

Tidy Towns Competition 2024

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Kinvara - Cinn Mhara** Ref: **960**
County: **Galway** Mark: **332**
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/07/2024**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2023	Mark Awarded 2024
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	48	49
Streetscape & Public Places	80	46	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	42	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	33	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	25	28
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	33	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	33	35
TOTAL MARK	550	316	332

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 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....

Thank you for your completed 2024 Entry Form, map, 3-year Plan, and your Interim Biodiversity plan. You are evidently a very hard-working committee of 10 with an amazing number of volunteers – 72 for a village of 700+ is wonderful. You must be the envy of many surrounding villages? Well done on recruiting these. You have a great presence on social media aiming at both the young and old of your community – a dedicated email address, a website, and both a Facebook page (1.6K followers) and Instagram account. We love that all are active with regular postings. For those not on social media you use the traditional methods of parish newsletter and Kinvara Community Council newsletter. You list the state and semi state agencies, along with businesses and community groups who assist you financially or with advice and activities. Congratulations on your 2024 Awards for your sustainability projects and tidy towns best practices. We are delighted to read that you have been successful in various grant applications which assist you to partake in your activities. You have been involved with Tidy Towns for over thirty years, with a break of eleven years in the middle. The competition has given you a focus to protect wildlife habitats, to increase biodiversity and to engage in activities and projects which will enhance the village and bring more businesses together. All will influence and contribute to your vision of making Kinvara a great place to live, work and visit. You mention a large number of projects – we will not make a comment on all of them but be assured we are aware of them.

See Concluding Remarks for advice on filling out the application form and producing a map.

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

The village located on both sides of the busy N67 is a mix of single, two and three storey vernacular houses and businesses, sitting side by side along your main streets. To these we can add the stunning Dunguaire Castle, St Joseph's RC church and presbytery, Seamount House (now a school) with its wonderful piers and entrance gates, Kinvara Courthouse (now an office), and the beautiful harbour area as focal points of architectural merit. Although the village was very busy along the N67 with through traffic, the side roads and that leading to your pier/harbour area were relatively calm when we visited. We tried to gain access to the St Colman's church and graveyard but unfortunately failed – the shop who normally gives people access was closed. We suggest you use goats to clean up the graveyard – they are excellent and are recommended by archaeologists of the National Monuments Service. Well done on using the grant given to you to install four stone benches and two picnic tables. We see that you are working on updating your Heritage Trail – use QR codes in addition to a centrally located map. We admired the small display of cobble stones at your Community Centre with a notice of the history of their use. The business premises in the village were well presented and many had floral arrangements to highlight their properties. We

admired the mosaic mural on the little white building at the harbour which we see was assisted by the Heritage Council. The Heritage Trail map was noted – compliments to the artist. The Plastics Mural on Tully's is clever and was admired – 'Let's Reduce our Use.'

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Your harbour area with its well-maintained green space and seats looking out to sea is very welcoming. We loved the contrasting red of the man-made structures. Your planting at the Community Centre is quite beautiful – we admired the variety of form and colour. The Memorial Garden set in the old graveyard was visited but the planting beds were very overgrown and unkempt which was a pity. We looked for the additional fifty native white thorn and guelder roses sown by the children but couldn't see them – perhaps the grass around them needs to be cut? We noted ivy on some stone walls. While ivy is a wonderful for insect life and is acceptable/good on rendered (plastered) walls it is not acceptable on stone structures as the roots penetrate between the joints in the stones, making the walls unstable and leading to their collapse. Natural stone constructions are in themselves great habitats for insect life and also very beautiful in the streetscape. The planting bed beside Delamain House with the red seat is quite beautiful. We suggest that the tall green bush is cut back /removed so as to give a panoramic view of the village. We loved the variety of flowers and plants chosen which will give colour all year long. Remove the timber sign – it's not needed and is illegible. We loved that you have undertaken a tree audit. Let us know what the survey revealed regarding the condition of the main/specimen trees in your area. We see that the pupils of the secondary school and national schools have assisted you in your tree planting – we assume these were all bare root trees? Who will monitor their progress and ensure that they don't get choked with long grass? The location of some of your seats are in wonderful quiet locations where one can sit and just admire the view out to sea without being disturbed. We refer in particular to the ones beside the slipway and Delamain House. The small green space – the Hollytree Garden - between the old road and the N67 at the bottom of Convent Road which looks a little unkempt. We recommend that you trim the section between the N67 and the path (where the bollards are located) and also a narrow strip along the inner edge of the path (say 300mm). This is how to effectively present a semi-wild habitat in this type of setting with a narrow strip of tidily mown grass along the path to show that the wilderness behind is deliberate.

