

# Tidy Towns Competition 2024

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Swinford - Béal Átha na Muice</b>	Ref: <b>361</b>
County: <b>Mayo</b>	Mark: <b>321</b>
Category: <b>C</b>	Date(s): <b>20/06/2024</b>

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2024
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	49
Streetscape & Public Places	80	46
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	39
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	26
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	32
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>321</b>

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

Fáilte Chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 2024. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Lean leis an dea-obair! Thank you for participating in Ireland's longest-running environmental project and helping to make Ireland a better place. We really appreciate all the great work that you do and the effort you put in, year on year.

Speaking of effort, many thanks for the effort that surely went into your entry this year. This was very detailed, illustrated with dozens of photographs and included a concise but relevant 5-year plan. The entry was also extremely easy to read and kept to the pertinent details. Your group is well-supported by your community with a great number of businesses name-checked as supporters. You use both traditional and social media for communication. You have been participating in Tidy Towns since 1996 and we are delighted to read how this has been so positive for Swinford. The specific project that you have identified for particular effort this year is the restoration of the Wood Well and work in associated areas.

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

New projects you tell us about here are footpath accessibility initiatives and the new Golf Club loop walk. The litterbins we should discuss under a later category. We started our visit from the car park at Pound Lane. Mellett's Premises looked really great. The building renovation at the corner of the Courthouse looks well. The Courthouse itself is impressive – watch out for a guttering that is giving rise to a rust streak on the front elevation.

There were quite a few disused and empty premises along Market Street. Is the former Post Office premises now empty too? However, some of the architectural features of Market Street are lovely to look at, like old shopfronts and window guards. Mellett's Pub front looks great. Efforts to make disused buildings look more presentable are praised here. Some lovely businesses noted were Lavin's, The Flower Cabin, Forkans Menswear and Lambe's. The Intreo premises looked very smart. The AIB building looked well and the window-boxes really help here. The Bank of Ireland premises will be in need of painting soon. Our favourite area though was the Cultural Centre and Library. This is a gorgeous use and rethink of a piece of Swinford heritage.

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

Here you describe a number of maintained projects. Rightly so, as the maintenance of such areas is every bit as important as creating new ones and we realise that these take time too. These projects include an extension of hedgerows, grass and flowerbed maintenance. We really admired the lovely well-tended pollinator-friendly

perennials bed beside the wall near the railway bridge. We wondered if it might be possible to reuse the planters that are attached to the bridge itself. There was lovely work on the island at the busy junction of Circular Road with Mount Street. This was really well-kept too. Beautiful planted beds with stone surrounds were admired on the corner of Davitt Place and Kilkelly Road.

The Youth Memorial Garden is lovely! We were very impressed. Incorporated into the old stonework of some built heritage, this is a really beautiful place. Well done.

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

A new project for you in this category is the planting of pollinator-friendly shrubs and bulbs at the Youth Memorial Garden. Another is the planting of native pollinator-friendly flowers at the railway bridge. You mention the Swift population of Swinford growing year on year. Great to hear, are there any statistics to back this up? Please let us know. Do also please tell us how you are maintaining the stream. This is a sensitive habitat – as you know – so any work on this should be with advice from experts. We acknowledge your appreciation of your fantastic horticulturalist here! The Butterfly Garden and Brabazon Woodland are really lovely! We spent ages here looking at the paths, tilework, sculptures and benches. The 'DIY' litterbins are unusual but they were being used... There was some lovely planting here.

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

A number of relevant and useful initiatives are listed by you here. The Wood Well – your most significant project for the year – was completed using 100% recycled and upcycled materials. Excellent! A project in planning is the old weighbridge and a range of materials for reuse in this have been donated to you, which is great. You tell us that your rainwater harvesting supplies 100% of the water you need for your planting. You also reuse all your compost in flowerbeds, very good. Finally, you source all of your flowers and shrubs locally, which is how it should be.

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

Thank you for all the details supplied here. Your weed control and anti-litter actions sound very organised. Well done on the organised events such as the Good Friday Spring Clean. Swinford wasn't litter-free on the day, unfortunately. However, no aged or long-lying litter was noted. We did however, notice that you have some very smart-looking new litterbins. The bottle banks at the Pound Lane car park weren't in great condition. These should be kept weed-free to prevent an unmaintained appearance (which can then lead to fly-tipping etc.). The sign was missing here. Maybe designing and producing a new sign could be a worthwhile project for this area? The bottle banks themselves were clean, it must be said. The finger sign for the bottle banks (at the car park entrance) is a little worn-out looking.

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

As you say, you have many housing estates in Swinford and most have their own committees set up. The children's playground is maintained by Tús and workers and Tidy Towns volunteers. Very good. Lots of well-tended and mature gardens were seen on the day. Some well-maintained flowerbeds at the estate fronts were appreciated too. The playground and equipment here were all in good order and very much in use on adjudication day.

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

In this last category, we pass on your appreciation to your Tús and RSS staff for their work on maintaining all the verges on the approach roads. It's good to hear that you are both extending your biodiversity areas and reducing your mowing regime. This is in line with best practice. As you say, this will reduce your fuel bill as well as the hours required. You specifically mention the painting at Brookville Avenue, Mellett's Stores restoration and former blacksmith's on Pound Lane. Well done to all involved with these. One of the great pleasures of being an adjudicator is wandering around exploring laneways and alleys. Having great restoration work like this really adds to the experience of a town. It was great to see a handball alley in such good condition. Teenagers were hanging out here at the time, which is how it should be.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

This was a very interesting and enjoyable visit. We were very impressed at some of the projects that have taken place since our last visit. Keep up the good work and thank you for all you do.