

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| Centre: <b>Dromiskin - Droimineasclainn</b> | Ref: <b>492</b>            |
| County: <b>Louth</b>                        | Mark: <b>349</b>           |
| Category: <b>C</b>                          | Date(s): <b>29/06/2022</b> |

|   | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2021 | Mark Awarded 2022 |
|---|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80           | 53                | 54                |
| Streetscape & Public Places               | 80           | 39                | 41                |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping              | 80           | 44                | 45                |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality  | 55           | 39                | 40                |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less     | 55           | 29                | 31                |
| Tidiness and Litter Control               | 90           | 65                | 66                |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas       | 55           | 31                | 32                |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes           | 55           | 39                | 40                |
| <b>TOTAL MARK</b>                         | <b>550</b>   | <b>339</b>        | <b>349</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... Thank you for your 2022 entry to the Tidy Towns Competition and accompanying maps and three year plan for 2020 - 2023. The entry form was original in layout, super clear, succinct and a pleasure to read – well done! For each project you have noted the project (new or maintained), timescale, cost and funding source if any, map reference and sustainable development goals that the project aims to address together with a brief description and one or two photographs. The map is clear and easy to follow and although the project numbers do not correspond with the numbers on the map, you have given map references which does the job just as well. The plan is also well laid out and was clearly designed following extensive consultation with the community and the summary update shows very clearly the status of each project.

Your core committee of 12 is hugely supported by up to 45 volunteers and it is such good news to hear that you have a Junior Tidy Towns committee who work with the School Liaison Officer and this must promote considerable buy in from all members of the community. Well done for working to ensure inclusivity in the village. Your chart showing the annual voluntary hours pledged, broken down by skills, is most impressive and hopefully it is available for the community to see how they have been able to contribute and encourage the real pride of place that surely exists in Dromiskin.

You have an impressive list of agencies who support you and your varied methods of communication including social media, Whatsapp, open meetings and posters are sure to reach a wide audience.

Congratulations on winning two awards as an acknowledgement of our work on promoting heritage in our community, the County award for your Heritage Week event and Outstanding Achievement Award in the Arts & Culture category of the 2021 Louth PPN Awards.

Your engagement with the school is excellent. It is indeed fortuitous that the former School Principal is Chair of the Tidy Towns Committee and this only serves to show what a tight knit community you have. Well done indeed to the school for their 10 Green Flags.

The work behind the scenes in getting some projects over the line, particularly when private landowners and legal issues are involved, is not to be underestimated so well done for getting the sign licence at Ginnity's Pond in place. An unbroken record 31 years entries to the Tidy Towns Competition is wonderful and you quite rightly celebrated 30 years in style last year. The total figure availed of through various grants in the last five years is very impressive and the results equally so.

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

You have an extraordinary amount of new projects under this category and others. It may not be possible to

comment on each and every one in this report but be assured that they are all taken into consideration when marks are awarded.

The new mural at the Linencare Laundry is eye-catching and the colour co-ordination with the planters really works. The wildflower theme mural on the lower wall is also very pretty.

The new interpretative panels in the Heritage Park are nicely placed and the chosen tributes very apt. The detailed research and consultation is absolutely acknowledged.

The Anois agus fado fado sign was in place on adjudication day and it is easy to understand why it is topic for much discussion and reminiscing. It looks splendid but will it engender even more questions about the prominence of the names? Why is Watery Cross so called? How did Big bush field, Little Bush Field and Rushy Bottom get their names? Perhaps this a project for the school children who could ask the older members of the community who may remember?

What good news that the very central site at the crossroads is to be developed according to the planning permission. Hopefully you will be able to give a little input into the sustainability of the materials used and the landscaping in the hope that the finished development will be in keeping with the long term aims of the community.

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

Your ongoing project landscaping the entrance/driveway to the church and school carpark is a big undertaking and the services of a professional landscape architect was very necessary. Well done for getting the preparatory work completed and we look forward to seeing further progress next year.

Congratulations for your achievement in gaining one of only 19 Community Green Flags for Parks in the country. This is testament to your dedication and hard work and very well deserved. The celebratory event with specially written poem was a fitting one and well done to the author/authors of the poem. This seat could not be further removed from 'off the shelf' and it is a piece of art in itself.

The seasonal and perennial planting throughout the village was colourful and gave a summer feel on what was a cold and wet adjudication day. The Viking Ship did seem a little bare and empty but given that there is provision for hanging baskets, one suspects that they may have since been erected.

Your continued tree planting, planting of spring bulbs and completion of the final phase of the linear beds at the church/school is to be welcomed. One wonders if you have a tree maintenance plan in place to ensure that any formative pruning, checking of ties and stakes and keeping the base of newly planted trees clear is in place. As more and more trees, are planted, this might be a good plan to have in place. There is mention of a completed tree survey for 2022 – 2023 on your three year plan but no mention in your submission. Perhaps you could update us on this survey in your next submission.

