



# CLONEGAL ENTENTE FLORALE 2013



## Fáilte Romhat - Welcome



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## Clonegal ~ Cluain na nGall

Clonegal is really delighted and honoured to be invited into the Entente Florale Europe 2013.



The village of Cluain na nGall (pronounced: **KLOH-nə-gawl** from Irish) or in English, “the Meadow of the Stranger”. This could have originated from the time that Cromwell’s soldiers fought the Irish in the village in 1650 after which all Irish surviving males were put to the sword. Some hold that it came from foreign students who came to study in a monastery near the village.

The location of this gem of unspoiled beauty is on the Carlow/Wexford border about a little over a mile (1.6 km) north of where the rivers Slaney and Derry meet. As for the parish itself it is situated where the three counties of Carlow, Wicklow and Wexford meet. There is about the same amount of land of each county in the parish, roughly something over 3.64 ha (9,000 acres). The total area of land covered by the parish is 11.33 ha (28,204 acres). The population of the village is 245 and the hinterland is 982.

The mountains, the valleys and the rivers, the fishing and the shooting facilities have made this village at the end of the Wicklow Way Long Distance Walking Route a favourite stopping place over the years. With a backdrop of tree clad hills, this pretty historic village is a joy to walk in, explore and discover. Clonegal Castle or Huntington Castle is known worldwide and has been the setting for many TV documentaries

Clonegal has a much smaller "twin" village across the River Derry in County Wexford, Watch House Village. It once had eleven malt houses in and around the village, along with a wool and corn store, a police station and other shops.

### Planned / Development approach

Clonegal is a magical place to visit and live in. The growing town of Clonegal has been based on the *Sraid Bhaile* (street-town) concept. Located in a rural agricultural community the beauty and greenery of the countryside with working farms surrounds you. Clonegal is an attractive and historic town primarily suited to cater for local residential retail needs with provision for an increasing tourist population.

Carlow County Council's Local Area Plan 2007-2013 provides for the proper planning and sustainable development of Clonegal for this period while also promoting the aims of national policy and objectives. The plan sets out lands that will be suitable for possible development during the plan period. The approach is based on the need to identify the entire development area and zone lands for development in those areas while:

- Zoning lands for development purposes that will provide for a range and mix of uses and set out urban design and development control objectives for their development,
- Zone individual sites for a range of residential, industrial and community purposes where appropriate
- Identify infrastructure works of local and regional benefit.

This approach is the most effective mechanism to allow for the development of Clonegal in a controlled manner that will maximize the potential of town centre and environs development.

Clonegal Tidy Village Association has also developed a three year action plan.

## Environment

### ***Natural Environment***

Clonegal's environment is a key strategic resource and asset and must be protected and managed to ensure that it continues to be the basis for our health, our wellbeing and a sustainable economy. Protecting and managing Clonegal's environment is a shared responsibility. It involves Government and public bodies; businesses and industry; as well as members of the public, working in partnership.

### ***The Derry River***



The Derry River (Irish: An Dioríoch) so called because the river flows through the Leveroch forest which was about 80% oak, rises just south of Hacketstown, County Carlow. It flows southeast to Tinahely, being accompanied by the R747 regional road for the distance. South of Tinahely it turns sharply and flows southwest through Shillelagh, briefly forming the border between County Wicklow and County

Wexford, before becoming the border between County Wexford and County Carlow.

It is primarily regarded as a spawning river for the Slaney. The Derry River holds small brown trout averaging 6 ounces. It flows under *Clonegal Bridge* at a point where it divides Clonegal, County Carlow to the west from Watch House Village,

County Wexford, to the east. A few kilometers further downstream it flows into the River Slaney.

## Water Quality

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is a statutory body responsible for protecting the environment in Ireland. They regulate and police activities that might otherwise cause pollution. They ensure there is solid information on environmental trends so that necessary actions are taken. Their priorities are protecting the Irish environment and ensuring that development is sustainable.

The EPA conducts audits and inspection and oversees the local authorities' environmental protection responsibilities in the areas of - air, noise, waste, wastewater and water quality. The EPA carries out raw water testing in the Derry River on a quarterly basis. Carlow County Council monitor the quality of the river by taking regular upstream and downstream samples. A new Water Treatment Plant was provided by Carlow County Council in 2009. The plant was designed so that additional capacity can be added at the site with relative ease in the future if the need arises. The treatment works consists of the following treatment processes: Fine screening; Biological treatment; Grit Removal; Sludge removal and Tertiary treatment. Herbicides and pesticides are not used near the river Derry and the landowners near the river are in REPS.