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

In Kinvara and the surrounding area you have a great variety of habitats - hedgerows, fields, trees, stone walls, barns, house eaves, the castle, the harbour and estuary and of course your long shoreline with the numerous beaches. The aim of this category is to encourage people to recognise, engage and celebrate the biodiversity and richness of the wildlife habitats in their surroundings. We noted the nature theme of the murals on some of the utility boxes and also on the panel at the pier.

We read that your main biodiversity area is the Hollytree Garden out the Ballyvaughan road, which has the Burren as a backdrop. While we accept your wish for it to be 'wild' we feel it is unkempt and ask that you see above for recommendations on this area. Truthfully all around, as stated in our opening sentence, you have great habitats. We see that you have held various biodiversity talk aimed at adults and school children which is excellent. We particularly admired that you had one on compost which is not only good for the soil but also reduces garden and food waste.

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

We must congratulate you chair who won a special Climate Ambassador award with An Taisce in Nov. 2023. It is wonderful that your group has been recognised by Galway Council and won a Cathaoirleach award for sustainability, and was also selected to represent Galway in the National Pride of Place competition. Kinvara Tidy Towns have also won a best practice award in the County Cathaoirleach awards for best practices and collaboration. Well done on all of these. We visited the polytunnell and garden at Seamount College and saw the great work undertaken by the students. School had finished and so the planting beds were overgrown. We have no doubt that next year the work will begin again. We loved that they have now planted fruit trees which will bear harvest shortly. We love to hear about plant swap events and see that you held one in community centre in October 2023. Spring is probably a good time to have another when those who've planted seeds can share their small plants with others. We liked that you invited students from St. Joseph's NS to visit the Kinvara Farmers Market to check out local producers and track their 'green miles'. This was a great idea and hopefully they brought the message home to their parents. You mention that you have applied to become Sustainable Development Goals champion – we look forward to reading about this in next year application. Do you know what the businesses in the community are doing with regards to this category? Find out and inform us next year. Sustainability – doing more with less, is for everyone. Where are the water butts for watering your planters? We looked but didn't see any.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You didn't mention if you take part in the National Spring Clean Campaign. We recommend the community to become involved as it helps to focus attention on the need to be vigilant with litter, fly-tipping and weed growth. We love that you now have your new Hi-Visibility Jacket with your logo on the back – this will certainly draw attention to your existence. We read that you are actively seeking to reduce signage which clutters the streetscape and landscape - this we approve of. We noted a number of signs of community groups etc. around the village which detracted from the streetscape. We suggest that you ask the area engineer to install 2.4m x 2.4m Community Notice Boards, painted black, on the main entrance roads to the village or in the centre of the village – siting will be important. All community posters are restricted to these boards and then all 'illegal' posters which are attached to posts, fences etc around the village are removed as soon as they are noticed. We love your 'Power of One' initiative which will greatly assist in keeping Kinvara litter free.

We commend you for the sand bucket for cigarette butts on the quay. We have seen these in other communities beside seats and have been told they are well used by smokers. Maybe add one to each of your seating areas? You have very large dog fouling signs we think the largest we've seen! Signage is clutter and is unpleasant and should only be used when there is nothing else possible. We recommend that you paint 'Clean Up After Your Dog' on the footpaths where dog fouling is a problem. We've been told this works better than signs on poles, fences etc. and has the added benefit of the removal of clutter. The Mutt Mitt bags were noted. When we visited the village was virtually litter free – compliments to the litter-pick volunteers. Unfortunately weed growth was noted at the base of walls, roadside kerbs etc. We see that you now have a weedex machine, but your volunteers will still need to pay attention to weed growth along the streetscape.

