

# Tidy Towns Competition 2022

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Adare - Áth Dara** Ref: **440**  
County: **Limerick** Mark: **356**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **15/06/2022**  
**30/07/2022**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2021</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	53	54
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	47
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	49	51
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	34	36
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	64	65
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	36	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	41	42
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>356</b>

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2022. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór...

Welcome to the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Thank you for your entry and for your commitment to your place. Keep up the great work.

We thank you for addressing the comments of the last adjudicator and note the responses you have made under the various criteria.

We note your committee of 10 people is relatively new but benefits from the experience of past members. You are fortunate to have 25 volunteers who help and a total of 80 people who assist for major events. You hold monthly meetings and also meet with other groups such as the county council throughout the year. Well done on the Adare Tidy Town's Champion's Award. It is a great way of recognising people who contribute to your community.

The list of agencies which support your efforts in one way or another is very impressive and we note your success in achieving a grant of €17,100 towards a nature trail from the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Fund.

You actively work with social media, local newspaper and radio as well as the church notices. Your work with schools is commendable and we wish Katie Conway good luck as the school representative.

The three community initiatives are noted:

- Poetry Irelands inaugural Poetry Town Week;
- the exhibition of contemporary art by Limerick School of Arts and Design and readings by Manchán Magan from his book "Thirty Two Words for a Field".
- Installation of Defibrillator on Riverbank

Thank you for highlighting the refurbishment of the Countess Dunraven Monument and Fountain which was originally built in 1855. We note that the work included much more than the actual cross. It looks very well and is an important focal point in your community.

We enjoyed looking at the picture of the 1976 Tidy Towns team that successfully won the overall award in that year. It was a great achievement and will always be remembered. Well done on keeping up a high standard ever since. Many thanks for your map which we found very helpful. Your application form is very neatly prepared and looks very well. However, we ask that you seek to reduce the number of pages by more than a third. This will allow us more time to spend looking at projects on the ground. We enjoyed viewing the videos.

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

We thank you for addressing the comments of the last adjudicator and note the responses.

We are pleased to note your success when contacting the owners of some properties, resulting in two of them being painted. The colour scheme of the premises in the centre of the town, especially along Rathkeale Road we found very attractive. On the opposite side of the road, the former town hall and the cottages with an open space in front

are delightful features of Adare.

Thank you for the information on the public realm which will see a complete overhaul of all the footpaths, lighting, way-finding signage and other features. It is great that you are actively involved in the consultation process.

New seating in the village has been noted – it looks sturdy.

Other projects listed under this criterion include

- The refurbishment of the Countess Dunraven Fountain – already mentioned.
- Improvements at the Wash Pool which made a very significant difference.
- Development of the Adare Heritage Trail is a wonderful and very interesting project that makes very good use of modern technology. It is great to see that local expertise and talents were used
- Restoration of Supple's thatched cottage and two others.
- Main Street footpaths, Rathkeale Road and Station Road replaced.

On Blackabbey Road, we admired Adare Country House, which is landscaped with trees, shrubs and climbing plants. The stone wall boundary is in keeping with the wall on the opposite side of the road. It would be great if this boundary treatment was done on other properties in this area. The boundary of Abbot's Way estate is a hedge. We note the fine specimens of lime trees at the entrance and suggest that the tree guards are no longer required for their protection.

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

The general description of the various green spaces in Adare is very helpful. You are fortunate to have a town park in such a central location which makes it available for visitors and locals. Your management approach is well informed, and we note the emphasis on biodiversity and pollinators. The analysis of the layout of the town park being dated was accurate and timely as well as being an important stimulus for change. The removal of low branches of trees is an important change that opens up the view of the park and makes it more inviting. However, we were surprised that the tips of branches were also pruned – that will stimulate more branching and a denser canopy. Don't be afraid to let trees grow high. We have noted the list of improvements undertaken but are surprised at the inclusion of a stumpery. They were a feature of Victorian gardens – why would you plan to build one in 2022? We liked the natural play features. The range of herbaceous perennials is very interesting and the standard of maintenance in the park is very good - we commend you on the care and attention being given to this most important facility. During our visit we observed workers removing grass sods from the base of trees. The finished product looks very well and should prevent damage to the roots by compaction of mowing operations – we assume these circular areas will be mulched.