The results of sampling for the River Derry for 2011 listed below give a Water Framework Status of "Good". (WFD status range has 5 classes, High, Good, Moderate, Poor and Bad)

Station No. 0900 Clonegal Br	Tributary of R. Slaney				
	County Carlow /Wexford	Location Code 12D02-0900	Grid Ref S 918 609		
Sample Number	1100941	1101824	1102762	1103976	1104823
Date Sampled	21-Feb-11	12-Apr-11	14-Jun-11	23-Aug-11	11-Oct-11
Time Sampled	11:40	12:20	12:00	11:50	12:00
Q Value	Q4	Q4	Q4	Q4	Q4
Temperature°C	8.3	10.4	14.1	14.5	14.8
DO mg/l	10.70	12.75	14.29	12.44	9.22
BOC mg/l O2	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.1
True Colour	33	23	27	15	27
pH	7.2	8.2	7.4	7.6	7.9
Ammonia mg/l N	0.04	<0.01	0.02	<0.01	0.03
Chloride mg/l Cl	14	18	22	23	19
Dissolved Oxygen % Satn	91.0	114.0	139.0	122.0	91.0
Conductivity µS/cm @25°C	175	203	217	227	208
ortho-Phosphate mg/l P	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.02	0.03
Nitrite mg/l N	0.009	0.007	0.012	0.004	0.014
Total Oxidised Nitrogen ng/l N	3.55	3.70	3.31	2.89	3.18
Alkalinity mg/l CaCO3	57	51	46	48	47
Total Hardness mg/l CaCO3	58	66	67	66	62

## ***Air Quality***

Carlow County Council's Environmental Section is currently looking at air quality and are developing an Air Quality Plan.

## ***Rain Water Harvesting***

A policy on rain water harvesting is being introduced into Carlow County Council's County Development Plan. With regard to rain water harvesting Clonegal Tidy Village Association have incorporated Water Butts for rain water harvesting into their Community Garden / Allotments, their next action is to install water butts in strategic locations throughout the village and their long term action is to encourage households to include rain water harvesting in their homes.

## ***Waste Management***

Domestic, commercial and industrial waste are collected at Clonegal by private operators and disposed of mainly at Carlow County Council's centre landfill site at Powerstown. The fundamental principle with respect to waste management and water management infrastructure is that of sustainability. Carlow County Council's policy in respect of waste management is that of placing priority on the EU Waste Hierarchy of waste reduction/minimisation, then recycling, followed by recover, with landfill disposal having the lowest priority.

## ***Waste Minimisation***

Clonegal Tidy Villages Association is keenly aware of the need to make waste minimisation a part of everyday life. They are constantly reducing waste by continuously employing new initiatives within their community. Clonegal Tidy Villages Association has engaged with Carlow County Council to carry out business energy waste audits. Carlow County Council in 2013 held a workshop on *Waste Not Want Not – Reducing Food Waste at home*, which representatives from Clonegal attended.

A community composting area in the centre of the village, for housing estates and close to the main recycling centre/bring bank, has been developed, this will also be the site for a new community garden / allotment initiative.

Carlow County Council has provided a bring bank opposite St. Brigid's Church which is serviced on a scheduled basis. Clonegal won the Best Bring Bank award in Carlow County Council Pride of Place competition in 2012. A wide range of small initiatives have been undertaken with a view to reducing the amount of waste that is generated in the area. The County Council's Environmental Awareness Officer works very closely with the local school and the Schools' Green Flag initiative is leading to the development of a very keen awareness amongst children in the area of the need to protect the environment for future generations.

## ***Sustainable Energy***

Carlow County Council's Environmental Awareness Officer has assisted Clonegal businesses in the carrying out of energy waste audits. Business waste and energy bills were examined and some practical energy waste prevention and

minimisation tips were given to help businesses reduce their energy consumption and thereby become more energy efficient.

As part of the Green Schools Programme energy theme students from St. Brigid's National School and the Green Schools Committee examined how much energy was being used in the school and when and where it was being wasted. This included looking at when lights were left on and when equipment was left on stand-by and for how long, they also held a Low/No Energy Day

## Built Environment

The community of Clonegal are very conscious of the need to adhere to the key components of what constitutes good practice under built environment. The promotion and use of Irish text and traditional fonts on shopfronts is something we encourage. The discreet frontage of the Sha-roe bistro is very appropriate to its setting. Lectures on the history of the village have been given by local historian Dr. Kevin Whelan to remind people of their rich heritage. A photographic survey of the built environment has been completed.

Some unoccupied properties have been tidied up by Clonegal Tidy Village Association with the permission of the home owners. Consultation was carried out with a paint expert and community representatives to develop a painting plan was developed to ensure that properties and street furniture would retain colours in keeping with the age of the properties/street furniture e.g. Weavers cottage lime wash and water pumps painted an antique green.

