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Association Européenne pour le Fleurissement et le Paysage / aisbl

# Entente Florale Europe

## Assessment Report 2013



Assessment report 2013

Page 1 of

Name of the Entry:

Reported by:

Date of visit:

Clonegal, Co. Carlow

Dr. Christy Boylan

25<sup>th</sup> July 2013**Sec 1 Planned / development approach**

There was a great atmosphere, everyone was involved. The setting for deliberations was amazing. The 3 year plans were considered remarkable for such a small place.

**Sec 2 Environment**

It was felt that the various criteria had been well covered. Water quality was mentioned, restrictions on chemicals, the Community Garden impressed. Rain water collection and composting activity was very good.

Maintenance of unoccupied buildings greatly impressed as did the charming streetscape. The relationship of the new buildings with the old was considered very good in maintaining the village atmosphere. They expressed a view that footpaths would change this to a more urban area and that was not favoured. The use of a shop window for medals/certificates was noted as was the photographic survey.

**Sec 3 Landscape**

It was easy to find an interface with the rural surroundings and the view from the sports fields particularly impressed. They were pleased to see the emphasis on use of native species, especially the oaks planted beside the Derry river. The biodiversity study was a good approach and the beginning of a new awareness and education.

**Sec 4 Open green spaces**

There was a good standard of maintenance of the various open spaces including the cemetery, community garden and river and they realised that all spaces were managed by the local community. The garden at the Weaver's Cottage impressed while the appearance of individual private gardens was variable and that is a personal matter for the residents. They felt that the tarmac areas at the community centre and church looked a little bare and would benefit from softening with trees. The size of the sports area in relation to the size of the community impressed and they were pleased with the native vegetation along the hedgerows. The Wicklow Way park with its informative signage and wheelchair access was also noted.

**Sec 5 Permanent Planting**

The jury were delighted with the range of tree species at the castle and suggested that they should be publicised more to attract visitors to Clonegal. They suggested that attention be paid to trees at the river and some dead branches at St. Fiac's Church. Jury members also approved of the emphasis given to permanent planting including roses.

**Sec 6 Seasonal Planting**

Seasonal planting at the school was noted and the involvement of children and their parents in the competition was considered novel. There was a good balance of seasonal planting between bedding and hanging baskets. In particular, they liked the Nasturtiums and plants in containers but suggested that black is not a good choice of colour for containers. The combination of flowers and vegetables in the garden at the Weaver's Cottage was of particular interest.

**Sec 7 Environmental education**

Children at the school demonstrated their various activities from the bedding plant competition, the composting project, the herb garden, the vegetable and fruit sections, the wall murals and discussion on the various rocks in the small rockery. Their dedication and knowledge in spite of the driving rain was of great interest to members of the jury. They could see that the gardens were there for some time and felt that the children spoke with great confidence which showed that they had not just learned off the material for the day. The use of the school grounds for environmental education was considered an example of best practice particularly when combined with the garden at the Weaver's Cottage and the Community Garden which as was explained is aimed at adults.

**Sec 8 Effort and involvement**

This section was agreed without discussion as all were agreed that the entire community contribute to the success of Clonegal.

**Sec 9 Tourism and leisure**

The natural environment of Clonegal was considered ideal for tourism, especially outdoor pursuits such as fishing, pony trekking, walking and cycling. The award winning local restaurant which supplied the food for the meeting was noted and appreciated. They considered the castle and grounds as having great potential for further developing tourism in the area.

**Sec 10 Presentation**

The information presented was very good and clear and the slides were very good. They saw the press reviews and the Entente Florale flag on top of the castle impressed them greatly. The organisation of the visit was regarded as very good and the timing was perfect.