

# Tidy Towns Competition 2024

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dundalk - Dún Dealgan** Ref: **494**  
County: **Louth** Mark: **371**  
Category: **H** Date(s): **16/07/2024**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2023</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2024</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	58	60
Streetscape & Public Places	80	51	53
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	47	49
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	38	40
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	27	29
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	56	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	39	40
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	41	43
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>371</b>

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

“Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu don bhliain 2024. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór...” It is a pleasure to visit the Inclusive Town of Dundalk, exciting new initiatives for further inclusivity is anticipated; age-friendly seating featured in the small amenity space shared by the Museum and the library is welcome as is wheelchair friendly carparking spaces at the entrance, future installations should include this type of seating throughout the town to make Dundalk a universally accessible destination. The hosting of Dundalk Pride in 2023 and the St Patricks Day Parade is laudable. The relatively small committee of ten has good community representation and there is a good volunteer base to call upon for a variety of Tidy Towns work. Further support is forthcoming from the long list of stakeholders in the future development of the town. The scope of communication channels utilized ensures that Tidy Towns updates are available to all. The committee's relationship with the town's 32 schools is fruitful and we note that all participate in the Green Flag Schools programme; a similar strong working relationship with Resident's Associations is noteworthy. The Sustainability Showcase organised by the Credit Union is an excellent initiative that will bring community benefits in the long term.

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

Attractive streetscapes are a feature of Dundalk's town centre with little or no overhead service cables along some streets and well-maintained street furniture including streetlighting on attractive lamp standards. The majority of buildings present a good roadside facade and there are many beautiful shopfronts however, too many utilize window roller security shutters which diminish visual amenity. A number of three-story properties along Clanbrassil Street look superb with their chosen colour scheme. The derelict building survey and planned action is excellent. The Seeks Urban Arts Festival with its emphasis on the transformation of walls with murals is an interesting and colourful visual experience; continuous removal of graffiti is favourably noted. Both 'St Nicholas' Quarter' and the 'Long Walk Quarter' regeneration projects will impact the visual amenity of the townscape upon completion; no doubt universal accessibility will be a feature of both. Public buildings enjoy an excellent presentation and the Ramparts project with its ecology study for the town centre will enhance this area of the town. Heritage banners and Victorian signage are appealing; a loose banner on a post on Park Street was noted.

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

Dundalk's two Green Flag Parks are being maintained to a high standard and both were enjoyed on adjudication; the children's playground is a lovely feature of St Helena's Park. Additional maps / information boards are suggested for Ice House Hill Park, perhaps one just inside each entrance. The Castletown Riverwalk with outdoor gym is a delightful experience also and the Clark's Memorial Garden is noteworthy. Green space management

throughout the town is to a high standard, some areas are managed for visual amenity and some for biodiversity. Tree management is good too; what looks like (to your adjudicator) a magnificent Monterey Cypress was spotted near an entrance to Ice House Hill Park with another very old tree seen inside the park both of which deserve highlighting; consideration might be given to the creation of a Tree Trail throughout the town! Well done on the planting of 30 new trees at Navi Bank for National Tree Week and on the creation of Pocket Forests / Parklets. 200,000 bulbs planted on roundabouts and throughout the town since 2020 is an impressive undertaking by any standard. Planters within the town centre were admired both for their floral displays and their pollinator friendly status. The information panel at the Thomas Coulter Memorial Garden on his legacy should be refurbished to make it more legible.

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

The five new wildflower beds on Ecco's Road with their Pocket Forests, edible beds and native saplings are an excellent biodiversity initiative. The new Rampart River Ecology Study / Assessment will no doubt guide future biodiversity actions. The Pollinator Patch at the pumping Station Fairy Garden which involved schoolchildren in its creation is a wonderful initiative. The installation of beehives in collaboration with Louth Beekeepers together with the Swift boxes project in collaboration with the Men's Shed are invaluable for pollinators, people and promoting awareness. The Dundalk Inclusive Garden project with its goal to engage all levels of ability and backgrounds is exemplary as is the Sensory Garden installation at St Vincent's Secondary School. Your No-Mow May regime now in its 6th year is well established; has an assessment been undertaken on outcomes? The FIT (flower timed Insect) count is a fun way to assess interventions for biodiversity, details can be found on biodiversity .i.e. The following links may also be useful with information on old walls and commercial wild flower seed mixes. Old Walls: <https://dnfc.net/2024/02/07/protecting-the-threatened-flora-of-old-walls/> Seed Mixes: <https://dnfc.net/wildflower-seed-mixtures/> A notice-board on what to feed / not feed to wildfowl in Ice House Hill Park pond should be installed. The biodiversity kits distributed to resident's sound interesting, is there feedback available on their use?