### ***Clonegal – An Estate Village***

Clonegal developed as an Estate Village in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Esmondes of Huntington Castle had ambitious plans for the village but they ran into financial difficulty. They had family tragedies, younger sons took over and the estate was sold piecemeal. Therefore, only one side of the village was built, which is now to Clonegal's advantage as there is now a clear view of the river.

***The Inn*** – The Inn, with its own Venetian window, was a posting house and developed with trade. Eventually it was a hotel, Osborne's was part of the old Inn, it is now called The Sha Roe Bistro and still looks after visitors



***Clonegal House*** - Clonegal House dates from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The front has Georgian features but the back is 17<sup>th</sup> century with its garderobe towers

and huge gable chimneys. It would have been the home of the agent for the castle.

### ***Weavers Cottages & Gardens***



The Durdin or **Weavers Cottages** were built by Alexander Durdin in the late seventeenth-century. They were lived in by weavers when the trade was at its height and now feature many items, artifacts, furniture and pictures from bygone times. Set facing onto the main street of the village of Clonegal, the development now comprises a pair of semi-detached, two-bay, single storey dormer cottages with attic

conversion. From time to time they are also used for spinning, weaving and bread and butter-making demonstrations.

### ***Huntington Castle & Gardens***



Huntington Castle, Clonegal, the ancient seat of the Esmonde family is today one of Ireland's historical treasures. The structure was originally a plantation castle, used for defensive purposes during the plantation of the area in the early 17th Century. The original tower house, which served as a garrison, was built in 1625 for Laurence Esmonde, later Baron Esmonde. Due to the strategic importance of the village of Clonegal during the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland because of its location on the road between Dublin and Wexford, the castle was captured by Oliver Cromwell as he marched on Kilkenny in 1650.

It is now a private house lived in by four generations of the Durdin-Robertson family, descendants of the Esmondés, the castle is set in picturesque countryside at the foot of the Blackstairs mountains. Built in 1625 on the site of a former 14th

century stronghold and abbey, the castle has something to offer everyone – from those keen to explore the fascinating house and gardens on a tour – to the discerning client looking for a venue hire with a difference, or the couple looking for a fairytale wedding venue. There is free access to the estate by the local community. Whatever you are looking for Huntington will have something unique to offer.

**Clonegal Bridge** – The bridge is a tapestry of stone in the different styles of stone building. It was rebuilt in 1780 after a flood; the top of the old bridge can still be seen at ground level.



**Siopa Uí Dhúinn** – This house was a shop and bakery, the bake house is still intact. The family has recently renovated the adjacent Coach House. All its windows were replaced in 2008 with lovely painted wooden sash windows.

### ***A thriving little town in the 18th Century***

**The Bridge House** – This fine Georgian building was the residence of the Rector of the Church of Ireland and is a focal point in the village. The house is the property of Huntington Castle. The rear of the house is slated against the prevailing wind.

**The 1798 Farmhouse** – this house was built in 1798 and was thatched. It was purchased by the developer of Moyacomb Meadow and is now owned by James Kavanagh.



*The above photograph was taken in 1948 at the parade in Clonegal to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the 1798 rising and was published in the Nationalist and Leinster Times in May 1998 on the occasion of the 200th commemoration of 1798. Photo supplied by Johnny Dunne.*

**Derry House** – In the 19<sup>th</sup> century this was a Royal Irish Constabulary station. In 1898 the gable was plastered to make a ball alley. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was converted into a shop. It has been restored by its present owner. The walls are random rubble and it has granite quoins. The Glaslakin slates, the half formers and the original chimneys make this an architectural treasure. In 2008 the owner restored the gable and put up a plaque.

**The Watch House** – Very little of this area is left. Once there were 7 small houses at the Watch House. In 1798 it was the home of migrant workers who came to service the barley harvest. These men joined the United Irishmen. The



Forge Stone is that of the Watch House Blacksmith of 1798. The name came from the fact that there was a checkpoint there in 1798. Two houses remain with their small windows and the curious plinth under the roof which also appears in the Weavers Cottages, in a house at the Bridge and in another cottage at the gates of the Castle.

It is closely associated with the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Mementoes of the men who fought in several of the battles of the period are to be seen in and around the village and include the 'The Forge Stone'. Michael Connors, a blacksmith from Johnstown, fought at the Battle of Ballyellis, where he suffered a stomach wound. As he made his way home, he died near the Watch House cross and the stone from his forge can still be seen there



### **A Chapel Village in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time of chapel building. Around the chapel, shops and schools were provided and so it was with Clonegal. P.J. Dunnes is a fine example of that period, with a slated gable.