Adare has plenty of fine specimens of trees in the parks and open spaces and along roadsides. It is important to plant some trees on a regular basis to replace those which will die at some future date, and we note you have many suitable locations to continue this practice. We visited St Nicolas Cemetery beside the main car park. It is very well-kept and individual families take great care of their family graves. In general, the graves are grassed and well-maintained. The trees around the boundary add enhancement. We suggest that perhaps you would find space for a few small trees (Sorbus, Crataegus for example) alongside the pathway opposite the entrance.

Well done on reviewing your seasonal planting and choosing to concentrate them on the Main Street and grouping them together. Many thanks for the information on the 25-acre Manor Fields Recreation & Community Complex. It is a major recreational facility, and it is great to see the inclusion of wildflowers and the emphasis on sustainability, especially health – no smoking zones around children. We noted that the maintenance of the planted areas in the car park at the rear of the Heritage Centre needed attention at the time of our visit.

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

Many thanks for the introductory piece with information on your environment, the soil type, bedrock, the River Maigue and the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC). You have shown a great awareness of the flora and fauna in and around Adare. The 2018 biodiversity study by Will Hayes and the 2020 study of the riverbank walk by Albert Nolan and the 2021 seminar are all noted. The management approach of hedgerows is well informed.

Complying with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and encouraging others to do likewise is a positive approach. The use of Twitter and Instagram for biodiversity and other social media channels keeps you very busy. You are represented on the Maigue Rivers Trust and you work with the OPW and LCCC on CFRAMS (Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Scheme). You are seeking to have Adare included as part of The Shannon Way.

You have provided details of six projects under this heading, some of which are ongoing.

- Adare Nature Trail
- Maintain and Develop our Wildflower meadows. We look forward to the area near the bridge recovering.
- Additional bird and bat boxes.
- Ongoing community awareness and training. Well done to your chair for taking studies in climate change and being on the Council's SPC for climate action and biodiversity.
- Designated Acts of Restorative Kindness A.R.K's for which you have designated two areas.
- No Mow May.

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

Thank you for commenting on the adjudicator's comments of 2021. We are always pleased to get such responses. We now note that connecting a water source to the old pump on the Rathkeale Road is not a possibility and the

information on local repairs is very interesting.

In regard to traffic, we note the figure of 24,000 vehicles passing through the village on bank holidays and can understand how welcome a by-pass would be for Adare. The trend of more photovoltaic systems and improved insulation is noted, as well as your campaign to have more charging stations for electric vehicles. Well done on exploring means of addressing the 17 SD goals and your plans to deliver projects in the future that complies with them and also helps to inform the community.

Having hotels more aware of sustainability is also good for their business and we note you are working with them in that regard.

Projects mentioned under this criterion include the

- The six Education and Awareness talks on aspects of sustainability.
- The Sustainable Adare Project – with the Men's Shed and the Ladies 2020 Club which made bunting from used fabric for the St Patrick's Day parade in March. This project also included classes on upcycling furniture, card making and other crafts. We noted the difference to 25 Abbey View following the retrofitting.

Adare's Renewable Future Project is a mapping project for the collection of location based citizen based which will provide a map of locations in Adare where renewable energy is or could be generated.

- For the St Patrick's Day Parade, you reinforced the message of Sustainability and Reuse, Recycle and Upcycle. Well done.
- You have delivered the message of the UN Sustainable Goals to the community by giving a presentation that was put together in conjunction with LCCC. Well done on that as well as becoming a Fair Trade village this year.

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

Projects mentioned under this criterion include

- Recommencement of the village weekend litter picking roster in April 2022 which must have been difficult after the Covid pandemic interrupted your routine. Well done to the 50 volunteers.
- The 'Team Adare clean-up campaign' in conjunction with Team Limerick Clean-up 7 on Good Friday is also noted as was the additional work done on weeding and cleaning at the same time. That work included signage which is very important.
- Well done to the volunteers who worked during the week on cleaning, hedge cutting, grass cutting, kerb sweeping followed and other works.
- The evidence of decluttering and repairs to seats is very good.

We found Adare very neat and tidy so congratulations to all involved in that huge effort of collecting litter and maintaining tidiness. We appreciate that this is a particularly onerous task for you because of the large volume of traffic passing through Adare. The sign for Curragh Chase needs refurbishing.

