

Tidy Towns Competition 2021

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Monaghan - Muineachán** Ref: **611**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **335**
Category: **E** Date(s): **12/08/2021**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	51
Streetscape & Public Places	60	49
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	42
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	44
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	39
TOTAL MARK	470	335

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

Fáilte Chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 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.

I thank you for your comprehensive application and the extensive time and effort put into this detailed document. Your 25-year association with this competition is remarkable. The links formed with other agencies, bodies and businesses in excess of 40 notes a community that value partnership. Your committee of 15 supported by a core group of volunteers who are divided into a network of sub committees that are project focused shows a well organised and focused team. It is great to learn that Covid and the associated restrictions led to an increase in the number participating on your committee and supporting your efforts. I am particularly pleased to note the over 30 young people participating in Junior TidyTowns and 40 number from the Men's Shed. The strong links you have with Monaghan County Council is important as is your participation on the Town Team and your leading and guiding role on the brilliant County Network of TidyTowns and Residents' Committees. All considered this notes a committee that knows the value of partnership. Your range of communication techniques involving traditional with modern online media ensures your message reaches a wide demographic. Leaving your mark by painting vacant and derelict buildings gets your committee positive recognition while achieving tangible results. Your long-established annual awards night took an imaginative twist with the logo 'Looking good 2020' a good response to the Covid restrictions. Having all 5 schools registered in the green schools shows that you are communicating well with this important group. Your committee has developed a comprehensive list of guidance documents, which have been developed on the back of significant consultation with the local community thus ensuring a sense of ownership and involvement.

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

In this category you have clearly identified the excellent work carried out in the past at key profile locations including, the Diamond, Church Street and the old square. The planned improvement works in Dublin street and its back lands will result in a huge transformation of this area. It is good to note that the plans for Dublin Street have received some funding and significant recognition winning prestigious awards. Thankyou for providing a copy of the Plans with your application. The new train sculpture looks modern and robust with a strong solid profile and is well located. The landscaping planned will help to soften the piece. The recent refurbishment of the railway station is a real positive the building looks well, and I am delighted to see new tenants giving the building a new purpose. The peace hub currently under construction when completed will bring much needed community resources to this prominent location. Your progress with Monaghan County Council in compulsory purchasing derelict buildings will

lead to significant investment in both Dublin Street and Glaslough Street and assist in solving the perennial problem associated with dereliction in your town. The photos provided of Mooney's corner shows what can be achieved. Painting the 32 seats was a significant but worthwhile undertaking they look great. Your paint windows and the Biodiversity mural projects tackles a very difficult issue head on. Several future projects are noted however, the small murals proposed for around the town depicting local Flora and Fauna looks interesting. The Mural on the Poc Fada public house looks amazing. The use of Creamery Cans as planters is effective but also nostalgic well done. I am delighted to note feedback from the adjudicator in the 2019 report assisted in getting support for painting the Upper Storeys on Dublin Street. Your co operation with Albany Home décor is positive. The colour coordination element associated with the Shop Front Paint Scheme is important and will be worthwhile. The partnership between your committee and Monaghan County Council is noted in the My Kingdom of Monaghan walking tour. The St Davnet's Campus Project notes yet another strong partnership in this case the HSE, the restoration of the weighbridge is worthy of note. Your ongoing efforts with the Lock and the Lock keeper's cottage and your 4 focused actions will return results. The work in providing the green way path and fence is significant, your efforts to drill the post to accommodate bees denotes a committee that don't leave anything to chance. The Monet in Monaghan bridge painting and landscaping is just beautiful, innovative and unique, well done to all involved. The creative Ireland Art Mural is an effective way of screening and at the same time bringing an educational and artistic element together, I am delighted to note the support of Monaghan Town Library. It is great to have succeeded eventually with completely the railings at the Orange Lodge. I wish your committee the best of luck with the 2 projects highlighted as FPs associated with the Destination Towns.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

