

The International Awards for Liveable Communities 2012

Summary for Submission for Moynalty, Co Meath. Ireland

Moynalty is a small village in County Meath, Ireland. The residents of Moynalty have been very active for many years now in working together to create a strong cohesive community in this rural setting.

In addition to being a strikingly picturesque setting, Moynalty has a strong, vibrant community with excellent facilities throughout.

The village life caters for all residents and visitors with a vast range of facilities for young and old, from the state of the art National School, to the vast range of social activities including bowling, angling, football, soccer, tennis, walking, cycling, drama, history and karate. There are many volunteers within the village who give up their time to support these activities. There are many thriving small businesses in the village too, strongly supported by the local community.



Moynalty Village, Co Meath Summer 2012

The submission for Moynalty was developed by all sections of the community and was co-ordinated by the Moynalty Tidy Towns. The people of Moynalty are very proud of their history, heritage and the unique landscape which they inhabit.

They are protective of their environment and are always making plans to further develop their area for the betterment of the local community. They are skilled at developing and implementing projects and use the wide range of skills available locally to best effect. Of all the wonderful assets the village has to offer, its people may well be their best one yet.

**The International Awards
for Liveable Communities 2012
Whole City Awards**



Village of Moynalty Submission

Submitted on behalf of the people of Moynalty & Local Tidy Towns Committee by:

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Introduction

Moynalty is a small village located in the North-West corner of county Meath. The Parish of Moynalty has a population of 1550 people and the village is located on the banks of the River Borora and is 45 miles from Dublin, Irelands capital city. Moynalty translates to the Gaelic Mágh nEalta, meaning Plain of the Flocks. Moynalty is surrounded by mature woodland and agricultural landscapes. The village, built in the 1820s by James Farrell, replaced an older and more humbler settlement. James Farrell built the village with a Swiss influence in mind and this is particularly evident in the Lodge, located at the lower-end of the village. The village of Moynalty is bookended by two Churches. The Church of Ireland (present day Credit Union), situated at the top of the village to the East, was built in 1790 and was closed in 1994. The adjoining graveyard served the community of Moynalty for almost 100 years and it is now closed. The Catholic Church is located at the lower end of the village to the West. It was built on lands donated by James Farrell in 1820. It continues to serve the Catholic community of Moynalty. In the wake of the new Millennium the bells of both Churches were tolled in harmony, thus symbolising the unity between both Religious communities.



The Lodge at Moynalty Summer 2012

Since its formation in 1975, the Moynalty Tidy Towns Committee has enjoyed much success at the annual National Tidy Towns Competition, this success was culminated with the reward we received last year “The Best Kept Town in Ireland”. In 2004 Moynalty took part and received a Gold Medal from the European Competition, the Entente Florale. We are also favoured with receiving a Gold Medal from the annual Tidy Towns Competition. We, the people of Moynalty, are proud and honoured with our continued Gold Medal status.

Moynalty has been a frontrunner in both the Pride of Place and Anti- Litter League competitions, sponsored by Meath County Council.

Every August Moynalty is host to the annual Steam Threshing festival. This event attracts on average 30,000 people each year. This event displays the traditional methods used by farmers, centuries ago. There is a massive demonstration of old vintage agricultural farm machinery. This event is the largest and most diverse of its kind in the country.

In 1957 a guild of Muintir na Tíre was formed in Moynalty. Its aim was to promote community cohesion and to foster a sense of neighbourliness within the community. It was from the Moynalty Muintir na Tíre that such committees like the Tidy Towns and Threshing Committee were born. In 2007 Moynalty Muintir na Tíre celebrated its Golden Jubilee, it was 50 years in existence in the locality and to mark the event, the Former President of Ireland, Mrs Mary Mc Aleese visited our village thus being the first Presidential visit to Moynalty.

Enhancement of Natural and Built Landscapes

The Threshing Field is just south of the village and the River Borora meanders its way through its undulating plain. This field is fortified with a public walkway and picnic facilities. The walkway is enhanced with mature trees and hedgerows along with the babbling waters of the Borora. In order to enrich biodiversity, bird boxes, bat boxes owl boxes and ‘insect hotels’ are all placed strategically around the park land and village areas. The Credit Union building was appropriately refurbished in 1994 after its deconsecration as a Church of Ireland. The adjoining graveyard is now closed and serves as a thriving wildlife sanctuary. An apiary was established in 2010 by a local member of the community at the bottom of the graveyard and is thriving here, within these ancient walls.