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

You have listed 14 residential areas in Adare where the resident associations take good care of their estates. You encourage them to contribute to bio-diversity by minimizing use of chemicals, planting pollinator friendly shrubs and flowers and practicing some set-aside.

Projects listed include residents having planted fruit trees and berries in their communal green at Blackabbey Gate area for all residents to enjoy.

Periodic Community meetings in the Village Hall to which all the residents are invited.

We admired the tall line of lime trees growing on the open space at Park Avenue. Nearby however, we were surprised to see an area where a total weedkiller was used. At a new estate on Blackabbey Road (The Heritage?) a new open space would benefit from tree planting. In the Abbot's Way estate, we admired the lime trees but suggest that the plant containers with seasonal plants are not necessary. As an alternative, consider leaving a patch of grass unmown and be surprised at how many wildflowers will grow and delight you, and not need any planting or watering. Two open spaces mark the entrances to Manor Court and Abbeyville residential areas and there are many trees established here. The trees look well although some appeared to have been pruned to form mop head growth, which can happen if the stems are topped – something that is not recommended. The pleasant group of birch trees at Abbeyville caught our attention. There are also flower beds surrounded by stones and the signs are placed in separate locations. There is an opportunity to form two beds – one at each entrance with the planting and the signs fronting the beds. That way you can provide some unity and add enhancement to the signs.

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

One of your problems is the high level of traffic going through Adare village every day. Volunteers litter pick every few weeks, usually at 6.00am on a Sunday morning to avoid the conflict with traffic. The main approaches from both sides are distinctive. On the Rathkeale approach, mature beech and lime trees form a significant avenue and on the Limerick side, the boundary of Adare Manor is delightful. Maintenance of the grass margin is fine. Well done on your reclaim the stone wall project by removing ivy to prevent it from destabilising the walls.

You are well aware of the old stone walls and mature trees that characterise your community (as well as the thatched cottages).

### **Concluding Remarks:**

You have a beautiful village, and it is great to see such a proud and active community doing its best to have Adare looking its best. We look forward to receiving your much reduced application in 2023.

## Second Round Adjudication:

We were delighted with the opportunity to visit the beautiful village of Adare for the purposes of second round adjudication and as expected, it didn't disappoint. Like our colleague in June, we were most impressed by the well kept appearance of Adare and the range and quality of the projects completed for this years competition. Firstly, we wholeheartedly agree with the earlier comments in this report with respect to your entry form. While it has been carefully prepared, 73 pages is too long and we urge you to reduce it by a third by cutting down on the text and the number of photos included. It is only necessary to submit photos of projects that cannot be seen during our visit (such as spring bulb planting or areas inaccessible to members of the public such as school grounds). We would also like to commend your committee on your engagement strategy – a striking feature of your entry form was the involvement of the whole community in tidy towns projects and the strong links that are in place between your community and volunteers with statutory agencies, businesses, the schools and a wide range of community based groups. Well done and keep it up!

It is wonderful to see the care and attention given to the many first class heritage elements. This is clearly demonstrated by the renovation of the Countess Dunraven fountain (which looked lovely) and the restoration of the Courthouse and the second cottage – both of which are fabulous buildings that occupy very prominent locations in Adare. The attractive heritage building at the entrance to Scoil Naomh Iosaf caught our eye and we wondered if this in active use at present? The new heritage trail is a delight and well done on providing supporting videos for it. We would also like to compliment the many owners / occupiers of commercial premises in Adare as the standard of presentation was uniformly high. Picking out good examples is difficult due to these high standards, but it is necessary to meet the demands of this short report. Sean Collins Bar, Catherine McCormack, Earls and Pearls, Stacpoole, the Arches and the thatched cottages that accommodate the Lucy Erridge premises, Aoife and the blue door restaurant all stand out. The Garda Station is very well maintained. It was also obvious during our visit that business premises closely adhere to an agreed colour scheme and this also helps to create a consistent appearance for your commercial properties. The upgrades to the footpaths are applauded as they provide for a better experience for pedestrians in your town and the new car park opposite the School is acknowledged.

