

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clonegal - Cluain na nGall** Ref: **37**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **342**
Category: **B** Date(s): **26/06/2019**
02/08/2019

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	50	51
Streetscape & Public Places	60	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	48	50
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	37	38
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	22	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	66	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36	36
TOTAL MARK	470	334	342

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Clonegal Cluain na nGall páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta Supervalu na mBailte Slachmhara 2019. We are delighted to welcome Clonegal to the 2019 Supervalu Tidy Towns competition. It was a pleasure to return to your lovely village to see all the positive changes that have taken place in recent years. Thank you for your beautifully presented Entry including excellent map. Your photographs are well-placed and greatly assisted our adjudication. We are impressed that this year you moved to paperless meetings. Your active committee of 11 members has plenty of willing volunteers to call on for specific tasks. We congratulate you on your achievements and involvement in the IPB Pride of Place Awards – a wonderful celebration of the entire community. You list a wide number of agencies that support your work as well as your local businesses and school. It really takes a cross-community effort to reach your standard. Your concise 3 Year Plan (2020 – 2022) sets out your plan of action under each of the eight categories. Keep up the excellent work.

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

For a small village, you have a wealth of interesting built heritage. You show strong awareness of its importance and the need to conserve it in the proper manner. This makes a significant contribution to the overall picturesque aesthetic of Clonegal and is one of the reasons for your many visitors. Your IPP Award for 'Model Village for preserving Heritage and History' says it all. A stunning avenue leads to the spectacular Huntington Castle. Credit must go to all the businesses for the upkeep of their attractive frontages. Shops such as Siopa Un Dhuinn and Plunkett's Hardware Store were admired. The pubs (even the closed one) look well as does the Sha-Roe Restaurant. Efforts have been made to brighten up the surroundings of the Take Away and the former pub PJ Dunne's, with clever use of floral displays. The painting scheme at the Weighing Station makes it a very attractive feature that blends in well with the surroundings. We like the way the old village pumps are highlighted with planting yet allowed to stand out in their own right. Both graveyards are maintained to a high standard – the wall planting at the new graveyard provides a nice softening effect to the car park area. The Church of Ireland is another fine example of built heritage and the landscaping here looks like it is well-cared for. Good use of Irish language was noted on signage. We wish you luck with plans for the old Church of Ireland school.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

You have carried out some outstanding work in this category since our last visit some years ago, particularly around the village green, Wicklow Way Park and school. We are delighted to see that you have moved towards more permanent planting – this offers so much more interest and is a better choice in terms of watering, maintenance and of course wildlife value. Would it be opportune to remove the former hanging basket posts as they do make some areas appear a little cluttered? We acknowledge that it's a big job to erect or remove them. From public spaces to

street-side planting to residential gardens – the colour and variety of planting is spectacular. The Wicklow Way Park in particular has been transformed since our last visit and has a lovely mix of trees, shrubs and plants among the various points of interest. We love the way you have framed the park with a diverse range of perennials planted inside the wall. Residential areas must be singled out in this category as well as in 'residential' for the contribution they are making to the overall pleasing aesthetic of the village. We loved the simple planting scheme at the grotto – it helps to highlight the lovely feature itself. Two containers with dead plants should be removed from here. We acknowledge your contribution to the recent landscaping work at the school, following their new extension. The riverside area is beautifully maintained. Thank you for including your recently conducted Tree Survey. Your work is ongoing so we await an update on what recommendations come out of this for future action and the sustainability of tree planting in Clonegal.

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

Clonegal has some spectacular mature trees. Your new tree survey will hopefully assist you in identifying any issues or areas for future tree planting. Your rural location ensures that you have a wealth of habitats for birds and wildlife. The mallards were enjoying the sunshine on the river. We are delighted that you are committed to implementing best-practice actions as per the National Pollinator Plan. Your registered account ensures that you can feed your findings into the national database. Your information leaflets on 'Helping the Pollinators' and 'Hedgerows are important for wildlife' further raise awareness among locals and visitors alike. Well done to the students and teachers of Clongeal N.S. who sound they are well-versed in all biodiversity matters. Your 2018 gave some good recommendations and we note you have taken these on board, such as the planned planting of Yellow Rattle in grass meadow areas. There was good information on the Wicklow Way walk; however we weren't so sure of local walks (maybe we missed it?), is this something that could be looked at for visitors staying in the area? Ben Mulhall Park is a fine amenity – we like the way grass is being 'meadow managed' in certain appropriate areas with grass walkways nicely maintained so locals can enjoy the peace and views.

