

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Monaghan - Muineachán</b>	Ref: <b>611</b>
County: <b>Monaghan</b>	Mark: <b>346</b>
Category: <b>E</b>	Date(s): <b>07/07/2022</b>

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	52
Streetscape & Public Places	80	49	50
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	42	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	44	46
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	40
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>346</b>

### 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 Tidy Towns competition. The organisation of tasks in Monaghan is excellent and the partnership approach you have with other vested interests is admirable. Getting young people involved in activities is very important and you appear to have achieved this with junior and senior school groups. We note your active Facebook page and website, and branding to keep the wider community informed. The list of this year's projects which includes painting, Riverwatch, Annual Awards night and table quiz is something to be proud of considering the times we now live in. Your continued participation in the competition for twenty six years is appreciated and it is wonderful to note the improvements to the town spirits and enjoyment it has brought. The number of volunteers that can be relied upon is impressive and we were delighted to read of your success in the past – Endeavour Award, Notice Nature, Regional Youth, and a Silver Medal. Your ongoing commitment is a credit to you all and we wish you continued success.

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

You have some fine heritage buildings in the town giving it real character. The buildings on the main street are primarily two and three story and some of these are very beautiful – The Market House, Bank of Ireland, Alma House, and Western Arms. Well done on your continued promotion of streetscape painting, signage and improvement scheme and your guided Town Talks. Owners take pride in their property as was seen on our visit and many had been freshly painted. Nice touch with 'Thank You' cards. Street furniture which has been refurbished by volunteers enhance the streetscape in bright colors. Great display of colour with pollinating perennials, especially the diamonds bronze planters. Congratulations on the redevelopment plans of Dublin Street which will enhance this area of town significantly. The Peace hub too is also praiseworthy and Tidy Towns Groups can play a very important part in designing, improving and maintain their public spaces. At Rowantree Road, the train sculpture is a nice nod to history and the ongoing refurbishment of the Railway station with its copper finish brings a modern twist. We look forward to the landscaping. While there is some dereliction, the town in general looks well. Your adjudicator appreciates the creativity of biodiversity murals to feature local flora and fauna and we look forward to other walls being completed in the future. Outside the town we enjoyed a visit to St. Macartan's Cathedral. St. Davnets has a fine campus of Victorian built heritage and getting the attention it deserves. One is all too aware that Covid has meant delays to many projects, but planning is underway for several exciting new projects, and we look forward to the transition soon.

### Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The emphasis on low mow regimes allows wildflowers to grow and is an excellent way to promote Biodiversity. We are glad to hear you now have the use of a polytunnel, a useful space to grow your own. Thank you for the details supplied on what is grown: all complying to best practice. As noted above perennial planting were noted for their colour and effect in numerous locations to soften grey areas. It is good to note that planting is sustainable and chosen for the bees. St. Peters Lake is one of your prime green spaces and in good order: obviously well valued by the community. The water fountains, diverse planting and the duck 'antics' were very engaging. Maintenance carried out in flower bed at footbridge. Do try and maintain flowerbeds as weed free as possible to maximize their presentation, we appreciate this is a very difficult task. One understands these have been hard times for volunteers to carry out maintenance work and many thanks to all who give of their time to do this work. Work at the ESB substation and Hospital Hill is favourably noted and well done to the residents of Mullaghmat and Tully hill: wildflower areas are a great idea – could other resident associations be encouraged to make a wildlife area in their estate? We admired your wildflower beds created on Macartan Rd and Castle Rd with a staggering one million bulbs adding a multitude of colour to the town. Often overlooked, spring & summer bulbs are among the first to bloom and a great way to expand and add visual interest to the landscape. Roadside margins are generally suitable, and these are quite stunning. We love your 'Dispersed Urban Orchard' initiative as this will cater for wild birds, bees and is visually appealing. It is good to see that you are focusing on the long-term green structure of the town with your recent planting of over 400 + trees in various locations. Let us know how the tree survey goes! We found more nice spaces at the Crocus Garden and St. Davnets, and they will certainly offer higher levels of health and well-being. You mentioned quite a few roundabout transformations which are all to be commended and we particularly admired the striking sea of blue at the Clones Road roundabout. Planting has a good mix of tall and low planting which gave great flow and colour- but again some need attention. The landscaping in the Ulster Canal Park of liquidambar and birch will take time to mature and will add greatly to the area. The Greenway is an excellent resource and was popular with walkers, runners, and cyclists during our visit. It's great to see you have not used any chemicals or herbicides. Your Council Horticulturist has certainly advised you well as landscaping is excellent. Your younger members continue their involvement in a range of projects illustrated in the photographs. Well done to your Tidy Towns committee and volunteers for the huge commitment of time and work involved in sowing, planting, watering, and maintaining numerous displays throughout the town. The cheerful displays speak for themselves. You have put a lot of work into this category, and you are commended for adopting the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Best of luck with progressing the Giants at Rossmore Park, a fun element of your landscaping that will inspire great imagination in small children in the years to come! We look forward to seeing photos in next years competition.

