

# Tidy Towns Competition 2010

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Glaslough** Ref: **609**  
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **292**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/06/2010**  
**23/07/2010**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2009</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2010</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	50	39	40
Landscaping	50	41	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	17	18
Litter Control	50	35	36
Waste Minimisation	20	12	12
Tidiness	30	22	22
Residential Areas	40	32	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	36	36
General Impression	10	9	9
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>292</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Glaslough to the 2010 National TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your detailed submission including your annotated aerial photograph which made finding areas of interest an easier task for the adjudicator. Congratulations in recruiting even more members to your committee, we note its number have risen from 13 last year to 15 for this year. The level of voluntary commitment is excellent and shows the amount of hard work and dedication needed to be successful in the competition. As a group you seem to have a well structured approach to gaining support from various agencies in the town, be it sponsorship or of a more practical nature. As ever the support you receive from the owners of Castle Leslie and the commitment they show in maintaining the highest standards both within their estate and in their contribution to the fabric of village life, is applauded. Well done in keeping up your media profile as this is a key way to get your message across. Have you considered using the internet as another means of communication; this has successfully been used by some other centres. Perhaps you could publish a link to your multi annual plan on the Glaslough Development Association website, to let the community as a whole see what your objectives are and maybe have a section where residents can suggest areas they feel could do with some input from your group. This is a further way to use the links already established in the area to further your objectives and gain support for your works. Overall your development approach is going from strength to strength and your cohesive approach is reaping rewards for you.

### The Built Environment:

You have a lovely village with a very neat core area and a variety of interesting sites and building of interest. The estate village structure gives you a setting that is the envy of many other villages and its character has been preserved to great effect. The newer developments have been designed to be in keeping with the overall village character, however try to ensure they are completed to a high standard. The gable wall of the new townhouse development on the main street was not finished too well and is visible from the village core. The

Oakland Community Centre was well presented and the new roof improves its appearance. The re use of the old church door here was a nice touch. The works to the Pillar House have done much to improve this site at such a visible position to visitors to and from the Estate. The phone box and bus stop are nice elements in the streetscape and need to be maintained to a high standard. The ornamental curved ironwork at the stop has been bent out of shape and could be a hazard for pedestrians. Best of luck with your programme of upkeep in these public areas.

### **Landscaping:**

Landscaping is at a high standard and the numbers of carefully maintained beds scattered throughout the village offer bursts of colour and high visual impact. Once again the restrained use of seasonal planting in addition to the consistent colour palette works well in the village setting. The tiered planters at the entrance to the village were admired. The extensive tree planting you have undertaken this year with Castle Leslie is to be applauded as this type of long term investment in the landscape structure of the estate, as well as the village, will be appreciated by the next generation. The continued tree planting programme is to be encouraged. The urns in the village centre were in keeping with the historic setting, however the tap here was leaking and this should be fixed.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

Congratulations on the works that have been carried out in this category over the last year. We are glad that your members gained from their attendance at the biodiversity workshop. The local biodiversity plan is a very valuable document for you to have and we look forward to seeing a considered and structured plan of action emerging based on this study. Now that you have a baseline study of what is present in your locality you can begin to assess what actions need to be taken to either protect or improve the habitats identified. The Blackwater Heritage Trail signage is well designed, easy to read and the combination of maps, graphics and text is well balanced. The adjudicator enjoyed a very informative stroll around the constructed wetland and indeed they were alive with insect life and an elegant heron. We look forward to seeing you advance in this category during the life of the biodiversity plan.

### **Litter Control:**

You have a structured approach to litter patrols and well done on your successes in this area. The inclusion of the local children in your campaign here, and their catchy litter slogan, is a good approach to take as it ensures they have a stake in this issue from an early age. Litter management is currently at a high standard as very little litter was noted in the village on adjudication day. The play area showed a marked improvement on last years visit and it is good to see that you recognise and address the litter hot spots in the village. A small amount of litter was noted at the bench in front of the old Pillar House Hotel but we are sure this would have been addressed in one of your next patrols.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The pupils and staff of Scoil Mhuire are to be congratulated on the awarding of its third green flag for water. The practical steps you have taken to improve the energy performance of the community centre are a very realistic approach to this category. We look forward to the provision of a composter in the grounds of the community centre for next years visit. Expanding on this theme could you approach Castle Leslie and some of the cafes in the village to consider a study to address the issue of food waste in the hospitality industry? This could be followed up with a strategy to encourage traders to use biodegradable food packaging and compost where possible? You could discuss this with the café and takeaway operators.

