

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Douglas - Dubhghlas** Ref: **116**  
County: **Cork(South)** Mark: **336**  
Category: **G** Date(s): **25/06/2023**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2023</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	46	47
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	47
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	46	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	42	44
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	36
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>336</b>

### **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 chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amachanseo. Adh Mór... thank you so much for your entry into this year's competition, you are most welcome. Thank you for your entry which was very clear with some lovely illustrations and clear maps, and thank you for reducing the application as suggested by last year's adjudicator. from 96 pages last year to 41 pages this year, it is greatly appreciated as it helps the adjudicator focus on the work that you have prioritised and makes sure that you get maximum credit for all the work that you are carrying out.

You enjoy good support and communication with a wide range of organisations, ranging from local businesses, Cork County Council as well as sporting clubs and more. And it is good to hear that you are doing ongoing work to increase this interaction with these as well as local schools. You have a healthy complement of 6 people on your Committee with an additional 35 volunteers that can be called on to help you with your work. You appear to be taking a very practical and strategic approach to your work, with an annual AGM, an annual meeting with Cork County Council, as well as other occasions when needed and regular volunteer work, most Saturdays throughout the year, and work on Wednesday evenings during the summer months. Great to hear that you have an eclectic mix of volunteers from all walks of life in the community and a nice tradition to share a coffee together after you have done your work. A continuation of this community spirit is the support that you give to local residents with the provision of equipment and advice, and a really good idea to interact and work with other local Tidy Towns groups to share advice and tips and tricks.

Some of the alliances that you have developed include agencies and bodies such as Cork County Council, Cork City Council, Tus, SECAD (South-East Cork Area Development) and the Local Authorities Water and Communities Office (LAWCO). This is in addition to obtaining support from organisations such as Pobal, Birdwatch, Cork Nature Network and a myriad of local businesses. Great communications as well with the use of a website as well as Facebook, and I had a look at your page which has an impressive 1.6K followers, with a lot of colourful content, and I liked the logo on the pages looking for volunteers, with its colourful raised hands. It was great to read about all the great work that you do to ensure that the younger members of your community are also involved, with the huge range of projects that they are involved in.

Your project interviewing some of the more senior members of the community was a wonderful idea, a great way to find out how things have changed and to hear these voices.

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

Notable public buildings include St. Luke's Church of Ireland, St Columba's Catholic Church  
Some of the buildings that particularly caught the eye included John O'Sullivan's with lovely deep blue paintwork

offset by the window planters, and KC Restaurant.

There is a high standard of appearance of many of the businesses to be seen in Douglas

The Douglas Community Centre looked very well maintained, with a very neat car park including some good quality bicycle racks. There was really good quality information signpost showing the history and heritage of Douglas, with lovely photographs and descriptions of local landmarks.

I spied quite a few of the painted Electric boxes as I walked around the town, and they are a lovely way to add a bit of interest and colour to something that would otherwise be very grey and drab looking.

As with a lot of towns and villages throughout Ireland, there is unfortunately some empty and derelict buildings to be found in the town. However, you are being proactive in this regard with your work trying to identify and quantify them in order to see what can be done, and are continuing to discuss this with local Councillors. Good to see some progress in that the cottages on Douglas West have recently been renovated, which from the photographs that you have provided have improved the look of these dwellings substantially.

We also read with interest that you have consulted with the Council and other parties like Eir you are working on removing obsolete sign poles and phone boxes etc. which will further smarten up the appearance of the town. We also read about the issues that you are having in relation to the roundabouts, and that whilst the responsibility for maintenance is now formally with the City Council, that you are going to work with them on the appearance of this. You are to be commended for the fine work that you have done at the East Village road, with your work to clean this area and give it a new lease of life, particularly with regard to the planting for pollinator and biodiversity corridors with advice from an ecologist. Well done on your Junior Heritage Trail pack, a great idea, and your work at the Grange Loop Walk, which will not only enhance the leisure and amenity within Douglas but improve safety as well for cyclists and pedestrians from this area into the city centre.