### **St. Brigid's Church**



– the present church replaced the old Roman Catholic church which was built of mud walls and had a thatched roof. It is a barn type construction, built in 1824 around the old church at a cost of £1,000. When the new building was completed the old building was taken out through the doors of the new church. The truncated granite spire is unique. It is believed that Thomas Cobden, who was at the

time building Carlow Cathedral, may have had some influence on the architecture. The sanctuary with its Corinthian columns and broken pediment is worth seeing. The plaster ceiling is the work of visiting Italian craftsmen. The upper and lower cemeteries date from the early 1800's and are very well looked after by the Parish and FÁS.

**St. Brigid's Hall** – This building was originally a school. Brigidine Nuns taught there and lived in the adjacent house which was their convent. This building was restored in 2007 and the school children are using it again, this time with computers instead of slates and chalk.

**The Methodist / Wesleyan Chapel** – Built in 1834 this building was a meeting place for a community of Methodists which gave two brothers to the ministry in 1887. It was closed at the end of that century and fell into disrepair. The Bangor slates were imported for the roof. In 2003 the current owners purchased the property and have carried out a remarkable job in restoring the former chapel into a beautiful home.

**St. Fiac's Church** - St. Fiac's Church is situated overlooking the



spectacular village of Clonegal and the picturesque valley of the Derry River. The present Church was built in 1819 on the site of a former Church and the graveyard around it has gravestones dating from 1777. The Church was built in the Gothic style with Tower and Belfry and under the supervision of Mr. John Bowden, Architect. The parish embraces parts of Counties Wicklow, Wexford and Carlow. Three double stained glass windows depict the Good Samaritan, a scene from the Good Shepherd and the third window depicts the Resurrection scene. In July 1821 a meeting of parishioners of St. Fiac's was held and it stated that the parishioners wished to subscribe to the building of a new Roman Catholic Church in the parish of Clonegal. On 22nd July 1945 the Consecration of the graveyard extension took place- made possible by the good will and generosity of Denis Doyle. In February 1989 an extension was added to the Church car park- made possible by the generosity of the Hickey family.

A new turnstile was erected in 1989 by George Rothwell to give easier access to the Church grounds for the many visitors who call to view the church and ancient burial ground or to visit the graves of relatives who rest there. In 1992 a ramp was built leading from the new car park. In July 1993 the parishioners painted the interior and exterior of the Church. A new coping and path were laid from the middle gate to the steps leading to the main door and standard lamps were erected.

The **Old Rectory** is now a private house, but was the residence of John DeRenzy, commander of the yeomen in Clonegal during the Irish Rebellion of 1798. When prisoners were to be hanged they were brought to a yard just above the rectory and made to stand in a cart with the rope around their necks. This

rope was passed through a hole in a stone that jutted out from the wall above the prisoners head. The cart was then moved away and the victim was left hanging. The archway leading into this yard is known as the Hanging Arch. It is marked by a stone slab on the wall and if the gate is not open and a person stands on the opposite side of the street and stone can be seen sticking out from the wall.

**St. Brigid's Well on the Carlow Road** - Restored by the Historical Society, this well dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and always supplied the Easter water.

**The Iron Pumps** - These pumps were erected in 1896 to supply water to the village

### **Clonegal in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

**The Pig Weighing House** - Located at Riverside, the Pig Weighing House was built in the 1920's. On market day the pigs were weighed there. The weighing machine was also used to weigh cattle, timber and corn. It was in use until the late 1950's.

**Housing Estates** - Housing stock is a large contributor to the built environment of Clonegal.

St. Brigid's Terrace dates from 1950's

Valleyview was built in the 1970's

Moyacomb Meadow Estate - 29 houses were built in 2005

Radharc na Doiri – 7 houses were built in 2008

High Street – three houses were built in 1998

2003 – two houses were built adjacent to the Weaver's Cottages

Watch House Village - Nine houses were built in 2003

### **Name Stones**

1995 "Abha an Doire" (in the Watch House Village) was the squirrel motif to remember the legend about a squirrel traveling from Shillelagh, along the oaks, without touching the ground. This was a first monument.

1995 The Watch House Name Stone donated by A. Kinsella.

1996 The Clonegal Name Stone (in the centre bed) donated by P. Hickey.

1998 The Forge Stone Monument in the Watch House to remember 1798.

1998 "Sos cois Abhann" at Riverside, donated by Coillte.



