schools & their green programmes is fantastic to see. Congratulations to Crossbridge National School on winning the National Green Schools Competition last year. Are any of your older students involved in the Gaisce Awards for whom work in the Tidy Towns would tie in nicely?

Your Community Employment workers are indeed valued community members & the work they complete on behalf of the village cannot be underestimated. Other communities for whom their assistance is not available will envy you.

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

As the focal point in Tinahely, Market Square building's facelift is remarkable when viewed before & after completion of the works. The sympathetic restoration of the exterior lime work plaster will hold it in good stead for many years to come. The building's use as a library & its exterior space for the weekly market ensures its continued use for the community. So many times buildings of this nature are left unoccupied with no useful purpose. A perfect location for the upcycled map of Tinahely.

As one walked around the streets of Tinahely, it is no wonder there are so many buildings listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. The Courthouse Arts Centre is quite majestic & the gardens well kept. The terrace of granite houses on the R747 approach road presents a wonderful streetscape vista & it was a delight to see so many residences on the upper section of Kevin Street presented in lovely pastel colours.

It would be unfair to single out one or two businesses for mention however the standard of presentation of many

with recently painted facades was noteworthy. When finishes are of this standard then the unique architectural features really do make one stop & take note. If it were possible to engage all businesses in a uniform planting scheme the effect would be quite spectacular. It would be hoped that those businesses that have not yet reached this high standard of appearance would see the merit in matching their neighbours work.

There is a trend unfortunately towards window graphics on storefront windows that are not sympathetic to the appearance of the building as a whole & can detract from the streetscape.

Every community is grappling with derelict buildings & there is little that can be done if owners will not engage. However where unoccupied buildings have been painted & window treatments inserted it has improved the streetscape. There is evidence of this in Tinahely. It would be hoped that the Derelict Property grant & the proposed derelict sites levy will act as both a push & pull factor for owners of these properties.

The two halves of the village located quite a distance apart have the contrast of the old & new. The colourful façade on the primary school & its perennial planting create an inviting image & fundraising is progressing well as judged from the large poster. The Community Hall is a wonderful example of a modern twist on architecture fitting perfectly into its rural landscape. The GAA buildings & car park across the road were looking well on the day. Is it envisaged that soft landscaping will be included in this area to soften all the hard surfaces? The other entrance to Kevins Park GAA would benefit from a fresh coat of paint to its red gates & white walls. The Community Playground is a true testament to what a local community can achieve – childrens natural playground, adult exercise machines, basketball court and a skate park. The area was well used while visiting & well respected by all judging by the lack of litter.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

For a small village, you have a significant number of green spaces. With the Shrubwell area you have made the most of a space that could have been overlooked & hopefully the replacement hawthorn whips will thrive. The Picnic Area again a great use of an underutilized layby with the availability of a picnic table with mowed areas for accessibility & foraging the edible hedge. However, the entrance here is very narrow, the surface uneven & visibility as one exited impaired by high vegetation. The narrow access road requires some work as discussed in the Tidiness section.

Many times church grounds & graveyards green areas are overlooked. The views from Killaveny Church are panoramic & it is clear the green area is maintained as a short cut meadow. There was no shortage of walkers existing the laneway opposite the church. Is there a need for the planter at the roads intersection there & instead could a flower/shrub bed be created that would reduce water usage & maintenance? The restoration work carried out to date at Whitefield Graveyard is significant & availing of the services of a local archaeologist the best course of action. The culmination of the project with a publication will interest all who have a connection.

The number of walks & hikes to choose from in the Tinahely area is astonishing & it is no wonder you have a walking club. Is the walking map on Barton Street somewhat hidden for the visitor, perhaps a more visible location could be secured. The plans for the Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway recreational trail that will include Tinahely will bring much footfall if the Waterford & Westport Greenways are any indicator. It is welcomed that a final route has been finalized with environmental & infrastructural technical documentation organized although the planning stage will take time. Do keep us updated of the progress in each year's submission.