There is an inevitable cross over between categories and particularly between Green Spaces and Landscaping and Nature and Biodiversity as acknowledged in your application. Your decision to only list projects once is a good one. The support of a horticulturist in guarding your endeavours is to be welcomed. It is great to see the local authority signing up to the National Pollinator Plan. The list of horticultural projects either recently complete or still ongoing is extensive detailed and focused. Indeed, it is worth reiterating that all projects have a strong Biodiversity theme. This is even more obvious considering your move away from annuals toward perennials and herbaceous perennials. I am happy to note that significant consideration is going into where containers are sited and note that they are now situated predominantly in areas of high public access. The photos provided with your application in this category are impressive and strongly supports the information given in your application. The range of photos of the various projects undertaken at Peters Lake are noted for the vast array of landscaping schemes with different themes. An infestation of Invasive Japanese Knotweed was noted adjacent to the water course at Peter Lake and advice given by the 2019 adjudicator, I note the infestation has been treated but advise ongoing vigilance. The Rossmore Park regeneration and Giants project looks impressive. The 'Hug a Tree' for Biodiversity week is a nice appreciable event. The giants trail is unique and the involvement of Monaghan Tidy Towns on the consultative committee is an important role. Tree planting is an obvious priority considering the significant number of trees planted in public spaces and the Dispersed Urban Orchard project well done. Regarding your existing stock of trees, the 2019 adjudicator noted evidence of mechanical damage to trees associated with grass cutting equipment and the need to remove stakes and adjust ties, please consider. The benefits of an Arboricultural assessment of existing mature trees was also noted and I am delighted to read that you have commissioned a tree survey. The tree hospital at Killygoan is unique. The sage garden restoration has involved a lot of work and is a colourful and vibrant place. I feel your frustration associated with the ongoing issue of antisocial behaviour; the photos provided assisted greatly thank you for the same. Your efforts at Hospital Hill are commendable, conclusions reached regarding over application of chemical appears to be well considered and accurate. The planting on the Margaret Skinnader Roundabout was noted positively by the 2019 adjudicator and again from the photos provided it looks amazing and is admired and appreciated in this very prominent location.

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

Your 3-year Biodiversity & Development plan 2021 to 2024 has a strong biodiversity focus. It allows your committee and all project partners to describe, classify and prioritise actions for the coming 3 years. Most importantly it puts in place timelines noting recommended actions for your committee, the local authority and other voluntary bodies. The 2019 adjudicator noted your committee as national exemplifiers in this category, your new plan further supports this. Well done to all involved.

It is great to note the success of the Monaghan Tree Trail and your intentions to expand in the future. Your pollinator friendly mowing regime gives very specific guidance on when to cut which is important as is the distribution of the plan to all your project partners. It is great to see your committee and the wider community avail of the local expert Jenny Blackburn regarding trees. Noted is the success of the Dispersed Urban Orchard and your plans to develop Linear Orchards and Edible Hedges and Pathways. I would stress that you map all three wonderful initiatives. The Riverwatch project associated with the Blackwater notes 5 specific actions covering a range of activities and of course central to this is partnership, best of luck with this future project. The Biodiversity plan for the Bus Station considers the biodiversity value of what is existing as a starting point, this must be commended. The dandelion themed window display and the respect the dandelion logo creates a strong awareness of a very important wildflower species which is often overlooked. The proposed extension to the Greenway is a welcome development and your intentions to ensure a strong biodiversity value important. I visited your biodiversity web site and it is most impressive, well done to all involved. I note your partnership with Monaghan County Council regarding treatment of Invasive weeds at Rossmore Park. The native hedge planting at Woodlands Estate and Killygoan allotments and the orchard regeneration at St Davnet's show the important emphasis you put on planting. The making home for Nature associated with the Junior Tidy Towns the Biodiversity kit and the Birds of Monaghan all have a strong educational value. The Monaghan Biodiversity Town Day provides a good showcase for your work and the photos provided show strong support despite Covid. I wish your committee and your project partners well with the

Rossmore walled garden plan. The window murals at the library depicting wildlife at the Slaibh Beag area are stunning, it is nice to note a local connection with the artist and the landscape.

