

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: Rathmullan - Ráth Maoláin	Ref: 906
County: Donegal	Mark: 298
Category: B	Date(s): 11/06/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	41	43
Streetscape & Public Places	80	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	41	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	24	26
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	17	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	32	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	34
TOTAL MARK	550	287	298

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. Ráth Maoláin. Welcome to the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition.

Thank you for the selection of images over the past year that bring to life the activities your committee in Ramelton have been working on. Your map was very useful with particular projects to be visited annotated and their relevant competition category noted. You have a strong committee of 10 (and a special welcome to your new members) and how great to see that in addition you have 30 volunteers to draw support from. Your subcommittee structure seems to be working for you. Like many other Tidy Town Groups around the country Rathmullen TT had to resort to communication and meeting via social media and no doubt members became experts. We loved the fact that you have joined forces with neighbouring Ramelton to host a county market, a great way to make friends and strengthen local ties. You have a good rapport with your schools hosting two Environmental Awareness Days in conjunction with Donegal Volunteer Centre and TY students from the Royal & Prior Comprehensive School. Another example of your groups positive collaborative approach. Rathmullen TT have achieved a lot considering it is only your 4th year of involvement in the competition and we are delighted to hear that the community has benefitted massively from being a part of the National Tidy Towns family.

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

You have an obvious appreciation of the architecture of your coastal town and especially its links with maritime heritage. This has resulted in your desire to document and promote the history of your town. Your Architectural Inventory Survey is a record for the community to hold for future generations. This document together with the "Rathmullan by the Sea, the 19th Century Story" video will help promote the ideals of sensitive conservation and restoration of your valued buildings. On our walk around the village, we admired the many townhouses and the stocky tower of the historic terrace on the seafront. An Bonnan Bui bistro with its blue window trims was well presented as was the White Harte Pub on the seafront. We enjoyed a delicious lunch at Belles Kitchen, thanks to all their helpful staff. Best of luck with the regeneration of the Abbey and Battery, together with the landmark site of the former Pier Hotel. We hope to see progress on these sites in the coming years. The red bench by the neat black door at the post office brought a pop of colour to the street here. Your solar powered gas lantern sounds very interesting and will be a unique element of street furniture in the village. We noted a lovely old wall mounted post box on our stroll that look in need of some sensitive restoration. The brightly painted benches and picnic tables enlivened the shorefront. We hope that you keep a close eye on the future regeneration works. Ensure that locally appropriate materials are used and build on the recent architectural audit to create a palette of streetscape materials

respecting the tradition in the village. Ensure green areas, to be used for sustainable drainage and pollinators, are incorporated into the streetscape when hard surfaces are not required. This is an exciting project for the village than can be transformative if designed sensitively.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have increased your workload this year by expanding the number of landscaped areas within the village which you care for. From a previous total of 8 to 14 in 2022. Well done on this commitment to the public realm in the village. The bee and pollinator signs were noted to the bed by the boatyard, remove the sycamore seedling here before it damages the historic stone walls. The grass margin between the putting green and the railing could be an ideal place to have a wildflower area and screen the fence line here. Look to build on the success of your No Mow May by expanding this landscape management approach to other sites in the village. Build connected ecological corridors for the benefit of all wildlife. The semi-circular beds by the Rathmullan Celtic FC grounds were coming along nicely and the view to the pier from this high point is beautiful taking in the modern children's sculpture. A new Pollinator-friendly management of Sports Clubs guide has been published which the grounds maintenance team here might review and see if there are any possibilities of enhancing the clubs site for our pollinators. The tree information board at Pairc na Míolaoise was visited and ensure all new tree planted are kept well-watered and then remove tree ties once they have established. Thanks to Rathmullan House Hotel and the supervisors of their Walled Garden for supplying new herbs for your herb boxes. The Lá Bealtaine Fairy Walk Event to celebrate the 1st of May which your committee organised seems to have been a successful event. Batts walk is a great amenity to have and compliments the forest at Rathmullan Woods.

