

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: Milltown - Baile an Mhuilinn	Ref: 202
County: Galway	Mark: 373
Category: B	Date(s): 14/06/2023 28/07/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	52	53
Streetscape & Public Places	80	47	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	53	54
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	47	50
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	24	27
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	68	69
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	38	39
TOTAL MARK	550	361	373

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

Milltown is welcomed to the Supervalu Tidy Towns competition for 2023. Thank you for your application, map and copy of your plan. Milltown has an active committee of 13 members and a large number of volunteers working diligently to develop and enhance the area. There is great support from Galway County Council, local agencies and businesses for all projects undertaken. The two National Schools also provide support with different projects. Milltown have taken part in the competition for sixty years. Many projects have been completed over the years, bringing Milltown to the beautiful village it is today. Improvements to the amenities have encouraged more visitors to the area and as a result the local shops and businesses have benefitted. The competition has been the driving force and motivation in this regard. A number of the community were recently honoured such as the GAA for sixty years involvement at senior level. Also to native John Murphy for an IFTA award received for his editing work on the Irish film Cailin Ciuin. David Connolly also launched his book. Well done to all. Past members of the area were also honoured on their achievements.

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

The Heritage Park is a well maintained amenity in the village that can be enjoyed by all members of the community. The Herds Cottage looks charming and the large well-presented variety of farm machinery was admired. Heritage is important to the community and it is good to see information provided on plaques erected at different locations. Information on heritage of an area is so important both to the community and to the visitor. Mullarky's Pub looked bright and welcoming with good floral displays. The two National Schools also take great pride in their facilities and surroundings. The Church and grounds were also visited. The Church could do with freshening. The Community and heritage Centre, together with sporting facilities for the community are well cared for. Some buildings along the streetscape were cleaned to brighten up their facades.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Milltown has an abundance of green areas in the heritage park with excellent planting and an abundance of trees. Photos included with your application shows there is plenty of colour in the village throughout all seasons. The rose beds on approach roads and at the Church grounds, bring great colour to the streetscape. Planted containers were also admired with a good variety of planting, which includes pollinator friendly plants.

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

The village is rich in biodiversity and natural habitats for wildlife. How local species and habitats are managed and protected in all projects is important. Milltown works closely with the environment officer and schools in all projects.

Planting of holly bushes which are self-pollinating is one example of good management. Trees were distributed during National tree week, assisted by the schools. Bee boxes have been erected in the schools. Bird and Bat boxes are carefully maintained. Verges are mowed while leaving a corridor for wildlife. Wildflower meadows were also noted at the heritage park and other locations. Ground planting of bee loving pollinators are noted at different locations, such as the community centre and Glynn's shop. The schools have undertaken many projects all of which will enhance biodiversity. The heritage park and river are ideal locations for walks and talks to celebrate and appreciate nature and habitats in the village and learn more from the information provided on different species.

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

In this category groups are asked to show how by their activities they are making their area more sustainable and reducing environmental impact. Milltown are doing numerous activities in this area. To mention some of these in the different themes of water, energy and transport will give a synopsis of your work. The hub is powered by solar panels and the heating system has been upgraded to air to water. Working from the hub helps to reduce on transport. Rainwater harvesting is being done on a broader scale throughout the community. A water refill point has been installed in the heritage park and reusable bottles are available in the community. Cardboard is baled and shredded paper is used for bedding, at an animal rescue centre. There are battery recycling points. The Recycling centre is well used and continues to play a big part in waste reduction.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

There is a good plan in place on the control of litter in the village and along the river bank with regular litter picks. The County Council road sweeper comes weekly. Dog fouling signs encourages pet owners to clean up after their pets. The bottle bank which is well used was clean and tidy. On the Community Centre road there seems to be a lot of signage that maybe could be reduced somewhat, giving a tidier appearance.

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

The residents show they have great pride in their homes and surroundings from the good presentation of all houses on the approach roads and throughout the village. Green areas and landscaping are being maintained by the residents. Gardens are colourful and neat, bringing brightness to the streetscape. There are good stretches of ground planting and containers throughout which are well cared for. Some buildings have been power washed which has helped to brighten their facades. The play area which is an important amenity for the younger members of the community is superb. The residents are to be commended for their work in maintaining their homes to such a high standard.

