

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Macroom - Maigh Chromtha</b>	Ref: <b>183</b>
County: <b>Cork(South)</b>	Mark: <b>363</b>
Category: <b>D</b>	Date(s): <b>07/06/2023</b>

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2023</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	52
Streetscape & Public Places	80	46	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	51	53
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	42	44
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	24	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	62	63
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	37	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	40
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>363</b>

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2023. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amachanseo. Adh Mór... thank you so much for your entry into this year's competition, you are most welcome. Also, thank you for taking on the comments of last year's adjudicator, with the inclusion of page numbers, you have provided us with a clear and concise entry, along with your work plan, link to your video as well as some lovely photographs for which we thank you!

You have 4 Officers and 15 others on your Committee, and an additional 10 volunteers to assist you with your work, though I understand that this is a time of change for you with development plans for the town beginning to settle and praise to the recently retired Secretary of your Committee who provided such a wonderful service to Macroom.

It is great to see the crossover that exists, with your volunteers being involved with other organisations such as the PPN's, the Lion's Club, Lee Valley Enterprise Board etc. a great way to raise awareness of your work and possible attract new recruits.

You plan your work with monthly Committee meetings as well as formal group meetings every Saturday for all volunteers, as well as more fun initiatives such as the Santa Hut in the Fairy Garden complete with Santa and Mrs Claus.

Good communications strategy with a group responsible for this to share the load, and include methods such as Facebook#, news-letters and regional newspapers, vacant shop windows to advertise your work as well as sponsored High Viz vests.

You have developed very strong links with a wide range of organisations, businesses as well as sports clubs who support your work. These include Cork County Council (including Macroom Municipal District Council), Pobal Tús, the RSS, IRD Duhallow, Rural Development Company the Lee Valley Enterprise Board and Foroige, as well as the Mens Shed to name a few. Also, good to see how much you involve the younger residents of the town. This includes visits to school to help with their biodiversity programmes, presentations made to Transition Year students on the work of the Tidy Towns, as well as schools being involved in litter picking and tree planting, and well done to MacEgan College for taking on the work involved for the two flower beds at the Castle gates.

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

There were some very interesting and unusual business premises to be seen throughout the town, and some of the shop facades that stood out as being particularly attractive included Pickled, A. Golden Pub, B's Restaurant, Enchanted Flowers & Gifts, as well as the lovely 'The Shopeen' with it's traditional Irish font at Lucey's Lane. Others included the eye catching Clancy's Fresh Fish with it's Penny Farthing bike on the front, Siopa Leabhar Mac Gearailt, and The Greyhound bar with the interesting murals at the passageway beside it, as well as Fitz-Gerald's Bookshop with it's colourful mural of readers as well as Rory Gallagher.

There was a lot of street art to be found throughout Macroom which was really interesting, in particular around Learys Lane, and many of them had very strong messages in relation to mental health and wellbeing, as well as celtic themes, they made for a fascinating stroll around the town.

The modern Macroom Primary Care Team Centre looked very fresh and well landscaped, as did the Ceárd-Scoil building.

Much of the signage is of very high quality, in particular the black finger signs directing to the Tourist Office etc., however, the wooden Macroom Town Centre information sign/map would benefit from a refresh, and a fresh lick of paint for the bin and the old cast iron green post box beside it would enhance this corner a lot.

Some of the fine and historic buildings to be seen included the Halla an Bhaile building, the old Market House with the very vibrant old yellow water pump in front of it which added a lovely splash of colour to this area. The Castle with its cannons guarding is an imposing backdrop to the town, and again the signage, seating incorporating planters and landscaping here looks very well.

We note that this is a time of flux for Macroom, and that there are plans afoot to upgrade the streetscape and rejuvenate the town, and we very much look forward to these developments with great interest.

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

There was some beautiful planting to be seen throughout the town, with the flower bed in the square being admired, as well as the lovely circular flower beds outside the castle gates. The landscaping at New Street looked very smart, as did the Grotto area. The Fairy Garden area in the town park was absolutely charming and must be greatly enjoyed by the younger members of the town, with some absolutely gorgeous and colourful information signs here about pollination and the various trees that can be found in the area, lovely work. The park itself is a lovely space to spend a bit of time and relax away from the hustle and bustle, and the Sensory Garden is a lovely area with plenty of pollinator friendly plants. It is great to see that this is something that you are very conscientious of, and are encouraging residents groups to mow less and plant flowers that encourage biodiversity. Good work also being done on maintenance of areas such as the riverside, the old and new graveyards, pruning of trees, trimming of hedges etc., well done!

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

I have already mentioned the new Biodiversity Garden, great work and well done on the new composting programme that has been set up in the Biodiversity Garden. You are lucky in that there is a wealth of flora and fauna to be found in your town and environs. Work that you are doing to protect and promote some of your wildlife includes the Bat boxes in the Castle Demesne, as well as the Swift boxes which are maintained and monitored, as well as a 'Bee Scrape, at the riverside entrance to the Fairy garden.

