

# Tidy Towns Competition 2021

## ***Adjudication Report***

Centre: **Ballymun - Baile Munna** Ref: **854**

County: **Dublin** Mark: **308**

Category: **G** Date(s):

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2021</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	47
Streetscape & Public Places	60	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	41
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	42
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	28
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	44
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>308</b>

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

Fáilte Chug Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2021. Táimíd 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. It is great to see that your active committee continue to make improvements to Ballymun. Your committee is well organised with a range of subgroups being formed on a 'needs be basis' and given the large number of projects undertaken, this approach (notwithstanding the pandemic related restrictions) appears to be working well for you. We are delighted to read that events with appropriate safeguards have taken place and that there was a great response to the National Spring clean day in Ballymun. Be sure to try to maintain the high level of engagement with your residential areas and local schools as it will make a positive difference to the appearance and maintenance of your area. The online Ballymun in pictures competition sounds like an excellent alternative to the Ballymun in Bloom event and you are commended on this excellent initiative. The community barbecue (to promote the muck and magic community garden), the spooky Halloween competition and the better Ballymun project also sound like enjoyable activities that showcase the strong community spirit in your area. It is great to see that your committee has developed excellent links with statutory agencies (such as Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council and the Dublin North West partnership) and other bodies such as the regional resource centre, the Men's Shed and the business community. Participation in community level projects in Ballymun has reached an exceptionally high level with 59 local environmental groups (an increase of 17 since 2020) and it clearly demonstrates that the work of your committee and volunteers is worthwhile and appreciated by other residents.

Given that there is now a large number of local environmental groups, we recommend that a mechanism (such as a simple umbrella committee made up of representatives of these groups) is considered to ensure that their work is coordinated. This will help you to get the most out of their efforts and ensure that each group understands its role in improving Ballymun. It would also assist you by confirming that all areas within Ballymun are getting attention and facilitate your committee in delegating projects to them. The link with the Trinity comprehensive secondary school is commended and we urge you to approach other schools to see if they are interested in getting involved in your projects. Local sports clubs may also be interested in participating. Your communication strategy is particularly impressive and given the level of community engagement achieved in your area, it seems to be working very well so be sure to keep up the good work on it. Well done also on participating in the community employment scheme (on foot of a recommendation in the 2019 report) and you are congratulated on the special awards won in 2021. Thank you also for an improved map and your completed application form as it was very helpful during adjudication.

However, it has now become a very extensive document (running to 111 pages) and it is recommended that a more succinct application form is prepared for next year's competition.

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

Your application form details a range of high quality projects for this category in 2021. The improvements to the

streetscapes of Ballymun are particularly impressive with the Dublin canvas projects adding colour and interest to the old shopping centre site, Trinity comprehensive, the student village and Ballymun plaza. The decision to paint the glass recycling bins is also applauded as they looked particularly well. We were delighted to read that the window displays for the local area competition and the spooky competition were a great success and we would encourage you to continue with these excellent initiatives. It is particularly pleasing to read that history and biodiversity trail signs have been provided and we are hopeful that we can return to Ballymun in 2022 to visit these trails and find out more about your area. We also read about the excellent mural painting projects and we wondered if there is an opportunity here for involving the schools? Perhaps the students could be approached and asked to suggest designs or participate in the completion of one? This would serve as an excellent means of promoting community 'ownership' of the project. It is great to see that there has been so much new investment on the main street of Ballymun since we visited in 2019 with many new businesses setting up. We were particularly interested to see the proposed design of the Plaza and we look forward to seeing the commencement of construction in 2022. The parks in Ballymun are most impressive and we applaud everyone who organizes and participates in the activities such as biodiversity walks and park runs that are regularly held in them. It is noted that a range of future projects are also proposed under this category and we look forward to seeing these get underway in the years ahead.