## Cleanliness & Tidiness

Arrangements are in place for the prevention and control of litter on an ongoing basis, weed control is carried out on a weekly basis. Carlow Town & County Amenity Trust (a Job Initiative Scheme under the Department of Social Protection) has a dedicated worker in Clonegal who looks after the general maintenance and tidiness in the village and ensures that signposts are painted and cleaned on a regular basis.

Participants of a Community Employment Scheme (FÁS/Department of Social Protection) also look after the general maintenance and tidiness in the village, litter bins are checked each day, and there is constant sweeping of footpaths and roads as well as maintaining the sporting facilities in the Ben Mulhall Park

The Community of Clonegal, who participate on an annual basis in the Spring Clean organised in conjunction with Carlow County Council for the launch of National Spring Clean to take place in Clonegal in April 2013.



Community wheelie bins are provided by Carlow County Council. Residents can segregate their waste into recycling and non recycling.

There are two recycling centers provided by Carlow and Wexford County Councils. These have been made attractive with trellis and planting. Clonegal isn't subject to graffiti or wild billposting.

## Landscape

Clonegal and its surrounds has a wealth of attractive landscape with the River Derry and the beautiful surrounding of Huntington Castle which includes a lime tree avenue planted in 1680 and a Yew walk thought to be up to 500 years old.



Much thought and commitment has been put into the landscaping of Clonegal. A horticulturist was engaged to advise on a planting strategy for the village. Oak trees have been planted on the banks of the River Derry to reflect the Irish meaning of the village – the river of the oak. A maintenance programme is in place to look after the recently planted trees.

Ornamental planting is concentrated at the village core, with fewer annual planters at the riverside as this would detract somewhat from the naturalistic setting. Herbaceous perennial plants have been used in the larger ornamental

planted areas as they do not require annual planting, and provide a more interesting and subtle colour to these areas and require less maintenance. Local residents have been encouraged to plant species that are nectar rich and so have the village buzzing during the summer months.

It is our policy to encourage the protection and planting of native perennials, shrubs and trees to encourage our natural biodiversity so that our flora and fauna can flourish in their natural environment, including protected areas located within our village.

The long term objectives for cherishing and enhancing our landscape rest in the continued co-operation and support we receive from various funding agencies, Carlow County Council and indeed the community.

### ***Flora & Fauna***

Clonegal is a small village with typical urban habitats including buildings, roads and residential gardens. The gardens are valuable for wildlife and type of shrub and tree planting which they have. In addition, the centre of Clonegal village has a number of features of significant biodiversity interest; including stone walls and bridges, the Weavers Cottage garden, the Derry River. The village is located in a rural setting surrounded by good quality agricultural land which is farmed, primarily for grazing livestock. The surrounding farmland is characterised by intensively managed agricultural grasslands with hedgerows of varying ecological value.

The most important habitats in the village for fauna species is by far the River Derry. Clonegal Bridge is home to a number of bats. The hedgerows in the surrounding agricultural lands are also of value for song birds. As the village has a small urban footprint, it benefits from the agricultural lands, including its many hedgerows. Huntington Castle is a mecca for woodlands species and animal life.



In 2013 a botanist was engaged to undertake an audit of the flora and fauna of the village.

A Biodiversity Workshop was held in Clonegal for all Tidy Towns groups throughout County Carlow, this was made

possible through funding received from the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government under their Local Agenda 21 Environmental Fund Scheme. This workshop helped in the formulation of plans to help improve biodiversity by intervention or management practices.

### ***Wildlife and natural amenities***

The community of Clonegal are very conscious of their wildlife and natural amenities and have had a habitat surveys carried out for the Clonegal area and take active steps towards conservation. All year round fruiting plants and trees

are provided, e.g. cotoneaster, crab apple, buddleia, teasel, wild flowers, grasses etc. There is an information area at the Riverside and a close eye is kept on the swans and ducks that nest near the bridge.

### ***The River Derry***

*Fish:* Salmon parr, Lamprey eel, Salmon fry, Minnow, European fresh water eel, Gudgeon and Sea trout.

*Mini Beasts:* Mayfly, Stonefly, Crayfish, Dragonfly, Water snails, Water beetles, Newts and frogs.

*Mammals:* Otter & Mink

*Birds:* Water hen, Mallard, Moor hen, Grey heron and Swan

*Plants:* Water crowfoot, Watercress and Ranunculus



### **The River Banks**

*Birds:* Wagtail, Goldfinch, Chaffinch, Crow, Jackdaw, Magpie, Sparrow Hawk, Swan, Pigeon, Swallow, Owls and Bats.

