

Tidy Towns Competition 2024

Adjudication Report

Centre: Edgeworthstown - Meathas Troim	Ref: 714
County: Longford	Mark: 343
Category: D	Date(s): 21/06/2024

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2023	Mark Awarded 2024
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	47	49
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	44	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	44	45
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	26	28
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58	61
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	27	27
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	39
TOTAL MARK	550	330	343

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu don bhliain 2024. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór...”

Thanks for your entry form and the additional material. You clearly listed your work over the last 12 months detailing new and maintenance projects. It is important to be strategic in your work so it was great to be able to view your long-term plan. It is simple in format and has clear targets that should be achievable. You are half-way through - have you reviewed it to see how you are progressing? We were also delighted to receive information showing us some of the range of activities in the town including the Maria Edgesworth Festival and The National Famine Commemoration in May '24. How nice to be selected as the national venue for the latter.

Communication is important and you share news and announcements through various mediums including the electronic display board at the new library. Social media was up to date with lots of pictures of your litter-picking activities. And the work of your litter-pickers is your project of which the most effort was put over the last 12 months. Well done to all those volunteers, especially the early risers hitting the streets at 6am!

It is easy to forget that you are quite a small town in population term (2633). But working co-operatively with your community, businesses and County Council you have achieved a lot.

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

This year, you have done exceptionally well in this category of the competition with major changes in the refurbishment of empty buildings and the demolition of a derelict building for which you've been lobbying for some time. Quinn's supply store, beautifully painted, with lovely hanging baskets on its first floor, makes a strong visual impact for vehicles arriving into Edgeworthstown from the north. The former bank building has been converted into a co-working hub that appears to be an excellent amenity. And immediately outside the cleverly named Co:Worx is a charging point for Electric Vehicles. Do you have any statistics on the number of cars stopping in the town to fast-charge en route to & from Dublin? You directly reached out to some building owners to enhance their property and many responded. Indeed, one premises beside the old library received a full refurbishment.

The old school-house was visited and we admired the lovely seating and replanted area in the front garden. The bunting made out of recycled materials caught the eye too. We applaud you have had conservation reports to direct your work here. And we were impressed to read that this is the oldest, 2-storey school building in Ireland.

The train station building was nicely presented but we were disappointed with the plethora of parking signs by the

firm Apcoa all over the car parking area. There are two more at the top of the station road on a lovely stone wall with so much small print nobody would even read in this position and suggested that these two signs at least are removed.

The building and carriageway doors at Gogan's funeral directors were nicely presented. However, the upper floors of the nearby betting shop was in a very poor state of repair and glass in the windows need replacing – what a shame that some of these panes were replaced with boards.

What are the plans for the old library on the Junction? You have cleverly used an empty building to display the Festival of Lights creations - maybe some more empty premises could have similar window displays added. They really added to the streetscape and was an improvement on an empty shop window.

Thanks to the works directed by the with the Area Engineer which meant that as well as smooth road, street standard lights have been moved allowing all users to move more easily along the pavements, such as the new lamp outside Johnny's barber shop.

Overall, you have made great strides in this area and whilst some refurbishments were not yet complete during adjudication, the works have already brought a vibrancy to the centre.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Well done on removing all hanging basket standards and concentrating on in-soil planting. This is an important step to sustainable planting and to conserving your energies.

The Green is a lovely amenity for the town with the various facilities such as the playground, tennis courts and a mature oak tree in the centre. You have continued to enhance it this year by adding more willow trees and planters. The two murals, including the new one, looked very well. When strimming the grass, it be recommended to leave a little bit longer as the bank down to this stream to benefit wildlife and protect the water course. We wonder if you have thought about an inter-generational project collecting acorns from the oak and growing saplings to present to graduating students?

Window boxes at St John's National School looked lovely.

A cluster of hanging baskets nicely brightened up the top of the metal fencing disguising The Backs. Many more premises also brightened the street with their own hanging baskets. This included SuperValu, the refurbished Mostrim Arms hotel and Jack's corner had put in a lovely effort.

The trees in the tree-boxes on the road side need the support straps and poles removed. Can these now be transferred into the roadside, now that the resurfacing has been completed, or elsewhere as they may have out-grown the boxes? How are the planters and tree boxes watered – is there a rain-water tank nearby?

The six new planters contained some good, pollinator-friendly flowers at the Ballymahon Road/Pound Street junction. Whilst low in height, they could be appreciated by stationary passing motor traffic at the traffic lights. The higher planters on Church Street, and Main Street by the library looked well.

Emo daybreak garage was freshly painted, and with new signage it also looked very well. Some of the rough ground surfaces along the boundary of this property could be ideal to plant some ox-eye daisies or some other pollinator-friendly flowers which do well on stoney ground like this and could provide a nice softening effect to the large amount of concrete in this area.

The painted street bollards at the western end of Main Street were of a lovely heritage colour. It was nice to see public seating provided in front of the library. There are also a lot of seats in The Green and maybe one could be re-positioned along the pavement between the library and the Green. This could benefit those who may struggle to walk this distance.

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

You have commissioned a new biodiversity enhancement plan for the town. Many of the actions in the original version have been successfully completed. We love the fact that in the garden at The Old School House you have provided QR codes so visitors can learn about your choice of pollinator-friendly perennial plants and try them at home. That is an excellent idea.

We heard the swift's call whilst exploring the town and located the nest boxes on the new library. What a lovely building design to incorporate these. Have you got any residents yet? The wildlife mural at the back of the library looked very well.