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

Douglas Community park is a wonderful asset to the community and it was being enjoyed by a large amount of people on the day that I visited, and there were signs letting people know that it is a Pesticide Free Zone, and also the lovely Keep Douglas Clean sign, and 'Don't make the Earth sad' one. There was plenty of seating to be found in the park, the bench that was painted a cheerful yellow was particularly admired, and sufficient bins for people to make sure to dispose of their waste. The stencils showing pedestrian/cycling areas were a good idea as well, and the planters crafted by the Mens's Shed were excellent, and the Community Herb Garden was thriving. The Community Vegetable Garden also full of produce, no doubt due in part to your participation in a sustainable gardening course sponsored by Cork City Council.

It was lovely to see the signage advertising that a particular wildflower area was sown by, for example the Girls National School in one instance. Great also to see that you are making sure that the schools are involved as well, with changes to your Green Schools Programme in order to help support them in categories such as Biodiversity, Water, Litter and Travel.

Douglas is lucky to have an array of green and open amenity spaces, the Tramore River Walk, Doman's Wood, Ballybrack Woods to name a few, and it is fantastic that you are linking these spaces in order to form pollinator corridors, and we were very interested to see all of these in the map that you included in your entry. Great work being done to encourage biodiversity through your 'No Mow' areas as well as the 'managed for wildlife' sites such as the wildflower strip on the Carrigaline Road. You are also to be applauded for your decision to concentrate on pollinator perennials rather than just summer bedding.

Good work done by you in conjunction with Cork County Council on the work that you have done to improve the appearance of the Douglas Court Roundabout, and the placing of the planter at the end of the pathway to improve safety as well as visual amenity. A lot of hard work being done in relation to maintenance.

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

There is a lot of work being done in this category, all underpinned by the Douglas Biodiversity Action plan which you launched last year. We were excited to read about all the workshops that you have in progress, for example on Water Monitoring, Biodiversity, as well as Invasive Species.

A large amount of time and effort is being dedicated to this areas including the development of a community led monitoring programmes, recruitment of local volunteers, and the development of an invasive species management plan.

Your work on tree planting is impressive 2,200 out of your target of 2,500 native trees has been achieved, this includes a mix of Hawthorn, Guelder Rose, Apple, Alder and Hazel to name a few, a wonderful legacy to leave in the town.

Fantastic work also being done at The Mangala in Ballybrack Woods –including the development of, and implementation of a management plan for this area with Cork City Council. There are plans here for the woodlands, wetlands and grasslands to be found in this area, including path repair and maintenance, tree and hedgerow planting, installation of information boards as well as the Water Quality Citizen Science project, amongst the huge amount of activity happening here.

The Wildflower area in the Community Park was admired, and you take a very balanced approach, appreciating the value of 're wilding', whilst also appreciating that at other times it may be appropriate to sow wildflowers (though

make sure that these are bought from a reputable source). We look forward to seeing more native plants and flowers here in time. Your work on the Carrigaline Road, and Ballybrack Woods was noticed as well. The work that you have undertaken with your local Water Community Office and UCC is a wonderful initiative as part of the Citizen Science Stream Index (CSSI) and the Cork City Freshwater Monitoring Network. You mentioned in your entry that a report has been produced as a result of your work and will inform future monitoring and actions, it would be interesting to hear more about this and what impact it has had.

The field trip that you had sound extremely interesting and we look forward to seeing the results of this and the findings from the workshop that you plan to hold in September, and the idea of a river trust sounds like a really fantastic initiative.

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

You are showing very strong commitment to embracing the principles of sustainability in your entry form. This is evident from your involvement with the SECAD and it is fantastic to read that this has led directly to the preparation of the Douglas sustainable community plan in 2022 – 2030, and that you are working your way through the actions set out in that. You also took part in Cork City Council's Climate Action Training Programme, as well as a Community Client Action Programme, great work!

You made sure that the launch of the Sustainable Community Plan was as interactive and inclusive as possible, with experts and volunteers on hand to explain more about the plan, answer questions, and give information on specific issues such as grants. The pop up displays looked very colourful and eye catching with a lot of information displayed in a very easy to digest format.

I was really interested to read about the wonderful initiative that you had to take Prescriptions glasses that were no longer needed by members of the community and donate them to be used by those who could not afford glasses otherwise, credit to the Douglas and District Lions Club for this (Lions Recycle for Sight Programme). You embrace the principles 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' and following on from your involvement with Leave No Trace Ireland, you are holding workshops for schools as well as the general community on how to be more sustainable, and improving the environment for the benefit of all, now and into the future.