*Mini Beasts:* Butterflies – Tortoiseshell and Orange tip

*Mammals:* Stoat, Fox and Shrew

*Plants:* Wild celery, Indian balsam, Docks, Thistles, Dandelion, Herb Robert, Periwinkle, Ivy, Nettles, Brambles, Flag iris, Rushes, Buttercup, Meadow sweet

*Trees:* Lime, Oak and Maple

### **Woodland on the bank of the river**

*Plants:* Cow parsley, Spurge, Sorrel, Anemone and Celandine

*Trees:* Ash, Oak, Beech and Hawthorn

### **The Old Stone Walls throughout the village**

*Plants* include Ivy, Mosses, Toadflax, Herb Robert, Rusty back fern, Valerian and Pineapple weed.

### **Hedgerows on all the approach roads**

Located on the seven approach roads and on lanes about the village. The composition includes Hawthorn, Sycamore, Beech, Holly, Elder, Blackthorn, Gorse, Honeysuckle, Dog rose. The hedgerows are home to numerous birds including Finches, Tits, Wren, Thrush, Pheasant, Blackbird, Robin and Yellow

### **The native Trees throughout the village include:**

Oak, Wild Cherry, Hawthorn, Lime, Sycamore, Holly, Alder, Birch, Ash, Rowan, Chestnut and Crab Apple.

## **Open Green Spaces**

There is a range of excellent sporting and recreational organisations within the Clonegal area. Clonegal features several unique, well developed local amenity features which are preserved and supported e.g. Wicklow Way Map Park. A number of years ago a notable lack of open space for recreational purposes was

identified, this was addressed with the development of playing pitches in the Ben Mulhall Park and the development of a 9 hole golf course and additional playing pitches is currently underway. The amenity value of the Derry River Valley is a major asset. Huntington Castle is constantly developing its facilities, there are the more formal gardens, an adventure playground for children and woodland nature walks for adults and children. Also the 17<sup>th</sup> Century water features has been restored

Clonegal Tidy Village Association are constantly working to protect, increase, enhance and champion the River Derry banks, the Wicklow Way Park, open spaces for residents of the village and of course for visitors to the area.



The Sli na Slainte route has been upgraded over the last few months, a new map board has been erected as well as signage to alert motorists to walkers. The quieter roads surrounding the village are a dream for walkers and cyclists.

The Wicklow Way is a 127 kilometer (79 miles) long distance trail that crosses the Wicklow Mountains, it runs from Marlay Park, Dublin through County Wicklow and ends in the village of Clonegal. It is designated as a National Waymarked Trail by the Irish Sports Council and is waymarked by posts with a yellow "walking man" symbol and a directional arrow. Typically completed in 5–7 days, it is one of the busiest of Ireland's National Waymarked Trails, with up to 24,000 people a year walking the most popular sections. Developments at the Wicklow Way Map Park has ensured that there is universal access and that interpretive boards are updated on a regular basis.

A horticulturist was engaged to give advice on the planting of some of the green spaces and maintenance of same for the village. The well maintained private front gardens at the houses in Moyacomb offer a pretty extension of green space to the edge of the roadway. The residents in Clonegal appreciate the outdoors and this is reflected in many private gardens. One garden in particular in the centre of the village is 'The Weavers Cottage Garden' this garden is admired and enjoyed by many. This garden has been sensitively restored to reflect the 18<sup>th</sup> Century in which the Weavers Cottages were built.

## Permanent Planting

Clonegal's policy in designing or changing landscapes is to provide attractive, low maintenance and sustainable designs which improve the appearance of the area. As the relative positions of permanent planting can be critical it is imperative to plan everything prior to planting. While shaping the landscape and bearing fruit,

the permanent planting also positively affects air flow, soil water, and makes a difference to the native habitats.

Clonegal Tidy Village Association received 10 native Irish tree sapling, these have been planted in the Community allotment / garden to allow them to mature and will be planted out on maturity.

In 2013 some a Holly tree, provided by Carlow County Council, was planted as part of National Tree Week adjacent to the river walk. A number of Oak trees have also been planted on the banks of the Derry River.

## Seasonal Planting

Prior to the summer a planting scheme was discussed and the summer colour theme for the beds in the village was decided as blue, red and yellow. Clonegal will burst into bloom in the summer with its signature rose bed at the entrance to the village. Trailing nasturtiums, red geraniums, clematis, and a bed of red begonias will also be in bloom. Planters will be overflowing with non stop and trailing Begonia, red Geraniums.



Annual village planters and hanging baskets have been planted with organic compost from a local supplier.

## Community Garden



Preparations are well underway for the creation of a Community Allotment Garden on Main Street. Community members provided spare timber for the construction of raised beds. Water butts are also in place to harvest rain water. These allotments are being made available, free of charge to any resident or Group from Clonegal who would like to avail of them. There will also be a composting area for the green waste from the village and a leaf mulch area. These are being made by members of the Committee with recycled pallets.