It was obvious during our visit that your committee, volunteers and project partners have been working hard on your landscaping and green space projects over the last 12 months. We had a very enjoyable stroll around the refurbished Adare Park and we admired the trees, revamped entrance, upgraded seating areas and the natural play area that can be found here. The washing pool looked very well with its refreshed planting and refurbished seat and we have no doubts that it is popular with visitors to the park. We are delighted to see that your committee and volunteers have embraced the recommendations of national pollinator plan by taking determined steps to include high proportions of pollinator friendly plant varieties and shrubs in your landscaping schemes. This is particularly evident in the park where the abundant clumps of hydrangeas and roses drew positive attention while the carpet of Cranes bill (adjacent to the box hedging) was admired. While the entrance to Adare Manor and the grounds of Dunraven Arms looked well, we observed a reliance on ornamental plants in these locations such as begonias rather than pollen rich plants and it is recommended that a greater diversity of pollinator friendly plant species should be used here.

The riverbank walk is a delight and a lovely addition to your village. Keep an eye on the seating provided as at least one bench may need to be revamped before next years competition. We note that there a plan to turn it into a biodiversity corridor but be aware that it is almost certain to accommodate very valuable habitats already so be open to the fact that only very minimal interventions to it may be the best way forward. We were delighted to read that a biodiversity study for Adare has been completed and we would like to see this next year – could a summary of this document be submitted in 2023? Also, try and identify actions in it that could be completed by the schools or residents associations. We loved the 'pledge your garden to pollinators' initiative as it is a great idea that has the potential to have a significantly positive impact on pollen sources in Adare. However, 10 participants seems low. Have all committee members and volunteers pledged their gardens? Why not ask the school children to request their parents to take part? It is recommended that an ambitious target is adopted (and pursued) for the 'pledge your garden to pollinators' initiative to ensure that this great project succeeds. Well done on hosting awareness raising events but try and organise events that have linked 'desired outcomes' to them. For example, if a seminar is held on planting for biodiversity, follow it up with an appeal to 'pledge your garden to pollinators' and take note of the property owners / occupiers who get involved. The focus on wildflowers is noted and like the first round adjudicator, we would favour areas being left grow with no seeds added as the results may surprise you.

Praise is due to the committee and volunteers for your tireless work on litter patrols. While traffic was bumper to bumper during our visit, litter was virtually non existent. Aside from some isolated pieces of litter at the grotto, under a bench at the entrance to the river walk (beside the railway crossing), and some scraps at the bring bank, none could be spotted. This is considered to be an excellent performance so well done to everyone on their hard work. The standard of tidiness was similarly high and your sterling efforts on improving signs, benches, footpaths and bins were all appreciated. Though minimal, a small number of improvements are possible. The small planters at the grotto need refreshing while the perimeter beds in the town car park (behind the heritage centre) were quite weedy and untidy in places. An old pump that is in need of a fresh coat of paint was spotted in front of one of the cottages on the Rathkeale Road (No. 4) while a small number of signs seemed to be in of attention during clean ups – they include the 'Caution Children' sign on Dovecot lane and the green Currah Chase Park sign on the Rathkeale Road. The back of the Adare Town Park sign also needs to be powerwashed.

The work undertaken by the committee, volunteers and residents on the estates, streets and terraces throughout Adare is commended as they all looked very well. The Village, Woodlands, Embury Close, Parklands and Manor Park all stood out. The new estates adjacent to the Manor Field Sports Complex were admired but no name signs could be spotted. Well done to the residents in Black Abbey Gate for planting fruit trees. Perhaps a 'pledge your estate to pollinators' initiative should be started? This would involve residents associations adopting green area management strategies and pollinator friendly planting schemes in their residential areas. It would also tie in with your approach of encouraging residents associations to engage in 'No Mow May'. The approach roads from Limerick and Rathkeale looked exceptionally well with wonderful mature trees, natural stone walls, trimmed verges,

well maintained signage and attractive landscaping to be seen. The approach road into Adare past Manor Court also looked well but one of the 50 kmph speed limit signs here was obscured by vegetation. We applaud the excellent work that has been undertaken by your committee and volunteers for this years competition and it is clear that excellent progress has been made. Be sure to take the feedback in this report into account when preparing your work programme for next year and we look forward to returning again in 2023.