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

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. SDGs are now an important consideration in this competition, and I recognise your efforts to embed these goals in the work that you do, well done. Your committee has found very good project partners with Monaghan Town Runners and the reusable plastic cups initiative. The success of the stop Food Waste Workshops tackles an important issue. The Water Fountain is a well-used resource in a prominent location. The opportunity to reuse plastic containers at the sustainable shop on Glaslough Street is about reducing your environmental impact a key cornerstone in this category. Previous adjudicators noted the importance of Green Flags for schools and requested more information about participating schools. I thank you for the detailed information provided and the photos that supported this information. Of note was the TY ambassadors at Gael Scoil Ultain for their lead role regarding cyclists, well done to all involved. The canvass bag not only reduces concerns regarding plastics but also promotes the good work of your committee. Your project Zero on Facebook deals with an important issue waste prevention and reduction through a modern media. Both the reusable coffee cups and the compostable straws ensures strong co operation with local businesses. The range of important activities undertaken at the Killygoan allotments is vast and important to this category. Your efforts are well supported by the Men's shed organisation and the work they do is important and practical, of note is the many upcycling projects undertaken. The efforts of your committee to monitor the Recycling Bins using CCTV is a massive undertaking for a voluntary committee but I note your efforts are achieving significant results. The local link to Dublin Street in your recycling poster helps to reaffirm an important message at local level. The Climate Action workshop held in February 2020 was well attended in pre Covid times. The recycling education information days in local supermarkets is paying dividends. The 'Love where you live' theme to promote local shopping in conjunction with the voucher scheme are great initiatives well done. It is good to note strong support from Monaghan County Council horticulturist on your 'Happy Hearts Project.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

This category is difficult to adjudicate without visiting the centre under consideration. In short, the presences or absence of litter and tidiness can only be really established from a stroll around the centre under consideration. Nevertheless, I am happy to conclude there is ample evidence of a strategic and concerted effort orchestrated by your committee and supported by all your project partners, well done. Your litter vigilante video on social media has worked in encouraging the public to get involved. The significant investment in the Ulster Canal clean up should amount to money well spent as the recently installed CCTV systems should act as a deterrent. Regular litter patrols at Peter Lake is achieving results at this high-profile location. Your involvement with An Taisce for the Spring-clean launch notes a good partnership. The 13 items under the heading of additional work on litter are broad ranging. I note the use of local radio to promote your message as an effective media. The 2019 adjudicator noted several incidents of graffiti on laneways which you now describe as occasional, it is good to note progress on this issue. The work of Junior Tidy Towns on the litter issue is so important from a 'shared learning' perspective and note their endeavours have been acknowledged with youth awards. Lobbying work is never easy but important and your committee seem to have learned the value of lobbying. It is good to note the support of community employment regarding cleaning and maintaining street furniture. Your 'Poster Hunts' target a specific persistent problem and has proven productive. Your committee have demonstrated a huge ability to engage people, the Plogging and litter picking initiative demonstrates this well. The strong partnership you have forged with Monaghan County Council and more specifically the environment section is productive, and I expect mutually beneficial. I wish your committee every success with the sponsored pooper scooper project planned for next year. One of the considerations in this category is evidence of control of weed growth at areas such as kerbs, perhaps a future application could address this issue.

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

You're Estate Enhancement Plans (EEPs) is a wonderful initiative and it is great to note that it is expanding. The 2019 adjudicator noted further significant mechanical damage to trees in both private and public estates associated with grass maintenance works. It was suggested that the (EEPs) would be a good platform to address this harmful practice. The adjudicator also suggested that the issue be brought to the attention of the Local Authority. Your current application (actions on 2019 report) does not provide an update, I would be grateful if in a future application an update could be provided. There is no doubt that your Annual Awards evening is your flagship project and requires a huge effort and noted is a tasteful compromise in 2020 considering Covid. The newspaper articles and colour photos associated with your awards that accompanied your application are appreciated. It is great to read that your annual awards evening has a specific award for the best presented Town House, as this is an area often overlooked. The list of 10 residents' associations noting specific supports given to each of the 10 amounts to a remarkable body of work, take a bow well done to all involved.

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

I note and understand your decision not to number projects in this category as they have been mentioned in other categories, as noted previously there is an inevitable cross over between different categories. Your works to repair and paint fences annually are a big undertaking. Litter is also a consideration in this category, and I note a considerable concerted effort to litter pick all the main approach roads to your town. Here again the establishment of a rota to guide your efforts is wise. Tree planting on approach roads is also a consideration and note your considerable efforts in that regard. The list of works undertaken on all your approach are substantial and here again a strong partnership between your committee the local authority, Community Employment and the Business and

Retail Sector must be recognized.

Concluding Remarks:

An opportunity to visit your town would have been wonderful. I understand that desktop adjudication is challenging for all involved but necessary considering the times we live in. Your deliberate efforts to make Monaghan a biodiversity themed town gives your town a strong and definitive identity. Your three-year development plan is a wonderful document with a strong biodiversity leaning and will guide your efforts for the next three years. I must acknowledge your detailed analysis of the report issued by the 2019 adjudicator and a considerable list of actions undertaken to address the issues raised. While noting not all actions identified have been satisfactorily concluded your efforts are commendable. Keep up the good work.