## Environmental Education

The town is served by a primary school, by nearby secondary schools and avails of third level educational facilities at nearby Carlow town. There is a keen awareness and appreciation of all things natural in Clonegal.

Clonegal supports the Local Agenda 21 which is a process that facilitates sustainable development within the community. Local Agenda 21 is an approach, based upon collaboration and participation that respects the social, cultural, economic and environmental needs of the present and future citizens of the community in all its diversity.

Clonegal Tidy Village committee in co-operation with the Irish Peatland Conservation Council in March 2013 held a public information awareness meeting on biodiversity, composting, wildlife gardening and sustainable living.

The group found the seminar most worthwhile, they now have the tools to develop a biodiversity plan for the village. Continued education / information is the key to enabling all in Clonegal to do their best to protect the environment

### ***St. Brigid's National School***

St. Brigid's NS ([www.clonegalns.com](http://www.clonegalns.com)) was built on an elevated site in 1952 and occupies a focal point in the village.

St. Brigid's N.S. is a mixed Catholic Primary School in the picturesque village of Clonegal, with 118 pupils on roll. The staff includes six teachers plus a shared Resource Teacher, four S.N.As – three of whom work in the Autistic Unit, a secretary and a caretaker/cleaner. Our school is co-educational, under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. The school has a strong Catholic ethos but welcomes children of all religions and none. During 2010-11, the school was awarded a School of Excellence Award from Waterford Institute of Technology for Co-Operative Teaching and In-Class Support, and each year since 2007-2008 the school has received a Discover Primary Science Award for Science and Maths. An After-Schools service is provided by Millview Montessori School, who collect the children at 2 and again at 3 o'clock. This service is in the local St. Brigid's Hall and they avail of the facilities in the school grounds.

Clonegal's education programme focuses on young people, for whom the environment is both an inheritance right and a future challenge. **Green-Schools** (Eco Schools) is an international environmental education programme, designed to promote and acknowledge whole school action for the environment.

St. Brigid's has been registered with the Green Schools Programme for approximately 8 years now. The school has successfully completed three themes, having already obtained three green flags (litter/waste, energy, water) they are currently working on the Travel theme.



To achieve Green Flag status the school increased recycling, introduced composting and tackled the issue of litter. As part of the energy theme students examined how much energy was being used in the school and when and where it was being wasted. This included looking at when lights were left on and when equipment was left on stand-by and for how long. As part of the Energy Theme the school had a Low/No Energy Day

Green-Schools is a long-term programme that introduces participants (students, teachers, parents and the wider community) to the concept of an environmental management system. It fosters a strong sense of citizenship and leadership among participants that spreads far outside the school into the wider community. We are fortunate to have St. Brigid’s National School engaged with the Green-Schools Programme, which benefits the community.



The Green Schools programme in County Carlow as a whole has seen significant savings in the following areas:

<b>Waste Diversion Kg/yr</b>	<b>Energy Reduction Kw/yr</b>	<b>Water conservation Litres/yr</b>
109,088.07	1,103,256.00	5,566,256.85

In addition to Green-Schools, Clonegal Tidy Villages Association host collaborative projects each year with the school - A schools poster competition entitled “Garden Bug Bunnies” The aim of the competition was to create and promote awareness of waste minimisation and recycling among the children of our community at an early age.

## **Effort & Involvement**

Clonegal has a thriving Tidy Village Association and a strong community spirit. Clonegal’s success is reflected in the number of achievements which Clonegal has attained. Their achievements include:

- Tidy Towns – 6 Bronze Medals; 3 Silver & Gold in 2010, 2011,2012
- County Winner in National Tidy Towns
- Represented Ireland in Nations In Bloom in Washington DC & highly commended
- Winners in Carlow's Floral Pride; County Litter League & Carlow's Pride of Place
- Winner of Co-Operation Ireland Pride of Place
- Weavers Cottages - Winner in ESB Conservation Awards
- Award Winning Sha Roe Restaurant

The amenity visual appearance and general attractiveness of Clonegal has grown in recent years, due to an immense reservoir of local civic pride and community effort.

Clonegal Tidy Villages Association meets on a monthly basis. All meetings are noted and work to be carried out before the next meeting is agreed upon by the members. In preparing for the Entente Florale it was agreed that a steering group would be formed to encourage all of the community to get involved, to play their part, no matter how big or small. Public meetings were held and a number of community work days were organised to ensure that all members of the village had an opportunity to get involved.



St. Brigid's National School, and they have won the Green Flag award for the last three years. The school principal and teachers are very forward thinking and very diligent and they have a green schools project and every child and staff member plays their part in recycling, saving energy and conserving water.