The herb garden in the Green is not just a great resource for locals to harvest for their kitchen recipes, they are also great for pollinators. There is a great on-line information about what herbs etc are good at www.pollinators.ie/resources at the bottom of this page. Perhaps you could have a QR code at the herb garden to these also? Did you organise any wildlife walks during National Heritage or Biodiversity weeks?

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

Well done in your simple but effective schools competition sponsored by the Credit Union. The pupils won prizes by

designing posters to 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle'. It would be great to see the winning entries on your social media.

Waste not, want not: we were impressed that you used some of the rubble from the demolished Dolphin building to make a rockery on the Ballymahon Road, or for your re-using furniture in the Museum donated from a Government Department or using old window frames in the memorial garden.

We only saw one cycle parking rack at the back of the library. We were very disappointed not to see any cycle racks or lockers at the train station, especially due to distance from the town. Travellers had to lock bikes on the waiting room railings. We suggest this is a priority to provide. There would be a good opportunity to add a cycling lane on the Old Dublin Road for the many staff working in the commercial units here. Have you thought of organising a survey to consider what other cycling facilities could be offered in Edgeworthstown. Maybe get some ideas from the local cycling club?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

This is the category of which you are most proud of. And on adjudication day we would agree. There weren't even any cigarette butts outside the usual establishments – so well done to volunteers and businesses and smokers alike. Thanks also to the early risers, and to all who joined in with the Annual Spring Clean. You have put in a lot of effort to clean, repair and tidy up throughout Edgeworthstown.

One street litter bin was full but maybe they are emptied on a Friday?
Could the neighbourhood watch signs in front of St John's church be moved as there are faded and rusty. Nearby is one of a number of sewage system vent pipes that need painting. Maybe this could be a longer-term project for the town, funding permitting?

The bottle banks were clean and tidy on adjudication, though the information sign from the Council here was 'the worse for wear'. Could it be replaced? You could incorporate the children's winning competition poster here to brighten up the area.

On the Main Street it was great to see the support for the local lotto but we wondered if a newer sign could be provided as this was beginning to show its age. Elsewhere some other signs could also be replaced or removed if not needed such as at the entrance gate to The Green, and the damaged playground sign could be replaced with friendlier wording.

On the approach road into Shannon Park there was some litter but it was quite fresh and no doubt your litter squad would have quickly picked it up. Some of the signs in this estate were damaged and ideally would be replaced.

Your volunteers worked hard to paint over or remove any graffiti. If graffiti tags along the pedestrian access at the rear of the library are sustained, maybe embrace this by applying for funding for a community art-work project using this wall as the canvas.

We also appreciated your efforts to get all the cable ties removed from lamps.
Finally – well done to your CE workers and TUS workers – they are an asset to the community and their efforts, and those of your volunteers, are commended.

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

Homes on St Patricks presented very nicely with lovely hanging baskets making a warm welcome here too. Many homes at Devine Crescent looked well with arum lilies and hanging baskets even on their rear walls. Maybe the dead tree at Devine Crescent can be replaced? A couple of small silver birch tree would provide some dappled light, or maybe some native fruit trees so the residents have supplies for home baking.

There is a beautiful gate lodge at the entrance to Edgeworthstown House with lovely traditional railings. Many homes in Shannon Park looked really well. For example, number 2 and number 26 caught the eye with their lovely front gardens with planters and ornaments. At the entrance to Shannon Park there's a redundant street pole with no sign on it that should be removed. A nice community project for Shannon Park residents might be to plant a small cluster of trees or repaint the electricity box at the entrance with some colourful images created by the locals.

We read that many of the communal green areas in estates are managed by the Development Association with your support. There are some very large expanses of communal grass areas that are mown in some residential estates. Have you thought of adopting a tiered mowing regime in a small section of some of these areas? This would save you time and money, and help wildlife. Your Biodiversity Officer can advise and more information is available on the www.pollinators.ie website

The house on the Ballymahon Road next to the old school had a lovely red front door and more lovely planters in the front garden.

Smiles were brought to the face of your adjudicators at the entrance to Charlotte's Row with the lovely array of planters and one home with numerous planters and ornaments that looked very well. We enjoyed looking at the foxgloves and herbs here that are great for the wildlife. Much of which was represented as ornaments on the wall!

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

On adjudication day roads had been recently resurfaced which made for a smooth drive around the main streets of Edgeworthstown. Cycling around we appreciated the murals and were impressed that town clock was showing correct time. We read that energy-efficient lights have been recently installed on this feature. A freshly painted shed with red doors on Devine Crescent looked well.

The fire station looked well though some of the signs on this 'cul de sac' looked somewhat tired. With many workers heading driving up-and-down this road, have you thought about installing a cycle lane? What are the plans for the large industrial empty building that is beginning to deteriorate opposite The Green on the Old Dublin Road?

There's a lot of metal fencing at Kane's garage - maybe a cluster of some planters could be positioned in front to brighten this area.

Despite the ambitions in your biodiversity plan, there was a lot of tightly-mown grass on the by-pass roundabouts. Whilst the bypass itself forms a wonderful woodland corridor, this is a great opportunity for the 1000s of vehicles passing-by daily to be awed. Could a pollinator-flower mix be used here or adopt a mowing regime to benefit pollinators? Transport Infrastructure Ireland have been advancing some wonderful landscaping into their maintenance programmes – maybe reach out to their landscape architects to be a showcase for their ideas. See www.tiipublications.ie

Concluding Remarks:

You have come on leaps and bounds and your entry form was full of projects achieved and completed. Have you anything left in your long-term plan? Next year where possible include some more statistics and figures to boost your application. Well done on a great effort over the last 12 months.