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

Given that you have an understanding of the unique habitats surrounding your village and their importance having been designated as a Special Area of Conservation, we would very much encourage you to carry out a biodiversity plan for Rathmullen. Talk to your Biodiversity officer who may be able to help you source funding. This allows you properly develop projects in a holistic way to ensure they all combine to create a healthy network of habitats in and around the village. Look to the tidy town handbook for advice on how to tackle this. Not unlike your architectural audit, having a baseline plans allows you both respect the habitats you have and build on supporting and expanding them in an informed way. As you have been doing with your planted areas as seen around the car park and the Battery Landscaped areas with their bee signs, continually look to the web site of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan for tips and advice. The planting of native trees to replace those lost through storm damage helps ensure the long-term health of these important woodlands and good luck with your sign project here.

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

This is a category that you as a group have put much thought into. As you say incorporating Sustainability into all of your projects fosters a greater understanding of the impact of environmental destruction to our wildlife, Sealife and locality and importantly the opportunities to create a better environment for all in Rathmullen. Your first and most important task is to inform yourselves and your community and the Sustainability Fair in March seems to have been a great success. Although a low initial turnout, make it into an annual event as this topic is only going to increase in importance. The school's pollinator planting project ties in with the biodiversity emergency and it is great to hear that they are also addressing plastic waste. This can have a devastating impact on sea life. The redistribution of used coffee beans is a novel way to link food production and composting. Creating linkages between all these projects show the community just how integrated we are with our environment. We loved the idea of new sewing classes for residents and new people to the area to encourage clothes upcycling and repair. The upcycled flower bed brought a smile with their quirky presentation. We hope the new water Butts behind the Garda Barrack will harvest enough rainwater to watering the flower beds nearby. Your communities participation in Earth Hour (March 2022) is appreciated.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have a range of approaches to this category, and we will review some of your projects below. Once again your collaborative approach to the upkeep of the village is evident here with you teaming up with local businesses and sports clubs like Milford GAA and Rathmullan Celtic FC, to take part in your regular clean ups. As you say this enhances the perception that the beach is everyone's responsibility. The car park, streets and pier areas are cleaned in partnership with Rathmullan Clean Coasts group and these areas were looking well. While no doubt there has been a reduction in the presence of litter on the beach, as a result of the weekly clean-ups, on the late afternoon of the visit some amounts of litter were seen on the sand. This is very frustrating for your group given all the time and effort residents take to address this. When the beach is busy with visitors from Letterkenny and further, littering can be a really hard topic to address. However, it is great to see that simple initiatives such as the anti-litter signs at the point of sale of takeaway coffee and chip vans have made a difference. Keep up all your efforts here and your new litter warden will be a great asset.

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

You seem to communicate well with your residents and the weekly column in the local paper has been used to encourage all homeowners to maintain their gardens. This seems to be working as some lovely gardens were seen during our visit. The many historic homes in the village add such interest to the streets. The verges at Maolin Park were neat and trimmed. Some plants in the ground to the base of the signs here may make more of an impact than the thin planters. Some evidence of spraying was seen along residential boundaries on the outskirts of the village. You might use your weekly column to draw attention to this practice that can cause such harm in your waterside

location.

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

Build on the no mow may approach to your verges which seems to have been a success and we hope they will begin to show new species emerging in these important ecological corridors. Keep on top of your reporting of items of concern that are outside of your groups remit. The issue of coastal erosion will only become more serious if extreme weather events continue. Like wise any sewage leaks need to be reported as soon as they are noted to protect the Swilly. Work on enhancing the gateways to the village to slow traffic and so aid traffic calming.

Concluding Remarks:

Your plan for the future of Rathmullan is to 'preserve and share your Heritage, Culture and Historical buildings and create a goal to be shared by all, while being mindful of our community which encompasses all year-round residents, seasonal holiday home owners and tourists to the area, as well as many day trippers from around the county.' We fully agree that your beautiful beaches and coastline is at the heart of who you are. With your short history in the competition and the amount you have achieved so far, we see no reason why Rathmullen cannot go from strength to strength in the county tables and indeed beyond. We look forward to return in 2023.