

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: Letterkenny - Leitir Ceanainn	Ref: 704
County: Donegal	Mark: 368
Category: G	Date(s): 11/06/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	53
Streetscape & Public Places	80	46	47
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	53	54
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	44	46
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	24	27
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	40	41
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	41	42
TOTAL MARK	550	355	368

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 application, map and plan. The sub-committee system you have developed is an excellent way to share the workload and enable volunteers to get involved in activities they are interested in. A broad range of volunteers from different sectors support the work of the Tidy Towns group. Your efforts to support people in direct provision and the integration of Ukrainian arrivals into the community have been favourably noted by the adjudicator. The application form that you put together was excellent.

Letterkenny Tidy Towns has identified many stakeholders to rely on for support and advice. You are involved in a broad range of campaigns throughout the year. The "Power of One" is an excellent initiative highlighting the importance of individual action in improving environmental sustainability.

The website is regularly updated, and you have a broad range of communication channels, this allows for inclusive communication. Your action plan is regularly updated, and you invite stakeholders to take part in the process. The volunteer table is an excellent way to generate interest in the Tidy Towns group, as it takes into account how intimidating it can be for people to join a new group.

You have an excellent relationship with the local schools, and you support them to get involved in sustainability and biodiversity projects. The derelict in Donegal conference is a brilliant way to demonstrate a proactive approach to the national problem that is dereliction. It shows the vital role that Tidy Towns groups can take in tackling the dereliction problem.

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

The Flight of the Bee Street art trail is a superb way to raise awareness of pollinators and brighten up the streetscape in parts of Letterkenny. It is a fantastic way to encourage pedestrians to move through the town. Do you have any plans for more street art projects in Letterkenny?

The Derelict in Donegal is a great project highlighting the critical role that Tidy Towns groups play in the fight against dereliction. It is good to see the positive progress made with derelict buildings in Letterkenny. It must be very motivating to see positive progress made.

Letterkenny Tidy Towns has ensured their voice is heard in the regeneration strategy for Letterkenny. This project should promote innovation in the Northwest. The planned new cycle/pedestrian routes will be an exciting addition to the infrastructure, allowing people to go around the city without using motor transport. Seeing the sustainable development goals linked to this infrastructural development is very positive. The development of the Cathedral Quarter will enhance the centre of town. It is good to see the public signage about the project as it will keep people up to date with new developments. Many infrastructural changes are planned for Letterkenny in the next few years.

Is there a plan to keep the general public updated on the recent developments? The adjudicator would like to suggest repainting the boundary wall around Trinity Hall as it would enhance the area.

The 'paint your town initiative' gives business owners expert advice on enhancing their business façade. In next year's application, it would be welcome to include some before and after pictures so the adjudicator can see the work done.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Letterkenny Tidy Towns and Donegal County Council have made considerable progress using pollinator-friendly planting. The urban greenway will benefit pedestrians.

Letterkenny is committed to using planters to improve the streetscape. On the day of adjudication, the adjudicator did not see any planters in the cathedral quarter. However, you may have decided not to plant them due to the dry June. The pictures from 2022 demonstrate excellent use of brightly coloured pollinator-friendly planting. It is good to see that you have promoted tree planting in Letterkenny at the same time as promoting local business. The Tree of Hope is an excellent way to promote the importance of good mental health. Are you considering repeating the project?

The parks in Letterkenny are all very well managed, and it is good to see the use of trees to create peaceful green spaces that invite visitors to stop and explore. For the adjudicator, the herb garden was the highlight of the town park. It had excellent planting, a feast for all the senses, and paths made with multi-coloured paving. There was signage for a nature trail obscured by hedging; it would be good if this could be trimmed back. The Ballyboy was another excellent park, an oasis of green in an urban area. Two trees appeared dead but had been kept in place. Have they had been left for wildlife? The Ballymacool park was another well-maintained green space with high amenity value and pockets of planting. The urban park is a great way to add colour to a busy urban area. Have you considered creating a wildlife corridor through Letterkenny using the green spaces? It could be linked with the urban greenway project

The town allotments and gardens were fabulous green community spaces that are managed in an eco-friendly way. The allotments were very busy on the day of the adjudicator's visit.