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

The study of people's perceptions of the mud in Dundalk Bay is an interesting and intriguing project which no doubt we will hear more of in years to come; that mud can potentially store carbon and help slow climate change is an exciting area of research and hopefully, action. There are many reduce, reuse and recycle and upcycle initiatives ongoing within Dundalk and the towns recycling figures for 2023 are encouraging. The Redeemer FC Swap Shop for previously used and loved football boots together with the Vintage Shop and Bridal Boutique are excellent examples of reuse whilst the reduction in plastic usage within schools and sports clubs accompanied by trees planted with every order of bottles are well informed examples of reduce; upcycling is not forgotten either with the Ukraine Bike Appeal. Climate Action Talks in schools coupled with members of the Tidy Towns group attending a variety of training sessions on Sustainability, the availability of Home Energy Saving Kits from the library, the Social Media Awareness Week with its emphasis on a variety of sustainability topics will make a significant contribution to increasing awareness of the importance of energy savings and its impact on climate change. Improvements to energy efficiencies in County Hall and in public lighting are noteworthy. Well done to the pupils of Realt Na Mara for their Sustainability and Biodiversity Pledge. Have there been recorded outcomes of the Sustainability Show orchestrated by the Credit Union earlier in the year? The 20 EV charging points throughout the town and the mattress and sofa amnesty have also been taken into account.

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

The overall appearance of Dundalk was good in respect of litter and weeds; there were some shortfalls such as along the N52 however this was not a serious outbreak. A notable exception was a stairwell to a basement area of a building on Earl Street which was very badly littered and looked as if it had never been swept! There was a fair number of weedy outbreaks on hard surfaced areas around the town centre. your Adopt a Patch initiative appears effective in managing litter control together with new bins and anti-litter signs; some bins have yet to be replaced / refurbished. Participation in the National Spring Clean and events such as the Dundalk River clean-up is exemplary. Well done to the residents of Marion Park for weekly litter picks. Is litter segregated for recycling? has the source, type and frequency of litter been established? Is the amount collected on the increase or decrease? The answers to these questions could possibly be used to devise a strategy that may reduce time and labour involved in litter picking.

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

Residential areas that were admired include Pearse Park for its landscaping for biodiversity, terraced dwellings along Willaimson Place for the charm they bring to this town centre location, an attractive terrace of single storey dwellings located across from the Ice House Hill Park for their overall presentation. Well done to residents of St Nicholas Avenue for their organizing of trips for children and seniors and to Riverside Drive for their new planting. Appreciation is extended to Louth County Council for making grants available to residents for the maintenance of their areas. The Fatima Anniversary Garden which features pollinator friendly planting, newly constructed stonewalls and benches from recycled plastic is favourably noted.

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

Beautifully maintained roadside verges with maturing trees are an attractive feature of the N52 and are an excellent introduction to Dundalk. We wish you success on the outcome of your submission on the feasibility study for the Active Travel project on the R132 and hopefully you will be in a position to progress to the preliminary design stage

in the near future. Both the 'car-park' and the 'laneway' projects where a commitment of resources is made for their presentation and maintenance will work to enhance the town centre significantly. Congratulations on being the first town in Ireland to undertake a town centre 'health check' to make it more family friendly, this is a 'first' for your adjudicator. The 50,000 visitors that arrived in Dundalk for the Brigid of Faugherty Festival in 2023 must have been impressed with your lovely town centre with its landscaping, lighting, murals, colour scheme and so much more. Footpaths along Clanbrassil Street look really well, public seating appears adequate for needs however more age-friendly seating should be provided, carparking is well organised and there are adequate bicycle stands available. Road medians and traffic islands should have their black and yellow kerbing refurbished regularly.

**Concluding Remarks:**

Dundalk appears to be a very vibrant and youthful town where everyone plays their part in maintaining the environment to the highest standard for both people and pollinators. The commitment to making the town inclusive for all is excellent and we look forward to your progress in this respect.