

Tidy Towns Competition 2021

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Swords - Sord** Ref: **160**

County: **Dublin** Mark: **329**

Category: **H** Date(s):

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	52
Streetscape & Public Places	60	42
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37
TOTAL MARK	470	329

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachrmhara Super Valu 2021. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hionrála a chur chugainn. Go raibh maith agaibh as ucht bhur dtacaíocht le linn na paindéime.

Lean leis an dea-obair.

This year the competition has changed for all of us ... a desk top evaluation with a virtual tour of your town. Thank you for your comprehensive entry form, map, and supporting documentation including your Masterplan 2019 – 2021. The numbering system for your projects and referencing them on your map is still confusing – the advice given by the adjudicator of 2019 seems logical and we suggest you follow it next year.

Covid lockdown saw many communities cease all operations but we are delighted that you still continued and worked on updating various aspects including your website. We note that volunteers have joined you or adopted a patch to take care of near where they live since the Covid lockdowns.

You have a core group of ten on your Swords Tidy Towns (STT) committee and an additional 30 volunteer, which include residents from 17 different countries, to assist you when needed. This inclusivity is vital in our new Ireland and we are delighted to see our new residents being involved in voluntary groups. You have the work separated in different categories with teams working with the volunteers. You list businesses, voluntary groups, state and semi-state organisations who support your work, assist you and give advice. In the fifteen years of your participation in the TidyTowns competition you have completed many projects and have made a significant difference to the town where it can no longer be classified as Ireland's dirtiest town. Keep up the excellent work.

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

You maintain quite a number of structures along the street scape including St. Colmcille's well. We were delighted to read that new businesses opened during the pandemic and we wish them success. You have little dereliction and you successfully address this with FCC with buildings boarded up when necessary. The River Walk Art project has been completed ... we would have loved a photo! You have a number of wells in Swords and you now embark upon the restoration of St. Werberg's Well with financial assistance from Ryanair. Please take photos before the work commences and after the work is complete. We love the idea of a colour scheme for the town – other FCC towns have this in place and the streetscape has benefited from this coordination of colours and tones.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasá agus Tírdhreachú:

You have continued with your maintenance and new work during the pandemic with family bubbles working together. The roundabouts on the approach roads have year-round colour with daffodils, tulips, bluebells etc flowering in the spring to give colour after the long winter months. Summer sees a variety of pollinator friendly plants in the roundabouts and in your planters, which are then replaced by winter varieties which you grow in your

polytunnel. This seasonal change ensures continuous colour and texture in your planting and your work in this is commendable. We note the comments on the trees on Main Street and agree that inappropriate trees were very often planted in towns. Councils are now examining this and with expert advice from arborists now plant trees suited for their location. We note your planting of 1000 saplings in the Ward River Valley Park. We have no doubt that advice on the suitability of the varieties was sought prior to planting. We love the idea of the hawthorn hedgerow and agree that it will in due course attract both bees and birds. You maintain quite a number of planting beds which you list in your application form. We love the idea of a Frontline Workers Commemorative Garden which you are developing at present and which was funded by the DAA.

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

Having a Biodiversity in FCC is certainly an asset to all the TidyTowns groups in Fingal. We are delighted that you will engage with her and that with Wild Surveys Ireland you will now produce a Biodiversity Action Plan for Swords. You have a variety of habitats in Swords – parkland, lowland and rivers which discharge into Broadmeadow Estuary and Usher's lake. We note that 28 different species of birds, 7 species of fish and numerous mammals were noted in a walkover survey in 2020. You took part in the Dublin WaterBlitz survey ... what were the results? We note that one member of your committee completed the Master Composter course and now assists other groups to undertake 'Leaf Mould' composting. Other members have completed an East Coast Small Stream Characterisation Course, a Sustainable Gardening Course and took part in webinars with aspects of biodiversity as a subject.

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

Your Facebook page has posted articles on various topics relating to Sustainability. Facebook tends to be geared toward the 'older' residents and we suggest you also post on Instagram or some other social site aimed at younger residents. We noted the contents of your 'Sustainable Swords' on your website and were delighted to see the list of places where the residents can bring items for repair.

The Broadmeadow Community Garden has proven to be very popular and its website has a great variety of information for its members. We note the huge success of the local schools in the An Taisce Green Flag Programme with Gaelscoil Bhrian Bóroiimhe receiving its 7th flag. As a community you engage in Waste Prevention and you list the many organisations and businesses committed to this in Swords. We read with interest that the community can collect bark from one of the FCC depots. The installation of two Smart Benches is welcomed as is the GoCar. The new Urban Bike Scheme launched by FCC is interesting in that the bikes do not require docking bays.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhairéachta agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your designated Tidiness and Litter Control Officer in STT has the task of examining the town and bringing the group together to ensure tidiness throughout the town. We liked the campaign relating to the face masks - 'Finished with your Mask? Complete the Task, Bin it'. This campaign has been successful with fewer masks now thrown on the streets. You distributed high viz jackets, litter pickers, gloves and bags on behalf of FCC to those who volunteered to Adopt a Patch. The compactor litter bins are very successful and we were delighted to read that FCC have installed some in Swords. You have successfully beaten the Graffiti Artists by having a mural painted on the wall which they used consistently ... well done. We note your comments on the number of telephone kiosks and question if almost all should not be removed? There are very few residents and visitors who do not possess a mobile phone and so the need for land line phones must be minimal?

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

We read with interest that 14 of your estates have put their Communal Green Areas for biodiversity planting by STT and FCC with fruit trees and fruit bushes to be included in these planting plans. We look forward to reading about the progress of this project in future applications. The spring flowers in RiverValley were, we have no doubt, a welcome sight after the long winter and gave the residents hope of things to come. You now have an additional five residents' associations who keep in contact with STT and work with you and FCC to improve the roadside and communal green spaces. Ashtown Broc are very active and with the two new biodiversity planting beds and new footpath crossing the green space they will transform the estate. We see that FCC is very active in encouraging residents to engage with them by arranging a number of competitions compliments to the staff in FCC for organising these events.

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

FCC have been active in Swords and have made significant improvements to streets, roads, and laneways. You mentioned that footpaths have been broken due to the tree roots on the Main Street.; this situation cannot be allowed to continue. Have you met with FCC to discuss this? The four approach roundabouts are maintained by FCC and have an array of flowers during all seasons in addition to sculptural displays. STT have upgraded areas around the town including the Irish wildflower bed at Drynam Rd and the perennial flower bed at Pinnock Hill. You mention that STT have provided a mural on the RiverWalk – we noted the photo under the Tidiness and Litter Control category. Did you also provide murals in the carpark? We were delighted to read that FCC have increased the length of cycleways in Swords. These increases add to your cycleway network and hopefully is the beginning of further advancement in this area. Have you thought about providing a cycle network map on your website which could be updated as additional cycleways are made? This is something that cyclists from both your town and surrounding towns would use.

Concluding Remarks:

We were not able to visit your town this year and so our comments are based on the information received in your application and additional information.

We note that you did not refer to the Sustainable Development Goals in the various categories in your application, with the exception of part of Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality category. We suggest that you examine the Goals and see their importance and relevance to the lives of the community. Tidy Towns in conjunction with LCCC ran a webinar on the SDGs earlier this year and the presentation is worth reading as it will be helpful for your application next year.

The link is : <https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2021-03/sustainable-development-goals-helpful-hints.pdf>

We were delighted to read that you have also entered a variety of the Special Awards under the various categories ... best of luck in these.

Thank you for entering the SuperValu Tidy Towns 2021 competition.