The Fáilte go Masseytown Park looks fantastic, colourful and full of information about all that the area has to offer including the sensory and biodiversity gardens, the riverside walk, not to mention the charming fairy garden.

Great to read that you are working on your pollinator plan in conjunction with an ecologist from the County Council, and perhaps look into having pollinator 'corridors' if possible, and the new display boards were noticed.

Other work you are doing is the control and management of invasive species such as the Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron, along the banks of the river and the Castle Demesne.

We read about the erosion that has occurred along the riverbank and that this is being currently followed up with the County Council as well as Inland Fisheries, and we hope that a solution can be found for this issue.

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

A wide range of very practical and effective initiatives are being carried out in this category, and good work in making sure to tie these in with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is very exciting to read that Cork County Council has chosen Macroom to lead the way in reducing carbon emission post by post. You clearly espouse the principles of 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle' with park and walkway furniture being made from recycled plastic, as is the signage boards for the Sensory Garden, and the Men's Shed re purpose pallets for kindling as well as upcycling materials for use in birdhouses and Christmas decorations. There is also emphasis on giving 'pre loved' items a second lease of life, whether it is used books, clothes or phones. The Men's Shed is also working on producing fresh vegetables in their polytunnel as well as an outdoor garden, and we look forward to hearing more about this in the future, well done on your purchase of a chipper to produce mulch from tree prunings to be used elsewhere.

Sustainable transport such as cycling and walking is being actively promoted including a Bike Week which included the repair of donated bikes for use by Asylum Seekers living in the town, a fantastic idea. St Joseph's Primary School has just been granted a cycle park, and the weekly Castle Park Run and outdoor gyms will help encourage people to enjoy the outdoors and the environment around them.

You mention that some residents have installed PV Solar panels as well as harvesting rain water for use in their gardens. A great source of information for energy efficiency as well as grants for solar panels, retrofitting, electric vehicles etc. is the website of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland.

It is also great to read that the local schools are getting involved with initiatives such as 'no waste days' the reduction of single use plastics, 'keep cups' as well as reduction in the waste of water.

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

In general there was a good standard of litter and tidiness control, no doubt due to your weekly litter that you carry out throughout the entire town, and well done for involving the primary schools in their own litter picking programme. There is also a weekly cleaning of the streets with your sweeper and you try to ensure that pet owners clean up after themselves through the provision of doggie poo bins in various locations as well. There was unfortunately

some litter to be seen throughout the streets, particularly cigarette butts in some of the alley ways and offstreets, as well as some empty pizza and takeaway boxes to be found, and some debris at the picnic area. It is good to read that you are actively trying to reduce unnecessary signage throughout the town and to have these removed if no longer relevant. You participate in the National Spring Clean Up programme and good to hear that you are encouraging suburban areas to organise some of these as well. Given the work on the by pass there is obviously a period of transition with temporary works and signage taking place, but once this has all settled down and these removed these works should greatly improve the appearance and amenity of the town. Similarly, the upgrade of the O'Riada carpark, with new paths and walkway should enhance this area, and we look forward to seeing this completed.

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

There is a real mix of accommodation types in Macroom from the lovely terraced houses to be seen on Chapel Hill to more modern developments and traditional semi detached dwellings, and all areas visited were presented to a high standard, many with gorgeous gardens, hanging baskets and planters. The new development on the Millstreet Road were noticed and it is great to see so much activity happening in the town. In order to further enhance the local housing stock, you will be encouraging home owners to participate in the subsidised house painting programme, a great initiative by the County Council. It is great to read that you are now designated as a service town to the Gaeltacht and that signs where possible will be bi lingual. The many murals to be found in the town were very eye catching and interesting, and fantastic that is part of an ongoing Street Mural Programme, I really enjoyed seeing this as I walked around.

There were some vacant and derelict looking houses and premises to be seen throughout the town which is a shame, something that is unfortunately all too common across many parts of Ireland, but good to read that some of the areas with dereliction issues are being developed, with the social development on the Sleaveen Road being an example. .

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

The 'Castle' Welcome to Macroom sign along with the Macroom Foróige Garden, which was flourishing on the day that I visited looks splendid and is a wonderful welcome to the town. There is great work being done on keeping the approach roads looking spick and span and ensure the kerbing and edges are kept trim. This includes the hedge cutting programme on the Killarney approach road, the maintenance of the wildflower area at the impressive bull sculpture, and it is good that you are ensuring that any work that you undertake is in line with the All Ireland Pollinator plan. There are a lot of changes in the town with the completion of the bypass, with the new roundabout area. St Colmans Cemetery looked very well kept and maintained, good work done by Foroige. We note that you have several improvements that you would like to see implemented in the future. This includes upgrades of the picnic area with signage, parking and fencing, the upgrade of pedestrian paths and walkways from Coolcower into Macroom as well as looking at revising the approach taken on grass cutting for verges on approach roads, and wish you look in getting these implemented.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It is a while since this adjudicator was in Macroom and it was lovely to see the town again with its colourful and quirky streetscape and interesting shops and restaurants. It is an exciting time for Macroom, with a lot of changes to come, and we wish you the best of luck with these and look forward to visiting again to see the results.