Wildlife sanctuary at the Old Church Yard

There are numerous wildlife gardens positioned tactically throughout the village which aid in creating a safe environment for birds, small mammals, invertebrates and insects. The stonework on the Bridge crossing the Borora was restored tastefully. This bridge is an important and imperative area for Daubenton's bats that wish to feed close to the water.



The Borora River in Moynalty

The approach roads to the village are adorned by colourful herbaceous planting while the houses within the village boast prosperous floral hanging baskets and flower beds. The village sky-scape is cable-free due to the initiatives of the Moynalty Tidy Towns Group. New lamp posts and footpaths improve the Moynalty landscape. These lights are energy efficient and improve the aesthetic appearance of the village. All signage within the village retain an old-fashioned exterior form, and signs have black and white sleeves. All street furniture is annually repainted black.

There is special attention and care shown to the conservation of native Irish hedgerows which are so evident around our village. Hedge layering is a common practise throughout our village and we at Moynalty Tidy Towns promote the safeguarding and management of native Irish hedgerows and trees. In recent years Moynalty Tidy Towns in conjunction with local farmers planted 2500 native Irish trees in the surrounding regions. We at Moynalty understand the history attached to trees and note the ancient age of the Yew trees located in the old graveyard adjacent to the Credit Union. In the last decade a comprehensive tree survey and tree trail were compiled and are available to all tourists that visit our village.

From the mid 1970s the people of Moynalty were eager to improve the appearance of the village and therefore it was decided in 1976 to dismantle the existing Television aerials which occurred on most buildings, and to replace them with one single aerial that situated at the rear

of the village. This project was completed by a local entrepreneur and this system is still in existence and continues to free the Moynalty landscape of unsightly cables and wires.

There are two housing estates located within the vicinity of Moynalty village. There are successful Resident Associations at both estates that work in close co-ordination with the Tidy Towns group. Both have large green areas and flower beds which are maintained by the residents themselves.

Arts, Culture and Heritage

Moynalty has a flourishing Art Group, this group meets weekly and has frequent exhibitions for the local community. There are 30 members and the community is very appreciative for their artistic efforts. In 2007 at a monthly Moynalty Muintir na Tíre meeting, it was decided to establish a Drama Group, it was here that a little seed was planted in the minds of people and now it has developed into a thriving organisation. To begin, a small loan was provided to the young fledging group by Muintir na Tíre to get them started. From these small beginnings they have gone from strength to strength. They hold performances annually over a long Spring weekend, and it has proven to be very positive and successful. The crowds have been large since its formation. The three schools in the locality also hold several productions each year for the local people.

Music plays a crucial role in the daily lives of the people of Moynalty. From the ancient Church choir to the new and upcoming bands of the 21st century that have origins in Moynalty, music is evident no matter where one looks in Moynalty. We are fortunate enough to have internationally acclaimed Musicians take part in Church ceremonies during the year including Matthew Gilsenan, one of the acclaimed Irish Tenors and internationally renowned singer Deirdre Shannon, who have local links with Moynalty. We are also privileged to have three highly talented harpists live in Moynalty, that likewise take part in various local events throughout the year.

Culture is a highly significant and important aspect to life in Moynalty. Irish traditional culture is promoted and endorsed by our three local schools. Children of all ages have the opportunity to attend Irish dancing classes and Irish language classes in the local community centre. There is a popular group of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann which are a national group that promote the use of the Irish language, Irish traditional music and Irish cultural traditions generally. Moynalty Tidy Towns try to use the Irish language in as many mediums as possible. Signs throughout the village are written in both the Irish and English languages. There have been poetry recitals, both in English and ‘as Gaeilge’ in recent years by local interested members of the community.

Irish heritage reaches a certain climax each August when ancient agricultural traditions are re-inacted by local people at the annual Steam Threshing Festival. The attending crowds are witness to these ancient customs and techniques of farming and crop harvesting. The Threshing Festival began in 1976 and is now attracting up to 30,000 visitors each year.

In 2004 the Steam Threshing Committee decided to build a centre to house their many antiques and artefacts. It is now a thriving museum and is a focal point to all the visitors that come to Moynalty. In fact this museum was host to tourists from as far as America and Australia.



Local People preparing the crops for Threshing during the festival 2011



In 1984 there was a rich discovery of Bronze Age Artefacts near the banks of the Borora River. Six pieces in all, were discovered and they are housed in the National History Museum in Dublin, our capital city. In 2011 it was decided to commemorate this discovery by placing a large illustration on a shop wall, the imagery depicts the history and includes local artwork of the artefacts.