Carlow County Council, Wexford County Council, County Carlow Development Partnership Ltd., Tus, FÁS, Dept. of Social Protection, Carlow Town & County Amenity Trust, and Carlow Tourism have been of great support to the village.

## Tourism & Leisure

An ideal opportunity to experience and enjoy rural and community life at its best. The twin villages of Clonegal and the Watch lie between the rivers Derry and Slaney, surrounded by hills of forest and farmyard. It is often referred to as the "Switzerland of Ireland" for its outstanding natural beauty. With a backdrop of tree-clad hills this charming historic village is a joy to walk in, explore and discover. Carlow Tourism ([www.carlowtourism.com](http://www.carlowtourism.com)) list attractions in the area.

**Huntington Castle** Huntington Castle and Garden's, Tea Rooms. Fishing, Shooting and Pony trekking can be arranged. Children's playground also available. . There is free access to the estate by the local community.

Nearby **Altamont Gardens** – blend of formal and informal gardens with riverside walks covering 16 hectares. Snowdrop Week held every February. [www.altamontgarden.com](http://www.altamontgarden.com)

**The Weavers Cottages** - Open to the public. From time to time they are also used for spinning, bread making and crochet demonstrations.

**Clonegal House of Song and Story** commenced with the opening of the Weavers Cottages in 2000. It was originally scheduled to be held monthly in the Weavers Cottages, but due to outstanding success had to move to the local community centre on its second night. It has gone from strength to strength with artists traveling from counties Carlow, Wexford, Laois, Wicklow and Kildare. The House of



Song and Story celebrated its 10th anniversary in September 2010. Many of the original artists who were present at the first night in 2000 returned for the celebrations. In recent years, a number of young generations have expressed a keen interest in the monthly meetings and contribute their wonderful musical talents to the entertainment. "Fear an Tí" - Joe Hickey and all who participate in the night promise the best of home grown entertainment. Meetings of the Clonegal House of Song and Story takes place on the 3rd Monday night of every month. Tea and light refreshments are provided by the Ladies Committee and a successful raffle is held to conclude the entertainment. An entertaining night is guaranteed to be had whilst listening to traditional Irish music, song and story.

**Walking** - Clonegal is a favourite location for walkers, marking the end of the Wicklow Way, Call to Osborne's, a 300 year old pub of unique charm in the centre of the village where you can collect your own personalised Wicklow Way certificate for completion of the route. The village also features a 7km Sli na Sláinte walk via Ballyredmond and Clonogan Woods – starts from the Wicklow Way Map Park opposite the Weavers Cottages in the centre of Clonegal village.

**Dining:** Sha-Roe Bistro – Beautifully appointed little restaurant, seats 28, in an immaculately maintained 18th century building. Henry Stone, awarded Chef of the Year by the Georgina Campbell Guide.

Nearby The Forge Restaurant (seats 50) recommended by the Georgina Campbell and Bridgestone Guides 2012.

**Events:** A number of events are organised throughout the year by Clonegal Tidy Village Association and these include:

Art competition in school at Easter time to tie in with Easter Egg Hunt – themes have included waste management, butterflies and bees, bugs etc.; Family Fun Day; Pub Quizzes; Turkey Trot held on St. Stephen's morning starting in Kildavin and ending up in Ben Mulhall Park, Clonegal; St. Patrick's Night – Irish Theme fund raiser.

### **Ben Mulhall Park**



Ben Mulhall was a local teacher in the National School in Clonegal. He was known well for his wonderful sportsmanship and talent both in Gaelic football and hurling. Originally from Tullow, Co Carlow, Ben dedicated much of his life to the community of Clonegal whilst serving as principal of the local school. His talent and ability together with his passion for the game

rubbed off on the local children who had great success at under - 14 level.

The wonderful Ben Mulhall Complex in Clonegal is the home to Derry Rovers soccer team. The facilities include dressing rooms, toilets and showers whilst upstairs is a large recreation area. In all there are 4.45 ha (11 acres) of ground which includes two soccer pitches and one GAA pitch. There is lots of room for

parking. The grounds are nestled into the corner of three counties, Wexford, Carlow and Wicklow although its physical location is Wexford. Standing at the entrance gate at the top of the hill one has a wonderful panoramic view of all the fields and indeed of the three counties and the beauty they hold.

Recently work has been undertaken to develop a:

- ⇒ 160mt X 100mt GAA pitch – Hurling & Camogie
- ⇒ 2 Soccer pitches
- ⇒ 9 hole pitch and putt course
- ⇒ A walk-way all around the boundaries of the park.