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

You show a strong understanding of this category. We usually refer to the Recycling Centre under 'Tidiness' but yours with its unique can 'wall' and nearby metal robot and mural, deserves a mention here. We love it! Your regular attendance at workshops on sustainability enables you to focus your work and spread the awareness throughout your community. There are indeed startling facts about the effects of plastic waste on our ocean life. We look forward to seeing your information leaflet/website update next time. Despite the small monkey survey sample, some interesting recommendations came out of it. Your efforts to have a poster-free village during the election campaign are lauded as well as those to promote reuse or giving items a 'second life'. Clonegal's Ring-a-Link and Tullow Credit Union mobile facility are local offerings that help cut down on polluting car journeys. There is a strong ethos of sustainability at Clonmore N.S. – we wish them luck with their 6TH Green Flag on Global Citizenship, Litter and Waste. We would like to hear a bit more about community involvement in the 'Community Garden'.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The village is very clean – litter free apart from one plastic bottle but we think this may have escaped from the recycling bin collectors earlier that day. All bins we observed (2 at riverside and 1 at St. Bridget's Terrace) were in good order. The recycling bank area is very clean and inviting. Well done to the regular walkers who double-job as litter pickers – this greatly assists in ensuring your excellent standard. It is encouraging that the young people are also playing their part when using the public spaces. We like the concept of your 'Community Work Day'. This is in addition to your National Spring Clean event in April. A special mention too, to the students of Clonmore N.S., who conduct village litter-picks as part of their Global Citizenship programme. Well done. There is a tree branch encroaching on the footpath up towards the Wicklow Way Park. Perhaps the field gate beside the church and the main church gate could be refreshed soon? The 'children crossing' yellow school sign would benefit from a cleaning. These are just minor items in a very tidy village.

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

The standard in this category is high. You show strong engagement with all Clonegal residents and this is paying dividends. On the whole, residential areas were litter-free with attractive tree planting and other landscaping. Watch House Village was admired - the large and colourful area of mixed planting as well as the attractive name stone. Just watch for weeds on the footpath and along kerbs. Moyacomb is a beautifully maintained estate with attractive landscaping. Valley View has a very neat communal grass area – could a verge be given over to wildflower meadow? The verge opposite St. Bridget's Terrace looks very well as does this estate overall. The entrances have some welcoming planting – just a little weeding required as briars and other bigger weeds are starting to come through. The renovated cottage was admired with interest. The entire Watch House area is beautifully maintained with some interesting features. We noted the planning permission sign at Radharc na Doiri. The small trees will enhance this area as they mature in time. There is scope to plant a native hawthorn or (non-native) beech hedgerow along the road front to further improve the overall aesthetic. Well done to all the proud residents of Clonegal and keep up the good work.

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

Clonegal gives the visitor an excellent first and last impression – it's no surprise that you've accumulated all the accolades over the years. Remembering special community people at various benches etc, is a nice gesture. Street parking is well marked out. The old stone bridge over the Derry river is one of the village highlights. Road surfaces are good as is directional signage. You are conscious of maintaining but not over-manicuring your native

hedgerows. The long-awaited 'Carlow' road sign is a welcome addition.

Concluding Remarks:

We are impressed by both your approach and organisation. Clonegal Tidy Village is the driving force that draws all residents, groups and businesses together for the continuing improvement of your village. Your committee and residents obviously have a strong pride in your lovely village – you continue to work hard to show it at its best and to make it more sustainable year on year. We were delighted to have the opportunity to see Clonegal first hand. Thank you for an excellent entry and we wish you all the best with future endeavours.

Second Round Adjudication:

This was the second rounds adjudicators' first visit to your lovely village in a number of years and we are delighted to say that it certainly lived up to the memory of an inspiring and well-tended rural gem. Once again the colour and standard of maintenance of your green spaces was second to none. The focus you are putting on longer term and more biodiversity friendly planting was noted and much admired. We hope your tree survey will be a useful document to keep a track of the health of trees in the village and a basis to ensure the long term presence of trees in the local landscape. It is obvious that there is a really excellent knowledge of plants in Clonegal which allows maximum summer impact without resorting to sterile annuals for colour. The colour and variety of planting in the village took our breath away. The secret to the richness of the planting in Clonegal is also the fact that so many of your residents gardens directly address the streets so, as the first round adjudicator rightly says, they make such a contribution to the overall aesthetic of the village. We loved the mix of planting, sheep sculpture and oak tree at the centre green, which creates such a landmark in the village. Although you say the school has been disrupted with building works over the last few years if was looking pristine on the day of the second adjudicators visit with well a very well-tended frontage. The fabulous triangular planted bed by the arched stone bridge is a delight and was full of bees and butterflies as we walked past. Indeed its location and the height of plants create a lovely separation for the pedestrian from the busy road traffic. Is there any way a path can be provided over the bridge to create a safe link between the two sides of the rivers. Talk to your area engineers to see if a one way system or road markings could be employed here to allow for pedestrian priority. Clonegal has a great history in the tidy towns and we are so glad to hear that taking part in the competition has been such a source of pride for the community. In our walk around the village we noted some of your past awards from the competition displayed in the window of P.J. Dunnes. Once again the level of tidiness around the village was high although the bin by the picnic area at the Wicklow Way park may need to be checked more regularly by your walkers/litter pickers as it was full on the day of the visit, obviously a popular spot. The path side lavender beds here are establishing nicely. The work you are doing to address plastic consumption is commended and we look forward to seeing results here. The recycling robot 'Scrappy' is a fine feature and shows great collaboration between generations in the community. Ensure vegetation is cleared from road signs to allow maximum visibility. Some vibrant planting may be useful to the base of your new brown village signs to draw the eye of passing drivers and so increase their value as a way to slow and calm traffic entering the village. Especially on the long downhill approach from Ardattin. We are delighted to endorse the comments from the first round adjudicator and indeed left your village with a feeling of having visited a very friendly community that shows great care and respect for their home place. Well done to all involved in this year's entry. You should all take great pride in the hard work done by the community over the past year which resulted in the really excellent presentation of Clonegal for this year's visits.