The regular maintenance of beds, planters & baskets is a challenging task. However your hard work is paying dividends & on adjudication day there was plenty of colour & diversity. The Hacketstown Shrub Bed is quite spectacular & creates a wonderful vista as one enters Tinahely. As the plants mature, the area will fulfill its potential both visually & as a feeding & nesting area for pollinators. The bridge with its stonewalls & stone troughs with flowering perennials presents a colourful scene.

The planting at the Market Square compliments the building's environment & again the Mens Shed planters create a wonderful tiered level for cascading plants. The in situ beds outside the library had blooming red roses & it would be hoped they would be retained when replanting the beds. The birch trees soften the hard landscaping. It is planned to add more shrubs underneath or subdivide the existing Lady's Mantle? How fortunate you are to have an existing stone trough to reuse as a wonderful planter. The involvement of local businesses in the village planting scheme is important & there were great shows in baskets & containers. Do encourage all to focus their efforts on perennial plants rather than the annuals – some are further along this journey than others, it takes time.

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

How fortunate Tinahely is to have Tomnafinnoge Wood, a SAC, on your doorstep with both looped & linear walks & lots of opportunities to spot & hear the great spotted woodpecker. Educating both local & visitor alike through your website on local biodiversity is a good strategy.

It is marvelous that you are availing of the expertise of specialists who are focused on ensuring the survival of the native wild bee. Your Bee Friendly Plan is an excellent framework for your work. Based on your wildflower surveys this year at the picnic area (22 varieties) & recycling centre (12) it clearly demonstrates how nature regenerates when left undisturbed, a great sign for pollinators. Well done on using the FIT Counts to monitor for pollinators – do let us know the results year on year. It would be interesting to chart the change annually. Having the list of recommended plants & shrubs for pollinators on your website is a great point of reference for residents.

Not many communities have the opportunities to grow native oak from locally sourced seed. Did you partake in the Wicklow Trees for Communities programme that ran a workshop on growing locally collected tree seed? If not, it would be worth contacting the local Environmental Awareness Officer to see if a workshop could be run locally with a number of Tidy Towns groups. It is great to see the mature ash tree at the Community Playground was retained & worked into the space without impact on its health. The protection of trees is so important & it is heartening to see you abide by this belief.

Many communities are becoming more involved in protecting their river ecosystems & some have formed River Trusts. The Slaney River Trust covers the River Derry & would be worth contacting to see how your goals align. It is superb that the local schools have an opportunity to visit the local water units & partake in the Derry Bubbles Project with an experienced staff member.

Delighted to see all the perennial planting with only a few annuals added.

The immersion of all three schools in biodiversity either through the Green Schools programme or innately is remarkable. The attainment of so many Green Flags is to be applauded as each one is a significant undertaking. However the life skills & lessons acquired by the children cannot be underestimated. The involvement of the Tidy Towns in the Green School's committee dovetails nicely in aligning goals. The planting of fruit trees, wildflower meadows, vegetables, herbs & native trees is good news for nature.

Your plans to investigate the installation of barn owl nesting boxes would be best done in conjunction with local interested farmers. Have you determined whether you have a bat population locally & if yes, have you ever organized bat walks & bats?

Your adjudicator wondered if herbicide had been used in the Railway Walk car park along the edges & front wall as these areas were uniformly brown.

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

Congratulations on winning the Environmental Education & Awareness Initiative from Repak for the community recycling centre – you had competition from another Tidy Towns group, Swords. Certainly Tinahely is walking the walk & not just talking the talk when it comes to doing more with less. Establishing the first community recycling centre some years ago & using the proceeds of the venture to fund more local projects is commendable. Also the diversion of certain items brought to the centre & their use by the Mens Shed to create new items is a great example of the circular economy as is the in situ library. Your Mens Shed participants are to be congratulated for the stylish & robust containers they constructed. Are any items directed to Vincents for resale or to the schools or crafters for reuse or upcycling? It is fantastic that a village can support a charity shop that is so versatile.