In 2012, the Moynalty Tidy Towns Group decided to commemorate the ancient tradition of the “Hedge School”. The Penal Laws deprived Catholics of many civil rights including Education and Religion. The poor children of Ireland were educated in these hedge schools

by wandering scholars. Classes were held in the shelter of a hedge or ditch. Hedge schools flourished in the early 1800s. So in the spirit of historical commemoration, the Tidy Towns Group assembled a Hedge-School replica, to show our appreciation to our forbearers that educated the poor children of rural Ireland. The hedge school is located in the Threshing Field.

In 2011 the Tidy Towns Group refurbished an old phone kiosk and inserted a Visual monitor and DVD player to transform it to a modern Information Point. Two members of the community produced a film for all the tourists that come to Moynalty. This was one of the numerous innovative projects completed by the Moynalty Tidy Towns Group in recent years.

In 1994 a Student Summer Job Scheme commenced and four young members of the community compiled a detailed map of the old graveyard in Moynalty Village. The map included the names of all the deceased people that were buried here, the age, the address and the date of death. It remains a comprehensive and helpful record of all our ancestors buried here. In recent years the Moynalty Tidy Towns with the assistance of Moynalty Historical Society encased this map in a protective sealed frame to protect against the harsh elements. It was mounted on a large piece of limestone and is used by members of our community and those from further a field researching their family tree.

In 2001 a detailed and comprehensive Heritage Trail was compiled by the local Historical Society in conjunction with our local authority - Meath County Council. The trail continues to interest visitors that come to Moynalty and is widely available throughout the village and on the Moynalty Tidy Towns website.

During National Heritage week interested groups and individuals hold special events in the village. In recent years a series of talks were given by a local historian during Heritage Week. The subject of the talks ranged from the history of the old graveyards in the area to Bat Conservation.

In addition, two members of the Moynalty Historical Society produced two DVDs. The subject of the first was a local poet – Patrick Byrne (1891-1971) *Patrick Byrne – Life and Times*. The second was the broad subject of the relationship between the Moynalty people and stone down through the centuries. It was entitled “*Moynalty Written in Stone*”. The proceeds of both DVDs went to local charities.

In 1984 Valentine Farrell, a descendent of James Farrell, founder of the Village, wrote a book entitled ‘Not So Much to One Side’. The book is a comprehensive local history about the village dealing with the past and present, the local people, the humour, the tragedy, the gossip and the vigour of rural Irish life. Nearly every house in Moynalty would have a copy of this book, often with references to their own ancestors contained within.

Moynalty Muintir na Tíre expressed deep interest in an upcoming national project called “The Gathering” which will be held in 2013. This initiative sets out to welcome Irish emigrants abroad back to Ireland. Moynalty Muintir na Tíre have registered their interest and are currently awaiting further information.

The Moynalty people as a whole have a deep and close affinity with their heritage and were very conscience of the conservation of their heritage during the Celtic Tiger and Building Boom of the 2000s. Thankfully the heritage of Moynalty was not compromised during this period opting only for sustainable housing development.

Environmental Best Practices

Waste management is key objective of the Moynalty Tidy Towns Group. Our local Community Recycling Bank is located at the rear of the Community Centre. Here members of the public can recycle used bottles, cans and clothes as well as garden waste (see photo below). Members of the Junior Tidy Towns Group recently purchased a paper Briquette Maker for reusing newspapers as a fuel source. The Junior Tidy Towns offer the briquette maker on loan to local people and this initiative has proved very successful. There are litter pick-ups carried out twice daily on all the approach roads and all the litter collected is recycled. In 2011 it was decided to remove all the bins in the village. The thinking behind this initiative was if there were no bins, people would bring their waste home, rather than littering. Thus making Moynalty the first Binless Village in Ireland. This was a very successful and positive step for the Moynalty Tidy Towns Committee.

The Tidy Towns Group have provided garden composters to several households in Moynalty, they also provided workshops on the correct methods of composting to the community. Every year the Moynalty Tidy Towns carries out a Waste Management Survey for Households, Businesses and Schools. The findings of the survey are a sure sign that knowledge about Waste Management is on the increase among the local community.



The question of water conservation and hydro-electrical power is very familiar to the people of Moynalty because in 1984 a local entrepreneur installed a Dam on the River Borora. This dam has generated power for his house and shop for almost 30 years. Moynalty Muintir na Tire have installed a Water Harvesting system on the Community Centre. The water collected from the roof is then used in the toilets. The Moynalty Tidy Towns supplied 14 water butts to

local households. People can then use the harvested water for watering hanging baskets and flower beds. One of the recommendations of the Moynalty Tidy Towns Group was the issue of 'Toilet Hippos'. It was discovered that almost 5 litres of water can be conserved by placing a 'Hippo' in a toilet cistern. This has been adopted by all the residents of Moynalty. We have received a lot of practical advice from Duncan Stewart who is a high profile national Environmentalist. There have been numerous workshops and presentations on Waste Management and Water Conservation in recent years.