Other practical day to day steps that you are doing includes recycling whenever you can including repurposing items such as wheelbarrows to be used as planters, carry out composting, grow seeds in the greenhouse made of recycled plastic

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

There is a lot of work being done to keep Douglas clean and tidy, with Saturday morning meets including litter picking, including occasionally focussing on black spots if required. And the 'Area Champions' idea is a good one as allows people to play their part in their own area if they can not make the general meet ups and also helps instil a strong sense of community.

You also participate in the annual 'National Spring Clean' and target an area that particularly needs it in a 'blitz', well done on your work on the Tramore River in conjunction with Ballyphehane Tidy Towns, along with the newly formed Tramore River Community Group.

There was a bit of litter to be found in the main street and surrounding areas unfortunately despite your best efforts, but overall considering the size of your area you are doing very well.

It is fantastic to read that a lot of the junior residents of the town are getting involved, with students from Regina Mundi College and Christ King College participating in the Gaisce Scheme and join your volunteers on a Saturday morning. Following on from the work of two sisters who have dubbed themselves the 'Litter Picker Heros' you have met with local primary schools and developed your schools programme to include litter and waste, and some schools are already involved in the 'Picker Pals' scheme, it is very inspiring to see such interest at a young age. You also work with the local Douglas and St Fin Barres Scout Group who either work with your volunteers or take care of their own 'patch'.

Well done also to all 170 children who participated in the anti -littering poster competition, 9 posters of which can be seen across Douglas and looked very colourful and eye catching. A shout out also due to the two Tús workers Matthew and Piotr who finished in March and good luck to the new ones who were due to start with you in June.

Other work that you are undertaking is to obtain new bins, including segregated ones for recycling, keeping an eye on unsocial behaviour and dumping, developing a Litter Management Plan and keeping a check on ensuring that kerbs look clean and weed free.

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

There was a good mix of housing stock to be found in the town, including the lovely cottages at St. Anthony's Villas to the more modern estates.

Given that you have many disparate housing developments, that is an excellent idea to try and consolidate your information and to have a unified list of local resident's associations complete with contact detail. This will then be added to the Douglas Sustainable Community Database and will be used as a tool to ensure that they will have litter pickers and support, and maybe even attract some new recruits.

It is a pity that your idea for a Green Estates Competition didn't take off, as it is a good idea to encourage a bit of healthy and friendly rivalry and an opportunity for all residential areas to showcase their area and put their best foot

forward, but hopefully it will take off before too long. Well done on your ongoing work in supporting and encouraging local residential estates, including clean up as well as planting, such as the major bulb planting event that you carried out at Ardfield Estate, and your work at Lion House on Church Road amongst others.

Well done on your Pride of Place Award, a fantastic, and well deserved recognition of all the work that you are doing for your community.

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

A lot of work being done to ensure that a great first impression takes place when you enter Douglas and that there is a distinct identity to your area (although we acknowledge that you often go above and beyond to assist with other areas as well). The main areas of the town looked well maintained with very clear painted line Likewise, o the approach roads and roundabouts looked smart with neat hedges and very good signage. Great work being done on your signage and 'Welcome to Douglas' initiative.

The River Walk when complete will be a fabulous asset for Douglas, and it is evident how much work you have put into this project already.

The new residential development on the Carrigaline Road will be a significant addition to this area, and it is great to see that you are working in conjunction with the developers and helped them with their Volunteers Day, work which will see ensure that this project when complete will enhance the area.

Good work with your engagement with your community in order to made sure there was accurate information disseminated with respect to the BusConnects Cork transport transformation programme, and providing sensible observations in order to try make sure that this works for all.

We read with interest your plans to apply for funding in order to carry out a green travel survey which will inform your future plans as well as give invaluable information about travel patterns, and we very much look forward to seeing the results of this.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It is has been a while since this adjudicator has been to Douglas, but a most enjoyable visit was had, in particular a stroll around the Community Park and the Tramore River Walk area. There is a wide range of work being done in all categories, best of luck in the competition and your future projects.