Your plan to create your own compost at the recycling centre will be an interesting experiment. Where do you presently source your peat free compost for the many village containers? Rainwater harvesting offers the best results for plants, their preference – can you install more water butts to meet your container watering demands?

The community website could reposition & introduce more environmentally friendly initiatives for the community. It takes quite a bit of digging to locate it presently.

It is fantastic that the local schools are involved in growing vegetables & herbs & that one school they grow enough produce & flowers for a weekly pop up shop. A great lesson in local food & reducing food miles.

How fortunate that you have a weekly Craft Market & the sharing of skills with tutorials on knitting, pottery, macramé, sewing & more.

It was good to see local schools have introduced the Active School Walkway & there is bike parking in Market Square. We all need a little push to get out of our cars.

Do refer to the Tidy Towns updated handbook for a wealth of information in this area.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You are to be commended for the impeccable weed free state of your paths, kerb sides & cobbled areas on the main thoroughfares. It is a time-consuming maintenance program to achieve this standard however the results are amazing. Some of the laneways off the main areas would benefit from the same high standard. It would be worth engaging with the local County Engineer on repairs to some of the crumbling & broken footpaths in the village.

How fortunate you are that the PURE Project is headquartered in Tinahely & thus help is readily on hand – a wonderful initiative & one that would benefit from being rolled out nationally.

There was no litter visible within the village, well done. However, the litter bins were overflowing at the Railway Walk car park & there was litter around the area. There was a significant amount of litter in the Picnic Area along the inside hedge by the inner road & the hedge itself requires pruning to prevent it encroaching on the narrow roadway. It would present the area in a more enticing manner. In the village, some of the gulley grates were blocked with debris.

The street furniture was gleaming & it is these small generally unnoticed items like bollards, poles etc that can detract from a streetscape so well done. There would be value in completing a "vacant" pole survey in the village & contacting the council to remove those that are no longer required.

Once again the involvement of the school children in litter patrols is a great approach to ensuring they take personal responsibility for their actions from a young age.

Is there a need for all the signage on the stonewall outside the Business Centre – could it be positioned elsewhere while still promoting the businesses?

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

Residents associations provide wonderful support to Tidy Towns groups & regular open communication is key. Derry Drive with new roadside fencing will improve the appearance of the frontage & flowerbeds provide great colour to an estate entrance. Mill Court are fortunate to have a lovely green area with mature trees & a natural play area for children. Hopefully in time the ground floor commercial units will be leased. Beechwood Park was maintaining their green on the day of adjudication & a rejuvenated flowerbed at the entrance will enhance the area.

As many estates have green areas they may be interested in an initiative to create mini orchards. "DC for Bees" - www.hostinireland.com/dc-s-for-bees It was noted Beechwood Park has already begun with apple trees.

During the visit, it was noted there were some wonderful gardens & keen gardeners.

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

The landscaped bed on the R747 has a well-planned planting scheme & the backdrop of mature trees & fence & post railings compliments the setting. It was poignant to see the remembrance bench & what a lovely contemplative spot under the gazebo to stop awhile whilst out walking. The granite village sign is most appropriate although in time thriving shrubs may overshadow it. The new bilingual signage in monochrome is very elegant. The village sign on the approach road from Aughrim was obscured from view by vegetation.

It was interesting to note there were three different signage themes – granite, monochrome and "Welcome to Tinahely".

Safe pedestrian access to all regularly used areas within the village are so important & the construction of new footpaths from Lugduff to Railway Walk car park & from Killevary Church to the village is most welcome.

The road verges on all approaches were mowed to one mower strip allowing hedgerows & inner verge margins to thrive.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done on your year's work. You have ambitious plans for the future & it is with great interest your adjudicator will monitor your progress & hope to visit you again when the Greenway runs through Tinahely.