One of our approach roads

All street lights are equipped with energy efficient bulbs. The Moynalty Tidy Towns Group promotes the use of energy efficient light bulbs in local households. Now due to the efforts of the Tidy Towns Group all households are using energy efficient light bulbs.

In 2003 we introduced a "No Herbicide" policy within the village. We understand that the use of herbicides are a threat to the natural environment.

Moynalty Tidy Towns are working in conjunction with the three schools in Moynalty to introduce a "WOW"- Walk on Wednesday policy. This has proven highly successful and radically reduced the number of cars travelling each day to the three schools. In recent years a Cycling Club has been set up to promote a healthy life as well as reducing the overall carbon footprint. Each week the cycling club meet and go on group cycles. There are almost 50 local people involved in the cycling club. The Tidy Towns encourage and support the work of the cycling club.

All communication in voluntary organisation in Moynalty is completed via Electronic mediums. Members are E-mailed and texted agendas and reminders before all meetings.

In 2011 Moynalty were granted a new school to replace the older and less energy efficient school.



Our new school in Moynalty and children at work in the school garden

The new school is strictly Eco-friendly and is equipped with solar panels and water harvesting devices. There are composting and recycling facilities at the new school. All three schools in Moynalty have received several Green flags, to honour their zealous and passionate efforts. In fact all three schools are currently pursuing special Biodiversity flags.



The new school in Moynalty is unique in that it has been built to PassivHaus Standard. This involves a number of challenging aspects to the building like the high levels of insulation, the window glazing, energy efficiency, rain water harvesting, triple glazing, Co2 sensors in the rooms. The resulting building is therefore hugely energy efficient and extremely eco-friendly in its running and has received an A rating certificate. There are at present only two other commercial buildings to this standard in Ireland.

Community Participation and Empowerment

Moynalty has a great sense of community spirit and cohesion. All organisations in Moynalty work together to foster a sense of pride within the community. These organisations are:

1. Muintir na Tíre (translation from Irish is ‘Family of the Land’)
2. Moynalty Tidy Towns
3. Steam Threshing Committee
4. Moynalty G.F.C. (Gaelic Football Club)
5. Soccer Club
6. Tennis Club
7. Angling Club
8. Gun Club
9. Active Retirement
10. I.C.A. (Irish Countrywomans Association)
11. Art Group
12. Comhaltas Ceoltóirí
13. Drama Group
14. Girl Guides
15. Credit Union
16. Karate Club
17. Macra na Feirme (‘Sons of the land’ – Social club for rurally based young people)
18. Book Club
19. Cycling Club
20. Community Alert (Neighbour Watch)
21. Historical Society
22. Residents Association
23. Bowling Club
24. S.H.E.D. Project (Project aimed at encouraging social, activity based outlet for Men)

Moynalty Tidy Towns has been going strong since its formation in 1975 and as previously mentioned, the Tidy Towns group received one of the highest and most coveted prizes in Ireland, the “Best Kept Town in Ireland” award. This award was well deserved by all involved. All projects that are taken on by any organisation are helped by the other voluntary groups. Residents living in Moynalty take immense pride in their own areas. All gardens and housing estates are maintained by the residents themselves.

The sporting organisations keep the local community health conscious. All levels, young and old are catered for by the sports groups in Moynalty. The local community centre is aptly located in the heart of Moynalty village. The centre is used extensively by several voluntary organisations. Karate, Book Club meetings, Community Alert and Muintir na Tíre meetings are all held here weekly, throughout the year.

The Community Alert group provide safety alarms to the older and more vulnerable members of society. In the event that they feel in danger they can press the alarm system and their

family are immediately contacted. This service offers complete peace of mind to older members of the local community. There is a thriving Active Retirement group that meet every month and their meetings are held in the Community Centre. The group frequently go on tours throughout the year. In December each year the Muintir na Tíre hold a special Christmas dinner for all members of the community that are retired.

Fundraising events are held all year round, for the local voluntary organisations. The cycling club hold an annual barbecue in the Threshing museum. In previous years the proceeds were donated to the National Rehabilitation Hospital and in 2011 the proceeds went to fight child poverty (Barnardo's). In 2011 the Tidy Towns group held a Duck Derby which was a great success and was enjoyed by all. The local branch of G.A.A. holds a weekly lottery and every year raffle a young calf. All organisations within Moynalty are supported by the local community.

