

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Timoleague - Tigh Molaga** Ref: **694**
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **372**
Category: **B** Date(s): **07/06/2023**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2022 | Mark Awarded 2023 |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Community – Your Planning and Involvement | 80 | 51 | 52 |
| Streetscape & Public Places | 80 | 48 | 50 |
| Green Spaces and Landscaping | 80 | 49 | 51 |
| Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality | 55 | 46 | 48 |
| Sustainability – Doing more with less | 55 | 22 | 24 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 70 | 72 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 55 | 36 | 37 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 55 | 36 | 38 |
| TOTAL MARK | 550 | 358 | 372 |

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 a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór... Thank you for your entry to the Tidy Towns competition together with maps and photographs. The entry form has been considerably reduced as recommended by a previous adjudicator and this is much appreciated. The photographs are very well set out according to categories and are a wonderful depiction of the hard work that Timoleague volunteers, young and old, have undertaken over the course of the last year. You have presented four maps which listed local landmarks, future projects, ongoing maintenance and current and new projects. Whilst each map in itself is clear and easy to read, it did make the visit to Timoleague somewhat complicated having to refer to four maps simultaneously. Perhaps one larger map (A3) with colour coded landmarks and projects and a legend to the side would be more practical. Future projects do not need to be marked on the map.

You have a strong committee of 12 with an additional 50 volunteers who help out on various projects and work days and Meithal. You state that the level of voluntary commitment this year has been exceptional and this is heartening to note. The sense of community can only be strengthened by this commitment and the open and friendly nature of the Tidy Towns group clearly reflects in the fact that all ages and many people from different countries now get involved. This is absolutely the aim and hopes for all villages and towns in the Tidy Towns competition so very well done. The children in the national school and their families, the GAA, Youth Club and Church Bodies are all willing to help and be involved in projects and tasks so that all can take pride in their community. The support of Cork County Council, especially in relation to the Community Enhancement Scheme and hopefully the Village Renewal Scheme in the future has been of huge benefit to you and the Pobal grant funded through the Department of Rural and Community Development has also been of assistance. You are fortunate to have a person employed through the CE scheme which is no doubt a great help when getting regular tasks completed.

You use various forms of communications including social media, local newspaper and church notices as well as the all important Tidy Towns notice board. This is the most effective way of reaching the highest number of people in the community.

The new Education Garden in the school set up in conjunction with Tidy Towns and GIY is a fantastic project for all involved and you are to be congratulated.

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

You have quite a number of new and maintained projects under this category. Some of these projects have been repeated under other categories and will be commented upon under the most appropriate. Please do not repeat the projects under various categories. It is understood that many will fit under more than one and this is taken into account when marks are awarded.

Timoleague is situated in an enviable location on the estuary of the Ardigeen River and benefits from many heritage buildings of significant importance making it an attractive place to live and to visit. The 13th century Franciscan Friary is the main tourist attraction and stands in a prominent location. The self-guided booklet that you have compiled is an excellent initiative and it is heartening to know that the voluntary donations are sufficient to help with the cost of printing. The ongoing restoration undertaken by the OPW is being sensitively carried out and will hopefully ensure longevity for the building for many years to come. It is a formidable edifice and was much appreciated by your adjudicator as was the surrounding area. The public toilets nearby are in immaculate condition and the picnic tables and seating areas along the waters edge very well kept. The map of the village designed by Tomas Tuipear sign writer and framed by a local carpenter is a lovely addition to this area.

The paving semi-circle feature in front of the church doors of the Catholic Church do indeed give a good impression. The church is in immaculate condition and the entrance from Main St is spectacular with a most interesting Timeline depicting the history and heritage of the village.

The new toilets look great and the name 'Necessarium' is most apt. The accessibility of the toilets for all is very important so well done.

The upkeep of St Molaga's burial ground is of a high standard and was found to be a pleasure to visit. The collapse of the wall opposite was noted and it is understood that some areas are outside the control of Tidy Towns Committees. Hopefully the owner will be able to have the wall repaired in due course.

It is fantastic to see The Church of the Ascension being restored and hopefully returned to its former glory. The grounds are just lovely, with a great selection of trees including the commemorative Ginkgo Biloba which is thriving and even some old fashioned roses in full bloom by the wall.

The owners of the Courthouse have been thoughtful in their restoration and having a work hub space on the ground floor is innovative and for sure a welcome initiative in Timoleague.

Throughout the village the shopfronts provided a lovely selection of well-maintained buildings with floral displays.

The houses were a delight to view, all painted in varying colours but all blending tastefully and kept in immaculate condition. It was so pleasing to see such a well-kept Garda Station with flowering window boxes. Visitors are no doubt enthralled as they wander around the town and with good reason. It would be ideal to get the overhead wires removed and hopefully one day the funds will be available for Cork County Council to carry this out.

The Railway park is very well maintained and the lighting must be a great help especially in the dark Winter months. The photo plaques were much enjoyed.

The old telephone box which has been relocated looks very well. Many of these have been converted in to book swaps, seeds swaps and other community based ideas. The fact that you have the original telephone is important and you are right to preserve it. It is suggested that you put a suitable notice on the outside explaining this. The notice on the inside is hard to read and a little stark.

