

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Timoleague - Tigh Molaga** Ref: **694**
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **358**
Category: **B** Date(s): **22/07/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	49	51
Streetscape & Public Places	80	45	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	46	49
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	44	46
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	21	22
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	68	70
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	33	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	36
TOTAL MARK	550	340	358

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. Adh Mór.

Welcome to the Super Valu Tidy Towns Competition for 2022. We thank you for your entry, and wish you all the best in all your future work. Good luck.

Timoleague Tigh Molaga, a mid-sized village with a population of 375 people – has entered the competition for approx. 60 years and has a committee of 10 members with support of another 30 volunteers.

- It is noted that during the last year there has been an exceptional level of voluntary commitment in Timoleague. Your monthly meetings held outdoors during the Pandemic have been reinstated to twice monthly meetings indoors. Your Meitheal clean ups take place weekly during the summer months with very wide community involvement.
- Support is received from a wide range of national and local agencies and businesses, including Cork County Council.
- Since Covid you use several different methods to communicate with your members and the general public including What's App, Facebook, Zoom, email, outdoor meetings etc. Your Facebook page is regularly updated with information on current and future projects/activities with photos of projects before during and after completion and notices of upcoming events.
- There is strong engagement with the local school and some pupils are involved in the weekly clean ups. The school has set up an outdoor garden and in conjunction with Tidy Towns, pupils are involved with nature and biodiversity and sustainability programmes.
- It is good to note that the Timoleague community has benefited greatly from being involved in the Tidy Towns competition over the years, as it has provided a sense of purpose for improving the village and keeping it looking clean and beautiful. The work of Molaga Tidy Towns significantly improves the engagement and sense of togetherness of the entire community.

The map provided with your Entry Form, which is based on an original ordnance survey sheet is good in that it separately identifies the main landmarks of the village and the various works undertaken by the committee over the last year and these are colour coded. This is further subdivided into new projects, ongoing maintenance and future projects. The adjudicator feels that the numbering system whilst a little complicated works well. However, it was sometimes hard to decipher some of the numbers on the map and perhaps a larger A3 size map could be provided in the future and the project listings can be included on the map as well, if space is available. This facilitates the assessment process on site.

The quality of the application form is very good and the adjudicator was impressed with all the wonderful photographs and relevant information provided under each of the categories, which were very informative. The adjudicator's assessment is based on a recent site visit and the contents of the application form. The form which

extends to a total of 140 pages is too long and perhaps it would be better to include the photographs and illustrations on a separate document so the form itself can be reduced to 30-40 pages max. The text inserted on the form which is generally in bold font was quite easy to read.