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

The houses in the village are generally vernacular houses with businesses in between which makes for an active village. The surrounding areas boast modern bungalows or two storey houses set in neatly manicured gardens or farmhouses surrounded by well-maintained farm yards. Houses along the main streets are generally terraced and are either two or three-storey. It was good to see that the majority were occupied as vacancy leads to dereliction in a very short space of time. They presented well and many had been freshly painted giving a brightness to the streetscape. Some had great window boxes, planters or hanging baskets which added colour to the streetscape and also benefited our pollinators giving them food and shelter. Dunguaire cottages with their thatched roofs are a very pleasant vista on the approach road to the village, set back in neatly tended green spaces with stone boundary walls. The standard of presentation of individual houses in the residential estates - Cuan an Óir, Dunguaire Haven, Nun's Orchard, Arvough, Rinn na Mara, Cnoc na nDealg, Convent Park, etc - was generally very good and we applaud the many home owners and occupiers who clearly take pride in their place and keep their front facades, road frontage, gardens and boundary walls well-presented and neatly maintained in support of your work. We almost missed the name signs of Cuan an Óir, and Dunguaire Haven. We suggest that the letters are carefully painted white, which is legible on limestone stone and so be visible to the passing motorist. Please commend the residents of Dunguaire Haven for the presentation of their houses and the open space. The grass in the communal open space was lightly trimmed, allowing clover etc to flourish. Weed growth was removed from footpaths and kerbs and houses had an array of pollinator friendly flowers and specimen trees in the individual gardens. We loved the large raised flower bed in Nun's Orchard with its great variety of yellow, purple and white flowers – all carefully sown for our pollinators. We also noted the apple trees in the open space between the houses. The landscaping of Rinn na Mara is excellent. We see that it is a new estate so hopefully a management company will take it in charge and maintain it as it is very extensive. The housing estates generally are lacking in seats – this should be considered as not only will the children gather at them but also adults can sit and chat.

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

As stated previously you are on the very busy N67 with a considerable amount of through traffic. Trim an edge strip along the grass margin of the entrance roads so that not only will motorists know they are entering a village that's cared for by the community but also as they are entering an urban settlement, they need to reduce speed. We admired that the footpath extends to Dunguaire Castle so as to make the journey safe for the pedestrian. We note that pavements had been upgraded in some areas with dipped kerbs and rumble strips added. This will make the journey safer for those who are visually impaired and easier for those using wheelchairs and other mobility vehicles, children on bicycles and those with buggies. We admired the large stone surround planning bed which divided the N67 from the old road near the church. There are quite a few areas where roads surfaces are in need of repair. We noticed the surfaces of some are ravelling, there are also potholes and in some areas edge breakup. The boat planting by Foróige on the Bllayvaughan road was quite beautiful as was the one on the entry road from the north. In the small green space where the beautiful Foróige boat is located, we counted 12 poles with a variety of signs which seems inordinate for such a small space. The second boat there was barely visible behind the clutter.

Concluding Remarks:

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your village which we visited many times before so it's great to see the progress made – please commend your committee and volunteers.

We have some suggestions regarding your application form and map.

You have projects listed as New which are in fact Future Projects. New projects are only ones that have been COMPLETED during the year and NOT in the planning stage.

You put the same projects in more than one location. Please select only one category for a project and only put it there.

Please make these corrections for next year – it will also reduce the number of pages in your application form which will be beneficial.

Your Map and Project numbers don't match up. We make the following suggestion to make your application and map compatible and therefore easier to read. In the application form, number the projects as New (N1, N2, N3 etc.) and maintained (M1, M2, M3 etc) and then transfer these numbers (not necessary all) onto your map. This will help the adjudicator to find the projects and make the visit satisfying. All FUTURE projects and those unfinished are to be included in your 5-Year Tidy Towns Village Plan and not in the Application Form.

We wish to state that this is not a criticism of your work but to explain to you that as adjudicators we rely on a clear application form and accompanying map to inform us of your projects and make our visit rewarding. We would appreciate if these points could be taken into consideration when preparing your 2025 application.

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2024 competition and we hope this report will assist you as you plan your activities and projects for 2025.