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

Letterkenny Tidy Towns have been promoting a greater understanding of biodiversity through education. Have the groups considered running similar events aimed at children as well? It could complement the excellent work done with the schools and your fabulous colouring sheet initiative.

The biodiversity champion project is an excellent way to promote citizen science in your lovely wildflower projects. Have you considered encouraging other citizen science projects like the garden bird survey? The adjudicator was very impressed with your plans to develop a biodiversity action plan, with its focuses on hedgerow and tree connectivity. It is good to hear your 'Don't mow, let it Grow' project is expanding. Have you considered expanding the area on Sentry Hill? Have you recorded the actions that you took on pollinators.ie website? Recording activities and highlighting Letterkenny's work on a national level is essential. The Butterfly Garden was another beautiful public green space. The adjudicator did spot some Buddleia in the garden; this plant can become invasive and damage infrastructure. So, it is important this it is monitored to make sure it does not spread.

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

The results of your Sustainability Survey on Climate Action, Travel and Transport 2022 were fascinating. Well done for taking the time to find out the general public perceives the actions of Letterkenny Tidy Town. It is so important to take the time to make sure that community members understand your work and how they identify opportunities to volunteer. The cycling infrastructure in Letterkenny has improved. Have you noticed an increase in the number of people using these facilities? Have you considered running some national bike week events or bike maintenance courses? You have launched the reusable bottle scheme with the Chamber of Commerce. Using reusable bottles can reduce the amount of plastic waste being generated. Have you developed a way to monitor the uptake of this scheme? As it can be important to keep a record of the positive impact that your work is having on the environment. The Power of One campaign is an admirable way to highlight the impact that individuals can make when they change their behaviour. The adjudicator particularly enjoyed your Upcycling project. It helps to highlight the effects that fast fashion has on the environment. The make-your-mark symbol is an excellent way to highlight your process of embracing sustainability. Have you considered working with other organisations to use this symbol more widely across the community?

The self-watering hanging baskets are an excellent way to reduce water consumption and save volunteer time. You have also run a water conservation workshop; this is an important project, as potable water is a precious resource. Have you considered using social media to raise awareness of water conservation? The commitment to sustainability retail has been noted favourably by the adjudicator.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

When the adjudicator visited Letterkenny, they were very impressed with the number of volunteers out and about picking litter on a Sunday morning. Well done to all those involved! It is heartening to see that Tidy Towns committee takes the time to celebrate the volunteer effort. The CE and Tus workers do a lot of work keeping the town neat. You have broad-based community support for the clean-ups. Have you ever considered adding to the Junior Litter Warden competition and asked the children to design anti littering posters? Weed control is challenging and you have embraced natural weed control methods. It would be good to get an update in next year's adjudication form.

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

The Cleaner community's competition is an excellent way to acknowledge and encourage the community's efforts to improve their homes and public spaces. More information about this competition would be welcomed in this category would be welcomed in next year's adjudication form. Such as some pictures and information about the winners. It is good to hear about the sustained effort to enhance Church Lane. Helping Hands is an excellent initiative to support residents in maintaining their areas. Two areas that stood out to the adjudicator were Ashlawn, with its well-cared properties, wildlife area and mature trees. The second area was Mukish Avenue, where residents had used planters to enhance the entrance to their street.

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

The N56 laneway project will enhance the approach to Letterkenny greatly. The signs for the festival looked very well on the approach roads with the area of wild daisies in front of them. The station road roundabout was a lovely mix of perennial planting and shrubs. Seeing the pollinator signage and the areas of long grass left beside them was good. Have you considered extending the project to station road? It is good to see the positive progress made on Church Lane, and it is beneficial to see the people moving into the central areas of Letterkenny. The Cathedral one-way system has made improved accessibility for pedestrians in this area. The Tidy Towns group has taken a proactive approach to liaising with the council to improve the appearance of their approach roads. A key feature of your approach roads is the wonderfully landscaped roundabouts—these help to help to develop a sense of place in the Town.

Concluding Remarks:

Letterkenny Tidy Towns is a catalyst for positive change in the community. Keep up the excellent work.