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

It is clear from your application that your committee has been particularly busy with projects under this category for 2021. We are delighted to read that your committee have continued to engage in biodiversity planting that was evident during our last visit in 2019 and it is a great idea to link up with the O'Cualann affordable housing scheme to ensure that the planting in their green spaces is biodiversity friendly and to work with Lidl to facilitate tree planting on their site. The wildflower planted area at Balbutcher Lane looked particularly well and is pleasing to see that this is just one of a range of areas that accommodate wildflowers in Ballymun. The inclusion of planting schemes in the Better Ballymun Project is applauded and it makes sense to target a number of these schemes at children - such as the wishing tree project and the fairy garden. We note that planting has taken place at Ballymun Kickhams and the Setanta GAA club and we wondered if these sports clubs were responsible for the implementation of these schemes and their maintenance? It is pleasing to see that the planting project at Santry Cross was undertaken in partnership with Sika Ireland and we encourage you to delegate the maintenance of planting schemes to local groups where possible as this would free up your committee for other tasks. The excellent local area and neighbourhoods competition would also facilitate the promotion of this approach by awarding extra marks to projects that are designed and maintained by volunteer groups other than the tidy towns committee. The tree planting that was undertaken for National tree week is highly commended and we urge the committee and community groups to try and identify (along with Dublin City Council) other suitable sites for trees in Ballymun. The use of approach roads into Ballymun for planting bulbs is commended and we wondered if pollinator friendly varieties such as crocuses, alliums and snowdrops are used? Well done also on encouraging 'don't mow, let it grow' initiatives as a means of providing sources of food for pollinators. It is great to see that the committee is also engaging in pollinator and tree planting along Main Street and to the rear of the Supervalu. The future projects planned under this category are acknowledged and we eagerly await their commencement.

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

Congratulations to your committee for securing funding for an updated Ballymun biodiversity action plan and noting the delays caused by the pandemic, we look forward to seeing the plan preparation process get underway as soon as possible under public health guidance. We would encourage the committee to identify tasks in the proposed plan that can be easily undertaken by community groups and schools as a means of ensuring that its implementation will not depend solely on the tidy towns committee. The survey equipment that has been procured using the National Parks and wildlife service funding should also be made available for use by all of the groups and schools who get involved in this work. It is great to see that your community is engaged in awareness raising about biodiversity through social media and by organising events during national biodiversity week and National tree week. This is particularly important work and we encourage you to continue with it. The partnership approach that your committee have adopted to biodiversity projects warrants strong praise – as it is clear from your application that you are working closely with Dublin City Council on important initiatives such as 'Leave it bee (don't mow, let it grow)', wildflower planting and the use of environmentally friendly alternatives to weedkiller on approach roads. The Ballymun in Bloom event is also considered to be a very effective way of increasing the number of pollinator plants in your area. We were pleased to read that your community are proposing to record the number of pollinator plants that you distribute as a means of measuring the impact of this initiative and we would encourage you to look for other means of assessing the effectiveness of your projects. For example, why not get the councils to provide information on the total area under the 'Leave it Bee' initiative? Is this area increasing each year? Don't forget that pollination zones can be added to the national online mapping system available on the communities section of [www.pollinators.ie](http://www.pollinators.ie) We note that a number of suggestions were made in the 2019 report to enable you to check if your extensive pollinator planting is having its desired effect. These suggestions included asking the schoolchildren and the schools to undertake bee and butterfly counts in the vicinity of your pollinator planting? While we are in no doubt that this work has been disrupted by the pandemic, we would be interested to hear if there are any plans to engage in these activities in the years ahead. We are also wondering if any consideration was given to mapping the current wildlife areas as a means of establishing a network of wildlife areas (or corridors) throughout Ballymun?

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

We heartily commend the excellent work of the committee and volunteers on the excellent repak\sunflower recycling project which is led to a total of 4500 bags of segregated waste being collected. This is an excellent outcome (by

