

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tullamore - Tullach Mhór** Ref: **727**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **362**
Category: **F** Date(s): **08/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	55	56
Streetscape & Public Places	80	51	52
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	48	49
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	37	38
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	23	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	44	45
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	44	46
TOTAL MARK	550	353	362

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2023. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór...

Thank you for your lengthy, very detailed and well-illustrated professionally designed application to this year's Tidy Towns competition.

There is a committee of 16 with some one hundred volunteers. Congratulations on your sixty years involvement with the Tidy Towns awards. Your ongoing success with gold medal awards is to the credit of all involved. As described in your application the Tidy Towns Committee is 'supported by every corner of the community' and has been 'a catalyst for community involvement' for the benefit of the local community and environment. The Committee receives advice and financial support from local and state organisations and participates in local networks. Communications among the Committee and with the wider community employs all the present means including print and internet. Sixteen groups of young people are involved in the An Taisce Green School's programme, as you say they may become Tidy Towns active in the future.

You have also submitted a comprehensive three-year plan, prepared on your behalf, detailing many actions within each category of the Tidy Towns competition. The plan gives you a template to complete in the coming years – a worthwhile tool for the Tullamore Tidy Towns Committee and useful for future adjudicators.

The application described many projects, activities in and future plans for Tullamore. At times it was difficult to separate what were Tidy Towns projects from those of other local state or community groups with which you are associated. In future applications emphasise 'projects or initiatives undertaken by the group in a competition year' and link them with particular SDGs.

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

Tullamore has the benefit of fine network of broad streets lined with well-maintained houses and business premises. Many businesses and houses had placed well filled troughs and hanging baskets with colourful flowers. Having been refurbished in recent years the Market Square and O'Connor Square are fine public places. Streets such as Harbour Street and Cormac Street are well paved with tree filled planters situated at intervals. The designed and formal planting at the Tullamore College roundabout contrasted with the natural planting at St Mary's Youth Centre extending along O'Carroll Street to the grassy embankments by the Grand Canal. At the time of the adjudication the Millennium Bridge and associated paved area was busy with people. Acre's Folly was another recent project. How well it looked, snow white, glistening in the sun on the day of my visit.

Few derelict or vacant premises occur in town and the County Council have placed notices, likely at your behest, on at least four buildings. In time the County Council might 'underground' a lot of the overhead wires, especially those on the primary streets.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The most significant greenspace in the town - Lloyd Park has very good signage, interpretative panels and play equipment. The replanted ornamental beds, described in the application, were flourishing. The park is well maintained, with the exception of the entrance paths by the Tullamore river from the R443. As these paths are close to a primary school, brambles, thistles and nettles should be kept under control.

The grounds of St Catherine's Church of Ireland are, as the guidebooks say 'worth a detour' with mature trees, a grassed area filled with wildflowers and in contrast, a recent garden with fountain, seating and pollinator friendly plants. In contrast at the Church of the Assumption, grey stone walls have become a backdrop for a colourful shrubbery and for wooden planters, made by Tullamore Men's Shed. Two other landscaped areas visible to pedestrians on Cormac Street were the formal garden at Tullamore Town Council and flower filled containers and shrubs at the Presbyterian Hall.

Well planted and well-maintained shopping centres such as Dunnes Stores, Lidl and Kilbride Plaza also contribute to greenspaces in the town. The planting at Kilbride Plaza and the Garda station was augmented by the Committee's display of tiered planters with an associated seat. The photographs supplied showed begonia being planted which were in flower at adjudication time. Other photographs showed bulbs being planted and in flower in these and other planters at Kilbride Plaza.

Last year's adjudicator noted the development of the Charleville centre garden and the Committee's plan to grow pollinator friendly plants for the town ? How has this work progressed ?

Planting by the roadside by Colaiste Choilm had become very weedy. Pay attention to paved areas, margins of paths and utility boxes for example on O'Moore Street had also become weedy. At Kilbride Street tree roots are lifting tree grilles and will become a trip hazard.