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

- The main projects referred to under this category include various restoration works underway in relation to existing heritage buildings in Timoleague and upgrading of public spaces, road surfaces and street signage. We wish you well with the building works on the new Community Hall, due to be completed in early 2023. You are also taking steps with property owners to deal with a derelict site in the village.
- Your adjudicator visited Timoleague Village for the first time on a sunny and warm morning in July. Mill Street was looking resplendent with many fine residential buildings here providing a very colourful welcome to your village. The parking of cars on Mill Street which is quite narrow takes up a lot of space and no doubt this creates difficulties for traffic movements from time to time. Perhaps this issue will be considered and addressed as part of your proposals for the Timoleague Village Improvement Scheme. Road surfaces and markings along Mill Street and on Main Street were in tip top condition. The adjudicator admired the recycled plastic seating, nicely designed fingerpost signage, attractive pollinator planting located at the junction of Mill Street and Abbey Street. The nearby site displaying the St. Molaga sculpture (with the sheaf of wheat and lit candle) together with the information signage here, was greatly admired. The seating area was neat and tidy and presented to an excellent standard.
- Timoleague Main Street is characterised by wonderfully colourful well-presented dwellings and commercial premises. The overhead wires and poles detract somewhat from the streetscape but no doubt this issue will be addressed as part of any future Village Improvement Scheme.
- Pad Joe's bar provides a very colourful addition to the streetscape along Abbey Street and the outdoor dining area here looked very well. The corner seating area at the end of Abbey Street with nicely painted water pump and floral display also enhanced this area.
- The adjudicator called to Timoleague Abbey the former seat of St. Molaga and once mediaeval centre of learning and philosophical enlightenment. What a wonderful heritage property to have in your midst in Timoleague – a visit really does exceed all expectations. It was difficult for your adjudicator not to stay for a very long time, to study all the various features of the Abbey but unfortunately this will have to be left for another time. The self-guided Tour Booklet was very helpful on the walk around the Abbey and all involved with this publication are commended for their great work.
- It might be good to consider introducing some tree planting into the Abbey car park, where space is available, to enhance the presentation of this area and perhaps this can be considered as part of the Timoleague Village Improvement Scheme.
- The Argideen Valley Trails Information signage erected near the Abbey was positively noted as were the cycle parking stands installed there. The red coloured seats in this area could do with a freshen up with paint.
- The presentation of the area in the vicinity of the tourist signage located near the Toilet Block was excellent. Of particular note here was the sign detailing a 'letter from America'. The 'This place is for you' sign was also positively noted. The maintenance and presentation of the toilet block was to a very high standard. Perhaps in the future consider erecting a pitched roof on this building, finished with natural slate and facing the building with natural stone, as one feels this will help to integrate the building more successfully into the adjoining village 'heritage zone'.
- The Church of the Ascension was visited. This site is clearly very well cared for and maintained. The whitewashed walls of the Church building are a prominent feature. The stone wall and piers along the road were greatly admired as was the historic and waymark signage erected along the road frontage. The planting in the Church grounds including impressive Irish yews, oak trees and a commemorative Ginkgo, added to the attractive sylvan setting in this area.
- The children's playground was getting very well used on the day of adjudication and the universal access provided here was positively noted, as was the car parking area which was maintained in a neat and tidy condition. The access to the playground from the Main Street is enhanced with vintage farm machinery, recycled plastic seating, stone walls and floral displays - a superb combination.
- The Timoleague Timeline feature really is a remarkable piece of work and the Grotto and Church in the background, flanked by beech hedges and birch trees, really was a delight to behold. The standard of presentation of the Church grounds was excellent and the adjudicator particularly admired the Magnolia walk and the hydrangeas, which were in full flower. The design of the new toilet block or 'Necessarium' was very much in keeping with the overall design and historic character of the Church grounds.
- The Centra premises was very well presented with colourful floral displays and a tidy forecourt area. The cycle parking provided here was positively noted. Timoleague National School which was brightly painted and handsomely presented. The wonderful stone wall along the boundary and the many flags flying in this area, added to the very pleasing presentation of this area.
- The adjudicator called to St Molaga's burial ground which has a nicely painted boundary wall facing the road and a neat and tidy car park and bottle bank area.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

- The maintenance and improvement of existing open space areas such as the Railway Park have been included under this category together with floral displays, bulb planting and the establishment of the biodiversity garden.
- The adjudicator called to the Railway Park and admired the outstanding level of maintenance and presentation. The use of railway sleepers as a boundary treatment, to enclose seating areas and to provide a structure for park signage, provided a significant connection to the site's railway past. The signs providing information on the Timoleague Railway were excellently produced. The wonderful views across the site, towards the

Argideen river and Courtmacsherry Bay were enjoyed. The use of recycled plastic seating in the park was also positively noted.

- The area of open space located in the vicinity of the Centra Shop has not yet been fully developed. Perhaps in the future, this area might be developed as a 'Village Park' for Timoleague, with provision of additional tree planting, pathways, recreational/sport facilities and seating etc.

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

- A special project under this category this year includes the erection of ceramic plaques depicting the 13 bird species found around the nearby shoreline and bay. They are beautifully designed and informative for walkers in the area. A range of very interesting and innovative biodiversity projects in conjunction with the local school, are also included under this category.
- St. Molaga is known as the 'patron Saint of beekeepers' and is reputed to have been responsible for introducing the honey bee into Ireland. In view of Timoleague's direct historic association with the Saint, perhaps a project in relation the conservation of bee species or the native Irish honeybee might be considered for next year under this category? The erection of a piece of sculpture at a prominent location in the village highlighting the local association with St.Molaga and Bees might be a worthwhile project to consider for the future.
- The biodiversity garden was visited and the facilities provided for the local school children were positively noted here. A concrete block wall has been erected at the entrance near the garden and perhaps this can be replaced with a stone wall, in due course.
- It is good to note that working in collaboration with the National School, Playschool and wider community, you will now be taking part in the Pollinator Award (2022). We wish you the best of luck with this very worthwhile endeavour!
- The committee will be aware that the New All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) 2021-2025 has now been launched and it is particularly concerning that one third of bee species in Ireland are now threatened with extinction. As well as this Plan, useful guideline documents are now available to Tidy Towns committees to increase the numbers of pollinators in your local area, including guides which are specific to local communities, farmers, councils, transport corridors, sports clubs, businesses etc. Different 'How to Guides' are also available showing how to establish pollinator friendly planting schemes, pollinator friendly roundabouts, use of 'Managed for Wildlife' signage etc.
- This year the AIPP is focussed on gathering survey data to assess the impact of all the good work groups such as the Tidy Towns are carrying out across the country e.g., at the Biodiversity Garden. The National Biodiversity Data Centre has developed a new app to make this survey work easy for groups through the use of 'Fit Counts'. FIT stands for 'Flower-Insect Timed Count'. FIT Counts are very simple and are a very useful tool for TT groups to measure change in their local biodiversity, especially when they have taken action already for pollinators. By carrying out FIT Counts throughout the year and across future years, it will help track the impact of your actions on insect numbers and diversity as well as providing important data for the National Biodiversity Data Centre (biodiversityireland.ie). It would be good to get local schools involved in these counts. Please follow this link for further information Flower-Insect Timed Count (FIT Count) - National Biodiversity Data Centre (biodiversityireland.ie)