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

All roads leading to this picturesque village, gives a very good first impression to those entering. Entrance signs are good with bright landscaping bordered by stone walls, mature trees and hedging. The bridge an important part of the village was well presented. The newly painted blue gates impressed. Grass verges are neat while maintaining a corridor for wildlife. The pump which is part of the village history is bright and colourful. The planted bicycle brings its own charm to the streetscape.

Concluding Remarks:

Milltown was a pleasure to visit and adjudicate. You are doing good work in all categories to enhance and develop the village. Keep up the good work and you are wished well in the future.

Second Round Adjudication:

Congratulations on being selected for a second round adjudication. The role of the 2nd adjudicator is to have an overview of the entry form and the subsequent report and have a look at the work that was done on the ground fairly and objectively.

Your entry form was comprehensive and detailed with excellent photographs showing the work carried out during the year. The accompanying map was clear and projects and local landmarks were easily identified by colour coding. The plan, although not dated, is presumed to be a five year plan 2022-2027 and was comprehensive and very well structured. You have a good sized committee with many volunteers and considerable supports from agencies and local businesses.

The second round adjudication took place on a damp day with plenty of heavy rain showers. As it was relatively dry on arrival, the Heritage Park and Clare River Walk was the first stop. This was a revelation. A beautifully maintained amenity with large mature trees, areas for biodiversity, information boards and strategically placed seating. The Persian Ironwood trees, although not native, were particularly admired. Some of the ash trees along the river bank are starting to succumb to ash dieback and it might be an idea to start planning for their replacements sooner than later. You could also consider sowing some yellow rattle seeds (*Rhinanthus minor*) in your wildflower area to ensure that grass does not overtake the flowers in future years.

The streetscape of Milltown is very pleasant with an array of well-kept buildings all complimented by excellent planting along the verges. The perennial planting with colourful, pollinator friendly flowers were a joy to behold and there was not a space or a gap found that had not already been thought of and planting installed. The painting of all of the gates in the village in the Ukrainian colours is an excellent and subtle way of showing support and is to be commended.

Both Belmont National School and Milltown National School were visited and it was a pleasure to see so much work and engagement in terms of nature, biodiversity and sustainability. The outdoor classroom and sensory garden in

Milltown NS and the polytunnel in Belmont NS give the flexibility to learn outdoors even in inclement weather. The linking of the work of Green Schools with the work of the Tidy Towns committee is an excellent example of a community, young and old, working together. It is good also to see that you include Cloondroon Lake in your litter picking and maintenance schedules. It was a lovely space to visit albeit in the pouring rain on the day of this adjudicators visit.

Your sustainability projects have been comprehensively commented on and praised in the first round adjudication and the second round adjudicator would concur fully. The bottle bank reports make interesting reading. Have you considered compiling some figures overall for waste, recycling and composting? Your waste management company could help with this and once base figures are established, you could set targets for reductions in terms of general waste.

The quality of the residential properties in the village was excellent and it is clear that there is a great pride taken in their presentation. Millbrook Estate was visited and also found to be very well maintained. Perhaps the wall to the left at the entrance of the estate could be camouflaged with shrub planting or some climbers that could act as pollinators. The grassy area here is expansive enough to allow some to be left to grow wild to encourage pollinators.

Approach roads were a pleasure to see. The signs were clean, the grass verges left to grow except for a strip for safety reasons in places and the planting as previously mentioned, was excellent. One wonders if there were a few too many large yellow advertising signs on the N71 road to Claremorris? Perhaps these could be reduced in quantity. The village was spotless on this adjudicators visit so well done to all. The main street is a very busy road with large volumes of traffic. Although the pedestrian crossing does help somewhat, further traffic calming measures would be of great benefit and it is suggested that Cork County Council be approached to ascertain what action can be taken.

For a village of your size, you certainly pack a punch in terms of activities, amenities and hard-working Tidy Towns committee and volunteers and it shows.

The first adjudication report gave an excellent detailed, fair, and objective resume of the work that has been undertaken. This adjudicator concurs with the marks awarded in your detailed first round adjudication. We wish you all the best with future projects.