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

As described in your application the Tullamore Living River project has involved many local groups and state organisations. The photographs supplied show community involvement in the large scale planting this past year.

Though not accessible at the time of the adjudication, from the road young trees were noticeable among in an extensive display of wildflowers. Next year's adjudicator will see how this area has developed.

The Canal Greenway is another contributor to nature and biodiversity in the town. Readily visible were the Ox eye daisies and yellow Flag Irises. Less obvious but necessarily so was the Wild Garden by the County Council offices on the Charleville Road.

In this past year some Committee members participated in biodiversity training. No doubt, future applications will include details as to how this training has been applied.

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

Mobymove stations installed by Offaly County Council are evidence of the Tullamore's commitment to more active forms of travel in the town. The Bottle Bank and Bring Centre on Daingean road and Kilbride Plaza are well sited at the corner of large car parks.

The SEAI home energy upgrade event which was to have taken place in May 2023 and the Tidy Town Committee's association with Tullamore and District Chamber of Commerce regarding SEAI community charter should bring welcome benefits for residents of Tullamore in the coming years.

In the coming years adjudicators will experience how the planned Garden of Peace and Produce is used by existing and recent, particularly Ukrainian residents, in the town.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

In general, the town is very tidy and with little evidence of litter on the streets. Due in no small part to the number of new and ongoing initiatives described in your applications. Of note is the 'Adopt an Area' initiative with 40 areas managed by 23 custodians. As also noted last year Tullamore must be one of the few places where a canoe club engages in litter collection. Repainting rubbish bins in Lloyd Park may be part of the ongoing refurbishment of this town amenity.

At the time of the adjudication the entrance to the river bank from the R443 had become a haven for cans and rubbish.

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

A number of residential areas were visited. Flower filled tubs were a feature of Glenfircal estate. The communal shrubbery with climbers, herbaceous plants and shrubs was being given due care and attention. In Ashley Court the roadside verges and trees were similarly maintained. Maturing trees, and neatly trimmed communal hedges were to the fore in the Church Hill estate. It is obvious from the many colourful examples on Clontarf Road that residents enjoy their gardens.

At Ardan View while planters filled with annual plants have been situated by paths, there is scope to plant more trees and shrubs and reduce the number of grass cuts per year. There are fine mature trees and open spaces within Marian Place. Some weeding of the stone planters and shrubberies would reveal the many fine shrubs within.

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

A future project could replace the box plants in the containers on the roundabout near Dunnes Stores on the R420 which are not thriving in this location. Nearby the roundabout and environs leading to Church Hill and Hop Hill Avenue are well maintained, with grass by the paths recently mown and open spaces intentionally unmown. It was

not bulb season but the work involved in recruiting volunteers to plant 4000 bulbs at Hop Hill was a huge task. What a display of bulbs it must have been. The approach road from Daingean was well lined with trees. The Charleville Road (R421) too was both an approach road and a residential street with many fine houses and associated gardens. From the Clara side two landscaped areas with trees, shrubs, grass and pathways signal the approaching town. A substantial path lines the R443 from the Grand Canal to the Railway Station, much of which is planted with trees. Also of note are the well landscaped grounds of the Offaly County Council Fire and Rescue Service and the opposite the Official Temporary Dwelling with a well landscaped entrance and a neat central greenspace. Within the town, streets such as Benburb Street and Chapel Street and their associated entrances and alleys retain their original layout.

Concluding Remarks:

Tullamore retains its historical past with some broad streets with their fine two or three storey commercial premises and houses, the harbour and Grand Canal. The town also has expanded to include housing estates, schools, offices, shopping centres etc. In recent years attention has been given to the centre of the town at O'Connor Square, Market Square and Millenium Square. How the town must have expanded and developed in the sixty years since the Tullamore Tidy Towns committee began their work. How the scope of work and range of projects undertaken by the Committee must have expanded too. Based on the application and the three-year plan submitted Tullamore Tidy Towns has a lot of work in hand – all for the betterment of the local community and environment. Lean ar aghaidh leis on obair !