

# Tidy Towns Competition 2021

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Milltown - Baile an Mhuilinn</b>	Ref: <b>202</b>
County: <b>Galway</b>	Mark: <b>351</b>
Category: <b>B</b>	Date(s): <b>02/08/2021</b> <b>07/09/2021</b>

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2021</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	52
Streetscape & Public Places	60	45
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	51
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	46
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	23
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>351</b>

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

Fáilte Chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 2021. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn. Go raibh maith agaibh as ucht bhur dtacaíocht le linn na paindéime. Lean leis an dea-obair.

Welcome to the 2021 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. Thank you for your entry and for your commitment to your place in these difficult times. Keep up the great work.

The methodical approach of Milltown Tidy Towns group is evident right from the start of your submission where you illustrate how, out of a population of 215, you have 16 members plus street captain for every road, along with each of the Tidy Towns categories being head up by two members.

You obviously kept very busy during lockdown, building on ways to keep your heritage alive. It was great to see you take advantage of the opportunity from National Museum of Ireland to colourise old photographs. While ensuring that your own community was taken care of, it was also wonderful to hear of committee member Cathal Sheridan's 21-year-old son and his cousin Grace taking the time and effort to help those less fortunate. That was a great endeavour.

Your committee has really taken on board the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. It is great when communities can see how high-level strategy can be broken down and achieve real progress at grassroots level by community groups such as yourselves in helping solve much larger issues.

You highlighted that your Business Park now employs almost 150 people, implying significant levels of commuting to the area. The fact that DHL relocated their West of Ireland warehouse headquarters from Galway City to the park because of the facilities provided in Milltown shows how much your work has impacted your area.

As humans, we often use stone as a way of creating a permanent reminder of something. While the new plaque erected to thank volunteers who participated in the kerbing of your walkway is of great quality, we are sure that all of your works have left a lasting mark on your community.

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

While Milltown heritage cottage is a worthy contender on the "know your 5K" website we hope that it is enjoyed by many from a lot further afield during the summer

Your committee always seems to be thinking of the future. One of the legacies of Covid is going to be the ability to work from home or nearer to home. You have been very quick off the mark to already have converted the derelict Sheridan's new agents into your blue one hub.

To make people value heritage, they must first know that they are there and to use them. Your two evenings of

performance at Kilclooney Castle Bardic School by local schoolchildren is a great step on this path. Creating a 3D digital interactive model was an interesting way of trying to bring this to life.

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

For a village of your size, you have some impressive (and award winning) areas. From your Heritage Park to your walkways at Clare River and Slí na Sláinte walks, these must have been of even greater value to your community in lockdown.

While the new signage is lovely and bright, the fact that the writing “as Gaeilge” is in the old Celtic font really adds to them. An-deas ar fad.

Reading about your project, in conjunction with Milltown National School, of an outdoor classroom and sensory garden looked very impressive. Viewing the photos of this projects really introduced the “WOW” factor. From the first photo which showed the digging starting on the unused area, to all of the steps that were added, to a grandparent from the school using fallen branches to make fairy houses, as well as pictures of how palettes and tarpaulin were used to create the seating, and how donated fencing helped create an area for native hedgerow, on top of wild flowers and a hedgehog home. It is evident that this project comes under so many categories.

Sustainability you could argue was at heart of this project, but then you can see the emphasis placed on pollination and creating homes for pollinators and other wildlife. Every little space was utilised, including a small pot that was used as a pond. It's great to create homes and provide food for pollinators and wildlife, but often the water element is overlooked. The sensory garden was very well thought out, as is a hallmark of a lot of your projects. To see what a few leftover supplies created in the story chair shows the great imagination of your group. While you have many wonderful green spaces throughout your small village, this space could soon become a firm favourite. While it is inviting for pollinators and wildlife, the imagination gone into some of the structures makes it even more inviting for both young and old.

We look forward to viewing the new walkway at Cloondroon Lake. Congratulations on finishing the kerbing on your Clare River walkway.

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

Between two talks for National Biodiversity Week 2021, workshops with an ecologist and two members of your committee taking part in a five week Sustainable Gardening Course based on the All Ireland Pollinator plan by Aoife Munn for Tidy Town Groups in County Galway, there are going to be some more spectacular results from Milltown. Your sensory garden has already shown how you are putting this into action.

We would love to hear of how successful the new bat boxes erected at Lack Mill and bird boxes at Birmingham House were .

Your “Trees from Seed” project is very simple and effective. It hopefully will give children a greater appreciation of how long some of the trees in their locality are around by seeing how long they take to grow.

You have really put a lot into ensuring that the children in your area appreciate nature. Growing flowers, fruits and vegetables hopefully provides a better respect for these. But it will probably be projects such as creating the willow hut and the bird view area where children can immerse themselves in nature that should give the greatest sense of connection.

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

The use of approximately 90% recycled material to create seating and ornaments for the new sensory garden shows how items saved from landfill can really have a new lease of life in the right hands.