In general the streetscapes and public areas were very well maintained and there was much evidence of new street furniture and planters, and the displays of vintage farm machinery. One very large and imposing advertising on the wall above the St Molaga sculpture seems very out of place in this village. The owner of the advertisement might be willing to take it down after a certain period of time in order to retain the overall aesthetic of the village.

All of the signposts, including the visitor attraction finger posts were in excellent condition, clean and easily legible. The bi-lingual aspect is most important and you are to be commended for ensuring that all signposts are in both languages.

The new mural on Mill Hill is colourful and striking showing the Catholic Church and the Abbey. Congratulations to the artist, it certainly brightens up the area.

Timoleague is clearly a proud village with a swell of community spirited residents who take pride in their village and it shows.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The beautiful Magnolias and Hydrangeas in the grounds of the Catholic church are very well presented. There is however a lot of neatly cut grass and one wonders if perhaps some of this could be left as a wildflower area in the future.

It will be interesting to know where the trees received from Trees for Communities are planted in future submissions. One of the trees along the river walk opposite the picnic area has some rather dodgy looking staking and ties and could do with a little re-staking.

The new recycled plastic planters, funded by an annual grant from Pobal were noted in place on Main St and at the statue of St Patrick and will no doubt be planted up shortly. Seasonal planting is very lovely when in season however it is now recommended that more perennial planting is used to give year round effect which is less labour intensive and more pollinator friendly. There are some excellent tips and suggestions on the pollinators.ie website including examples of perennial planting schemes.

Valerian was growing wild and in full flower on the walls of the Church of the Ascension providing valuable pollen and it was cheering to see that it has been left to flower.

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

Your main project for this year has been the setting up of the Educational Garden in conjunction with Timoleague National School and GIY (Grow It Yourself). This is an excellent initiative and one which will undoubtedly develop and grow in the coming years.

It was only possible to look from the gate on adjudication day but it is clear that a lot of work has already been carried out. It is a valuable asset to have to be able to teach the children about biodiversity, gardening and nature and cheering to know that they are putting their learning to good use in their schools and gardens. The new stone

wall must be a great improvement on the concrete block wall. It certainly looks very well.

The possibilities for learning in this garden are invaluable. From seed to table including learning about making compost, pondlife, building stone walls and raised beds, the full gamut is there and will hopefully be fully appreciated by the school and the local community.

It will be interesting to see how the Educational Garden develops in the future.

Well done for joining the All Ireland Pollinator Plan. One of the objectives of the new 2021 – 2025 AIPP is to encourage more land to be managed for biodiversity and to establish a 'Pollinator Trail' as well as monitor pollinators on public land. Your work and commitment to your area to raise awareness and increase biodiversity puts you in a perfect position to become a supporter for the AIPP.

The Biodiversity Education programme run by SECAD/Wild Work that visited the school much surely have been exciting for the school children. Is a Biodiversity Plan for Timoleague the next step?

Have you considered carrying out a habitat survey? Habitat mapping can help inform decision making in a number of areas including planning, climate change mitigation and conservation of nature and as such is an important first step in understanding the habitat around us and what we need to protect them and to identify any gaps in linkages of habitat. The Heritage Council provide excellent information in their Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Villages. This would also be an excellent project for the children to contribute to.

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

You continue to ensure that all new planters and street furniture is made by recycling plastic and this year you have a compost bin in the Education Garden made from old pallets. The stone wall for herb was made from donated local stone donated and you have also been donated an old boat that the children can use as a play area in the garden.

Signing up for the All Ireland Pollinator Plan is also a tangible way of demonstrating your sustainable objectives.

This is a category where there is plenty of scope for you to increase your marks. It is a broad area and it is often helpful to divide it into the core headings of waste, water, energy, transport and climate action. Do also refer to the Tidy Towns Handbook for ideas and guidance.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

On the day of adjudication, with one small exception at the St Mologa's statue, Timoleague was litter free. Not only that but the streets were clean and free of debris and there was a lack of 'clutter' which positively contributed to the spectacular presentation of the village.

The annual National Spring Clean and on-going litter picking by both the committee, volunteers and local residents are clearly effective. Your new initiative 'Picker Pals' is a great idea with a cross generational plan to create a better environment for a shared future.

Well done indeed to all involved. It takes a team effort to ensure there is no litter and it is much appreciated.

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

The houses throughout the village are a rainbow of wonderful colours, each individual but all complimenting the others. As in every village one or two appear derelict but with the passing of time, no doubt they will be moved on and upgraded. It is understood that the Tidy Towns committee can only do so much to encourage the upgrading of privately owned properties.

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

The main approach road is such a lovely drive and arriving to Timoleague, one is struck by how pleasant and natural the approach is. The new welcome stones, made from local stone, are a great addition on the approach roads and one presumes that they will have some colourful perennial planting in due course. There is extensive vegetation along all of the roads especially at this time of year but none impeded visibility or the signs. The stone walls with wild flowers popping through them were very effective and residences were very well kept with lovely planting schemes.

Concluding Remarks:

This was a first visit to Timoleague for your adjudicator and it was such an enjoyable visit on a sunny afternoon in June. You are to be commended for your excellent work journey and can be justifiably proud of your village. Best wishes in the Tidy Towns competition and keep up the good work.