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

We are pleased to read that several wildlife projects are underway in addition to some good initiatives that are intended to raise awareness of your local biodiversity. We were most interested to hear that you are actively working on an Implementation Strategy and a Green Map to develop Monaghan as a 'Biodiversity Town'. The traditional 'just set aside' approach is almost certain to be inadequate so these plans will help you formulate actions and measures and get the message out to the community in simple language. We note the expert help sought and this is to your credit. Your submission outlines lots of good actions being completed i.e., biodiversity kits, 'Hug a Tree', 'Primary Pollinators', 'Bee Babies', Tree trail, pledge signs, online website to name a few. This would all fit in well with your Eco-Tourism objectives. Working in partnership with the schools and creches you have advanced great initiatives with the younger generation on Bees. You had great numbers out for walks and talks. Such events are a wonderful way to get people engaging with their local environment and realize the importance of protecting it. Your wildlife signage also helps you raise awareness. Well done on the work done to eradicate Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam and securing funding to remove azolla fern along the canal. The waterways provide significant recreational possibilities, and it is good to see the 'Riverwatch project' in operation. MTT has really embraced this category in a positive way and are implementing all the 'Pollinator Plan' guidelines into their everyday activities. Excellent work – you show a great awareness in the practical steps that can be taken.

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

Sixteen projects make up this category and the adjudicator appreciates that both the committee and the wider community are getting the message we need to reduce waste and sustainably use resources. Your committee and others (businesses, and the schools) have thought of and maintain several over the years. You are implementing a sustainable ethos in all that you do. You include water harvesting, in the allotments as this is all about saving on all our natural resources (waste, water, energy, transport). We note the reusable cup campaign, eco bags and the sharing scheme for water cups. These projects are giving a powerful message about recycling. You get marks for hosting 'Energy Upgrade Event' and promoting events such as the 'Cloth Nappy' event, drawing attention to using resources efficiently. Social media is one great way of administering 'Zero Waste'. Great to see the allotments are thriving helping a variety of groups such as Rehab, National Learning Network, Scouts, Junior Tidy Towns etc. We recognize the work of the Men's Shed. Your newly established 'cycle to school' at St. Macartans promotes active travel and bike infrastructure and funding a worthy addition. Credit goes to Monaghan County Council for ongoing improvements. Perhaps a community cycle bus could be initiated for other school children. For more information check out <https://www.changex.org/ie/cycle-bus>. The schools continue actions to reduce waste, water, energy & travel. Thank you for the information on their Green Flags achievements. We wish Collegiate the best in the World Final of Junk Couture. We look forward to getting an update on these projects next year.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Your regular litter patrols are paying dividends and hopefully changing the culture on litter. Praise is due to the Rehab team, National Learning Network team, Local running groups, Sub aqua club members, Civil Defense, County Council, Junior Tidy Towns and 'litter vigilantes' for the great support in clean ups - they will be rewarded.

We note your vigilante video to support your work. While the town was virtually litter free there was considerable weed growth in many areas which gave an unkempt look. We recommend that groups who litter pick the different areas are asked to bring a hoe with them to also remove weeds. Weed control is best tackled early season. We understand and applaud your decision not to use herbicides and know removing weeds is a not a nice job. Let us know next year what weed control strategies are in place? Post box at Ulster bank and litter bin require maintenance. Your efforts to clean up graffiti quickly are noted. We were impressed with your efforts to purchase litter trolleys, car bins, litter picker stands and pooper scoopers to keep Monaghan town litter free. We hope the new dog litter campaign has an impact. Your coordinated effort with Monaghan Co Co and Emyvale TT along the N2 will help keep a good standard in this category. Painting of fences, railings, WEEE collections and helping residents are all further evidence of your hard work and commitment. A special thanks to your volunteer hero, Joe who was spotted doing his great work: one of your shining stars in the community.

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

Compliments to the residents of the various housing estates on the presentation of their areas and who assist you in TT's work - Drumbear Wood, Tully, Lime Park, Crannog, Mullaghmatt, Mullaghglass, Hillgrove, Armagh Road and Rope Walk cottages, Belgium Park to name a few, looked impressive. Well done on getting residents to incorporate the biodiversity plan into their landscaping. Good to be working of a plan. We applaud your support for the Annual Awards and your photographs submitted include stunning displays, worthy of recognition for their efforts. Having a competition really improves an area and you were fortunate to gain more knowledgeable volunteers. Despite Covid you managed to plan work safely and are working on re-establishing Junior Tidy Towns. Perhaps they could help with surveys in these gardens. I am including a link to a to short video to show you how to do the FIT count: [https://videos>>All-IrelandPollinatorPlan\(pollinators.ie\)](https://videos>>All-IrelandPollinatorPlan(pollinators.ie)) and a new app is now available for Ireland that allows you to carry out a FIT Count and upload the results in one go. Nice to see the newly planted trees, wildflower meadows and nasturtiums.

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

One accepts that you are reliant on Monaghan County Council for their upkeep, and we are happy to report that a good standard is achieved. Route signage and street name plates make it easy to negotiate the town. Great to see you take advice on board and made improvements to areas at Drumbear, Bus Eireann and the ESB substation. They make a huge difference. With join you in acknowledging your council horticulturist enthusiasm in leading change for a more sustainable landscape. Much of it aimed at Biodiversity – again, try to ensure it doesn't look neglected. Newly installed pathways, maintenance works and planting of roundabouts are important for the townscape. Rotary hedging will give great screening when it grows. A strong partnership between the council, businesses and the committee must be recognized.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

We got the feeling of a hard-working community who cherish their surroundings and contribute to the well being of the entire community. You have a lovely town and are right to be proud of it. It was a pleasure to visit and most enjoyable.