It is very impressive that 50% of your flowers were grown in your new greenhouse, aiming to have 100% by 2023 which is in line with our Pollinator Plan.

While new health regulations meant that the use of reusable cups were discontinued, we certainly hope that this can be rectified soon in the country. Ryans reporting a saving of 400 disposable cups during a year in a small village shows how important a role this action can have on reducing the use of disposable cups.

A small but important saving you have made is that shredded paper is put to more inventive uses.

The school seems so active and it would be great to see more of the environmental results of their actions. The same can be said for your local businesses, who you mention continue with the Green Waste Prevention Programme by significantly reducing landfill waste through recycling and your great water saving initiatives. It would be great to see some approx. results. This is certainly not meant as a criticism. We just want to ensure that the extent of the results of projects are highlighted.

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

While new projects will always create a sense of excitement and enthusiasm amongst a community, the ability to maintain previous projects is a great indication of how healthy the depth of support for a committee is. You have mentioned a number of examples in your submission where repairing, maintaining and painting are all part of your committee's ongoing work. Well done on this.

This is in addition to your continued extensive litter clean ups.

We hope the new dog litter box erected in Heritage Park is utilised well.

Belmont National School painted in the Milltown colours and its gable, along with the school crest, gives more of a sense of place to this building, in a village where sense of place seems core to its values.

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

We look forward to seeing the New Village Plaza/Centre in design which will connect Millbrook Estate to the Village. This connectivity should really enhance the village.  
As can be seen from the numbers working in your community, you have very active residents.  
The renovation of the Derelict house on Dunmore Rd should enhance your housing stock.

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

Well done on only cutting 1 metre grass at the edge of grass verges on approach roads to assist biodiversity. It is a simple, effective and beautiful way to assist our pollinators.  
It is great to see photos of the stone walls repaired on N17 approach road. These give a fantastic impression on entering a village.

The approach to so many villages is marred with many signs. While we do appreciate (especially in these harder economic times) that business must advertise, it is great when a balance can be struck. Well done on the removal of some unsightly signs from the garage and roadside on the N17 approach road to the village following consultation with an obliging owner.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It is obvious that your committee and community is made up of so many talented, hard-working, dedicated and imaginative individuals that it often seems wrong to single someone out. But on behalf of tidy towns we wish to join in the congratulations to Frank Glynn on receiving his national volunteer Ireland award for his decades volunteering in Milltown. Not only has he managed to put his own hard work into your group, but he has also managed to compile an amazing group of people to help expand his work. We wish you all well in your continuing endeavours.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

It was a great delight to visit Milltown – Baile an Mhuilinn on a late summer's day and witness the great work on hand in this high scoring centre. Your submission has already been praised by the first adjudicator and its layout is praiseworthy. However, your map is a let-down and we are puzzled at the small size of it. You should consider an A3 size with clear markings for next year. Bear in mind your adjudicator may not have visited your village before. Your long established river walk is a classic and we enjoyed the walk again this year, which has improved kerbing and is a superb amenity for walking, fishing and heritage. However, after several times adjudicating this centre this adjudicator has yet to gain access to the lovely thatched house. Perhaps for next year you might alert us as to opening hours. The amount of maintenance is significant and we were fortunate to get a good understanding from one of the staff members on the magnitude of the amount of work involved. The signage and information plaques are most informative and the river walk is richly embellished with a variety of wildlife illustrations, arid mholadh. We would urge you to ensure amenity signs and heritage signs are bilingual at a minimum. The two major fáilte signs on the two principal approaches are now obscured from overgrowth. In early spring these are not a problem but in late summer they need attention. The sign for Belmont NS is inadequate. We only saw one finger sign at the corner for Mr. Price and there is no indication of distance to the school. This should be replaced with an attractive bilingual sign giving the distance and name of the school as it is part of the adjudication area and we were delighted to witness the Green Flag. There are attractive flag poles at Milltown NS but no flag was evident during our visit. However, we understand there is a Green Flag available, so well done. Millbrook housing estate has some very well presented individual front and side gardens and we liked the entrance design here. The John Joyce derelict building is now a black spot on this main road and we wonder if plans are progressing for refurbishment? Our visit to the GAA complex was much admired and the playing pitch and stand are of a high quality. When funding permits you should try and improve the surface area fronting the Club House. Our visits to both schools were enjoyed and have been freshly painted and project a favourable image for the village and the area. We admire your amount of plans for future projects which will improve your standard. The recent work carried out at Belmont National School is praiseworthy and will serve the 'k a day' well. The willow hut was much admired and creates a sense of enjoyment, maith sibh. Well done to each school. We liked the Tidy Towns display in the unoccupied shop which is a constant reminder of your work. Ideally we would like all shops and business premises to be fully occupied which happen soon we hope.

In conclusion we commend your work, especially at this time of Covid-19 and admire your high degree of empathy for others in these challenging times. We look forward to normal adjudication next year and urge you to continue with your plans for improvement. Go néiri libh amach anseo.