any measure) and it is likely to have led to a reduction in the amount of waste going to landfill, greatly reduced litter levels and improved the appearance of your area. In our view, this is a particularly important project as it demonstrates that the residents of Ballymun are serious about improving the appearance of their area and promoting recycling. Well done also to the committee and volunteer groups for participating in initiatives such as 'stash trays' (to minimise waste from cigarette butts), WEE and mattress recycling days. The Better Ballymun Project also appears to have led to some exciting new projects such as additional community gardens and the gabion walls project (which uses waste from the shopping centre for planters, benches and a living wall). It is pleasing to see that Trinity Comprehensive are taking steps to reduce food waste by installing a compost machine. We note that other schools are members of the Green schools programme and we would also like to hear about they are doing to avoid the generation of waste and minimise resource use. What waste reducing and resource saving initiatives are other local schools engaged in? Noting the suggestion in the 2019 report that encouraged your committee to develop projects with transition year students, we wondered if there are any plans to follow this up? The committee are commended on leading by example in this category by avoiding the use of pesticides and herbicides, using pollinator friendly planting and growing your own plants. We were interested to read that you also engage in rainwater harvesting for use during drought periods and we wondered if you had thought about using captured rainwater all year round? The provision of the cycle led traffic junction is considered to be a fabulous addition to transport infrastructure in your area and we wondered if it has increased the numbers who are cycling to school, work or college? Why not team up with some of the schools in your area (or DCU) to undertake a survey which looks at how many people in Ballymun are using active modes of transport (like walking and cycling). The future projects that your committee have planned under this category are also acknowledged. We recommend that there should be an emphasis on projects which enable the committee and volunteer groups to measure behaviour changes in the years ahead as this will enable you to work out the effectiveness of your efforts in achieving sustainable outcomes.

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

Some excellent initiatives are included under this category and we have no doubt that the better Ballymun day of action and the picker pals are boosting participation in litter patrols in your area and making more people aware of your activities. It is particularly encouraging to see that the large number of local environmental groups are getting involved in cleanup projects (such as litter picks, weeding and edging grass verges) and we would love to hear more about this. For example, could you tell us if all areas in Ballymun now have regular litter picks that are undertaken either by residents, local environmental groups or the committee? If not, it is recommended that any overlooked areas are prioritised for action in the year ahead. Consider asking residents associations, local schools and sports clubs to 'adopt' an area as a means of regularly maintaining it. This will help to raise standards throughout Ballymun and reduce reliance on committee members for litter picking tasks. There is no doubt that the repak\sunflower recycling project was a runaway success and we urge you to consider holding an event like this on a more frequent basis (perhaps twice or three times a year) as it is a great way of increasing participation and getting these important tasks completed. The work of Dublin City Council (presumably in partnership with the committee) is also commended as there is no doubt that the initiatives like WEE and mattress recycling days and the anti dog fouling competition are playing their part in improving the appearance of Ballymun. We were particularly pleased to read that the committee have taken the suggestions made by adjudicator in 2019 on board by using disappointing IBAL results as a motivation to do better and we would like to reassure you that the hard work that you undertake is evident from the consistent and notable progress that your area is making in the tidy towns competition each year.

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

As noted in the 2019 adjudicators report, Ballymun has a very interesting range of housing areas due to the different design styles and layouts on view. The open areas, parks and urban plazas provided additional interest and we are pleased to read that these public spaces have been further improved by thoughtful planting, the addition of murals and careful maintenance. It is noted that there have been further enhancements since 2009 with the completion of new housing areas such as the O'Cualann housing scheme and the renovation of the Poppintree Court lane ways. We look forward to seeing these new schemes soon. The DCC Greener neighbourhood scheme sounds like a very impressive initiative with educational planning workshops being held for residents and environmental groups who are interested in maintaining pocket parks in residential streets and housing areas. To support this worthy initiative, an audit should be undertaken of the different neighbourhoods in order to identify areas that could benefit from the provision of a pocket park. The results of the audit could then be discussed with Dublin City Council and Residents Associations to ascertain if there is any local interest in carrying out the work. There could also be a role for schools and voluntary groups in this process as they could get involved in different phases – such as designing, planting or maintaining the new pocket park. We would also like to congratulate all the winners of the local area competition and the DCC Northwest Area city neighbourhoods competition and we look forward to seeing the winning entrants soon.

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

It is clear from your application form that a range of projects have been undertaken under this category including painting murals on hoardings (beside the silver springs nursing home and Apriles), painting the glass recycling bins outside the library, landscape planting at Santry cross, creating a wild flower strip on the median along Balbutcher Lane and providing the first cycle led traffic junction on the northwest approach road. The maintenance of planters and planting schemes on approach roads are also acknowledged. In the view of the adjudicator, these projects will have helped to improve the appearance of the approach roads into Ballymun and create a positive first impression for the visitor.

**Concluding Remarks:**

The 2021 tidy towns application for Ballymun has revealed that the collective efforts of your committee, the residents, volunteer groups and your project partners have led to significant progress being made in your area over the last two years - despite the difficulties created by the pandemic. Well done on a very good performance in this year's competition and we look forward to returning in 2022.