Healthy Lifestyle

We are very lucky to be located in beautiful and picturesque area of Ireland, with fresh unpolluted air in abundance. The river walk is extensively used by young and old that come to enjoy the scenic views around Moynalty village. During the summer months the picnic areas are used regularly by locals and tourists.



In 2012 an outdoor gym was installed, near the tennis courts (pictured above, June 2012), with the assistance of Meath County Council and many local organisations. This facility is being used by young and old and is a great asset to the people of Moynalty.

There is a thriving Bowling club that has almost 20 members and they regularly compete in National competitions. The Active Retirement Group is in constant communication with Health Professionals and Dieticians, and they hold regular talks and presentations on healthy living and eating. The Active Retirement Group also provides a weekly bus service for its

members. The bus brings older people to hospital appointments and regularly brings people shopping.

We feel that the involvement of people generally, in the work around the village, increases their morale and helps them feel part of their community. In 2011 a Defibrillator course was held in the Community Centre and there was a large attendance. After the course two defibrillators were purchased and one was placed in a central location in the village and the other is available in the G.A.A. grounds. The Order of Malta have recently set up a branch in Moynalty, they will work in close communication with the wider community and will hold First Aid and C.P.R. courses in the future. The cycling club hold weekly cycling events and provide all the necessary safety equipment. There are nearly 50 members of the local community involved in these activities.



New Equipment for outdoor exercise at the Threshing Field, Moynalty

There are many sporting opportunities for young and old in our Village, with a highly successful Gaelic Football Club, Soccer Club, Tennis Club, Badminton, Cycling, Karate, Running and Angling available to all interested individuals. There are many committed volunteers who make their time available every day of the week to assist in the smooth running of these clubs – fund raising, developing facilities, training, arranging competitions, promoting their sport and celebrating their clubs achievements. All young children are encouraged at school to take part in these activities and the clubs cater from young minors taking up the sport for the first time up to the highly skilled senior players. Many young people who have moved through these clubs have gone on to represent their County and Country.

All sporting organisations within Moynalty promote healthy living and ensure all environments are alcohol, drug and tobacco free. All organisations are very vigilant to drug

and alcohol issues when dealing with young people. Healthy food is provided and promoted in all three schools in Moynalty to ensure the children of Moynalty get a balanced diet.

Strategic Planning

Every year Moynalty Tidy Towns renew and revise their Development Plan. This plan tries to set out the general objectives of the Tidy Towns in Moynalty and is proving to be a very worthwhile exercise. We also work very closely with Meath County Council in planning a strategic vision for the future development of Moynalty. Every 5 years the County Council develops a Plan in which they set out their vision for an area. The people of Moynalty are given an opportunity to propose amendments to the Draft Development Plan. We work closely with our local elected representatives also to ensure that the wishes and needs of the local community are reflected in these important documents.

Each year we update our Tidy Towns Three Year Plan for the Village. This results in a meaningful document year on year setting out realistic goals and objectives, based on available resources. It allows us to include new initiatives as they evolve. We constantly communicate and nurture existing relationships with the many organisations in our village to ensure that we are at the top of our game and that the projects we undertake are both innovative, sustainable and of benefit to the whole community.

One of the objectives included in the Tidy Towns Plan is the concept of developing our woodlands. Our proposal is to construct walkways throughout the surrounding wooded areas, encouraging visitors and local people to use the village for rural recreational pastimes. Funding is available from the Rural Development Agency for this type of activity and we plan to submit a proposal to benefit from these funds and to increase tourism related benefits to our community.

The village of Moynalty has not been immune to the recession across the globe, and many of our young people have been made redundant from their employment. There is a community employment scheme in the village, supported by the many community and voluntary groups. It is an opportunity to provide work experience to these young people, and in some cases it is an opportunity for young people to re-train in a new area with a view to finding permanent employment in the near future. We are consciously promoting 'shop local' in our community also, ensuring that the services that are available locally are supported and will remain viable in the future.

The residents of Moynalty enjoy an unspoiled environment with very many ancient and modern developments in a lush and tranquil setting. It is a vibrant, friendly, proud, inclusive and forward thinking community. We always welcome new and sustainable development in the area for new people who wish to live and participate in our community. We realise that any future development has to be sensitive to the heritage and character of Moynalty and that it is up to us, as a community, to work together to share, shape and enjoy our very special place.

Visit www.moynaltytidytowns.ie