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

- Your focus in relation to this category this year is the continuing efforts to encourage water conservation, the sustainable use of recycled materials e.g., installation of recycled plastic seating at the playground, stone entrance signs, recycled anti-litter awareness signs, transport sustainability and improved cycle training etc.
- Other areas worthy of consideration by Molaga Tidy Towns Committee for the future under this category, which is in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals, include the development of small electric microgeneration schemes for Wind, Solar and Hydro in partnership with the Local Authority and these may also attract suitable SEAI or Leader funding.
- You might look at the overall availability of public e-car charge points and bicycle parking facilities in the village and where there are deficiencies, suggest suitable locations where these could be provided in the short term.
- The Committee might also consider in the future initiating membership of the Sustainable Energy Communities programme run by the SEAI which includes engaging in learning networks, preparation of energy masterplans and local energy action plans etc. The following are useful links in this regard.
<https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/sustainable-energy-communities/>
<https://www.codema.ie/sec>
- The ongoing management of rainwater and floodwater in the context of climate change is an important topic to be considered under this category. This is a particularly critical issue in areas which have suffered from coastal and other flooding in recent years. The committee should be aware of the nature-based solutions to the management of rainwater/floodwater and surface water run-off, water sensitive design, best practice etc. A recent publication by the Dept. of Housing Local Government and Heritage is available and provides important guidance in this regard.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

- In relation to tidiness, it is noted that Molaga Tidy Towns have prided themselves in keeping the village and surrounding areas tidy and litter free. We wish you well with your plans under the Village Renewal Scheme 2023 to upgrade your footpaths in the village.
- You organise annual litter picks and engage with Cork County Council in relation to the disposal of collected material and the Council also undertakes a mechanical sweep of the village a number of times a year. You also organised a KWD county clean up in April of this year and have organised the erection of anti-dog fouling

signs. The adjudicator was particularly impressed with the "Picker Pals" cross generational initiative with the local school.

- On the day of adjudication, the village was entirely litter free except for a very small amount noticed in the vicinity of the Abbey.

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

- Thank you for the photos showing examples of the work undertaken to maintain to a high standard the residential properties in Timoleague and it was noted that most residents take great pride in the exterior of their buildings, keeping them freshly painted and adding floral displays during the summer season. The recent road re-surfacing works have really enhanced the presentation of residential streets along Mill Street and Main Street in the village.
- The Chapel Avenue Estate was visited and the wonderful views from this estate across the village rooftops and Abbey, towards Courtmacsherry Bay were greatly admired. The open space here is maintained to a very good standard and the buttercups which were in full flower were particularly pleasing. Private dwellings and gardens in this estate were very well presented.

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

- It is good to note that the new water/sewage treatment works, which were very disruptive in recent years in the village, involving a great deal of road works, have now been completed. The fact that all these roads have been recently resurfaced by Cork County Council has been a great benefit to the village.
- The two new welcome entrance namestones situated on the main approach roads into the village were greatly admired, as were the information signage provided at various locations.
- The Clonakilty approach to the village is characterised by extensive natural vegetation and hedgerows adjoining the road. The new namestone and Tidy Town sign really enhances this approach to the village. There is a small yard as one enters the village along this approach which could be enhanced with hedgerow planting along the existing concrete post and rail boundary fencing here.
- The Courtmacsherry approach to Timoleague is characterised by wonderful views towards Timoleague Village and the imposing monastic structures of the Abbey. The stone walls along the causeway were greatly admired and the approach is enhanced good road surfaces and markings.
- On the Kinsale/Bandon approach, the road environs are enhanced with extensive natural vegetation along the road boundaries, attractive stone walls along the causeway and good road surfaces and markings.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a great pleasure at long last to visit Timoleague on a warm sunny morning - it is an idyllic setting overlooking a beautiful coastal landscape. The traditional colourful streetscape and character in the village has been retained and enhanced, with the great support of local businesses and property owners. You have an active Committee and Timoleague has great potential to progress very well in the competition. We hope you find the comments in the report helpful and wish you well with your future activities.