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

Your long term project restoring the local wetlands is a work in progress with Phase 1 completed and Phase 2 now in hand. Inevitably there are hiccups and delays but well done for persevering and we look forward to hearing of your progress next year.

The newly refurbished planters set a lovely scene with an excellent selection of plants, both perennial and annual and particularly trailing red geraniums which very much soften the hard surfaces of the planters themselves. The addition of bee barrels, bird boxes, wildflower beds is very good as is the Biodiversity Project at the Animal Compound.

What a great idea to have a 'Wee - ecological Garden' competition for all ages. A great initiative for biodiversity awareness during lockdown.

It has been previously recommended that having carried out so many excellent projects, it might be time to take stock and see what results there might be and if the amenities are delivering their expected benefits. A habitat survey would be a good start. Habitat mapping can help inform decision making in a number of areas including planning, climate change mitigation and conservation of nature and as such is an important first step in understanding the habitat around us and what we need to protect them and to identify any gaps in linkages of habitat. The Heritage Council provide excellent information in their Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Villages. Please do update us on this suggestion next year.

Your Let's Get Dromiskin Buzzing leaflet and Sustainability Survey (which perhaps should be in the Sustainability category) is a good way of tracking the change in habits for residents and welcome news that there is certainly progress towards a more sustainable management of private gardens as well as public spaces.

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

You continue to have an impressive number of sustainability projects, both new and maintained. As recommended by a previous adjudicator, you were asked to try and quantify changes in habits or behaviour as a result of your initiatives. You have this year carried out a comprehensive survey over a four week period under the four main headings and not only shown us the results but also the action already undertaken as a result of the response to the survey. This is an enormous piece of work. The administrative work put into compiling and conducting surveys as well as assessing the response should not be underestimated and you are to be highly commended for undertaking the task.

No doubt the results will have given you encouragement to continue as they were most positive and will have given you clear direction for your future projects and the weaknesses/gaps that exist.

This adjudicator is slightly in awe of the work on this survey undertaken by the committee and can only congratulate you wholeheartedly.

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

Apart from the very smallest piece of litter on Chapel Road, Dromiskin was a litter free zone on the day of

adjudication.

Although you note that cigarette butts continue to be a big problem for you, there were none in evidence which is probably testament to your diligent litter wardens. Similarly there was no indication of dog fouling noticed but as you mention that it continues to be a problem, we done for your various attempts to tackle the problem including the humorous but informative awareness campaigns both on socially media and locally.

You have taken part in the National Spring Clean, the 15 minute clean up and other litter clean ups during the year. Your analysis of the waste collected was enlightening and hopefully your follow-up actions will result in some improvements.

Well done for retaining your Gold Medal status with a cleanliness rating of 96% in the Louth County Council Little League and your well deserved signs are well positioned on the two approach roads.

You have a comprehensive litter management plan which helps to structure litter management and is clearly working.

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

The Tidy Towns Ambassador scheme is an excellent method of collaborating with and managing the public spaces in housing estates and it is already clear to see the improvements in those estates visited. We look forward to seeing the progress of this scheme in the coming years.

One of the areas for improvement could be in the names of the estates at the entrances. A plan to standardise these with bi-lingual names should be considered as some were not only difficult to find but also hard to read in their current state.

There was evidence that herbicide may have been used around the trees in some areas and strangely one litter bin in Church View was completely covered in a black plastic bag to render it unusable. Large swathes of grass in some areas could be left to grow to increase biodiversity while still leaving plenty of space for ball and other games. Rather than using containers for planting on grass, it would be preferable to plant directly in to the grass and much less maintenance in the long run.

The House & Garden Awards are clearly a great project to incentivise residents and it is good to hear that more and more residents are taking part.

Individual houses too had a very high standard of landscaping and planting and are also to be commended.

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

No matter which road one approaches Dromiskin from, there is still the same feeling of welcome, of a caring community who have taken time and effort to ensure that the signs are clean and easy to read, the planting is appropriate, the mature trees give a shady cover, Valerian is left to do its thing for the benefit of pollinators on some of the lovely stone walls and many of the grass verges have been left to grow wild with just a strip cut at the edges. The wooden name signs are effective and easy to read with colourful planting below. The pops of red from painted pumps are very effective and co-ordinate so well with the chosen planting at the signs.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Visiting Dromiskin for the first time turned out to be a revelation for this adjudicator. No matter where one looked there was evidence of a very hard working Tidy Towns Committee and an army of volunteers supporting them. It was a pleasure to see and you are wished good luck in the Tidy Towns Competition.