### **Tidiness:**

The standard of tidiness is excellent and a reflection on the hard work of the committee. However this high standard unfortunately meant that an abandoned and vandalised car on the main street especially stood out. A notice on the car showed that it had been brought to the attention of Monaghan County Council and they should be contacted to ensure its prompt removal if the owner can't be found. Be careful with signage in the town as this can clutter up streetscapes if not properly sited and designed. The Castle Leslie Village Houses advertising sign is beginning to show signs of wear and should be replaced or removed before it fades further. Another temporary sign on a parked trailer by the bus stop was also out of place. Signage is an integral part of our villages but should be carefully considered so that it adds rather than detracts from the village.

### **Residential Areas:**

In general residential areas in the village are presented to a very high standard and well done to all your residents for the efforts involved in presenting both individual homes and communal areas. The adjudicator particularly liked the elaborate bird boxes which are becoming somewhat of a feature in the town; the one at Tullyree was especially admired. The bed at Ard Banagher needs a little attention to keep on top of weed growth but the hanging baskets here looked well. The new Castle Leslie Homes were sympathetically designed but one wondered why there was relatively little planting done here. While there was planting and

hedges to the open space areas some additional planting to the front of the homes would help soften the impact of the runs of terraces. In addition some climbers planted to gable walls could soften the impact of the large areas of walls as viewed from the road.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The standard of verges and approaches to the town were good with road signs clean and legible. The welcome signs were well presented and gave a co-ordinated approach from all direction and provide the visitor with a good sense of arrival. Your new feature at the junction with the Claedon Road was being constructed on adjudication day so we look forward to seeing it once completed.

### **General Impression:**

Glaslough has a long history in the TidyTowns Competition and over this time has developed a close working relationships with all the key stakeholders in the town. We are happy to see that in assessing your performance over the years you have the ability to see where you need to focus attention and then take positive actions to advance both your knowledge and practical application in projects on the ground. Well done to all involved in this years submission and we wish you continued success in 2011.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

The levels of participation in the TidyTowns Committee in Glaslough is most impressive with 15 members and 50 volunteers and there seems no doubt that the local level of interest and enthusiasm in TidyTowns is a reflection of your hard work and success in the competition to date. I concur with the first round adjudicator and encourage the committee to consider setting up a website and the use of email as both have been used very effectively by other groups as a means of communication and for broadening the appeal of TidyTowns. Don't forget, it can also help to minimise waste by reducing the numbers of printed leaflets, letters and newsletters required. The action plan provided was also read and considered to be a good comprehensive document. However, it is respectfully suggested that as the plan is to be reviewed for 2011, some consideration should be given to including a table which sets all projects (and proposed timeframes) under their respective tidy towns headings. Identifying projects for each category will help to ensure a balanced approach and enable you to obtain the highest marks possible. The documentation submitted with the entry form was also of a high standard.

Glaslough is a very attractive village with its built environment providing a number of its best features. The jewel in the crown is without a doubt, Castle Leslie. This complex of high quality and attractive properties and its immaculately maintained grounds is a joy to visit and it represents a tremendous asset for the village. A number of other buildings caught the eye of the adjudicator, particularly the terraced properties on Main Street, all of which are presented to a high standard. Some business premises also stood out and they include the Pillar House, the Coach House bar and the Antique shop opposite. The lovely phone box and the bus stop were also observed. The landscaped Leslie monument provides a lovely focal point for the village, while the new housing development opposite the impressive Community Centre was admired. I was delighted to find that the railway themed sculpture was in place for the second round adjudication and it didn't disappoint. It is noted that the refurbishment of the Community centre and rebuilding the derelict site were key projects for 2010 and you are to be congratulated on the completion of these projects.

The work undertaken by the Committee on landscaping projects was clearly visible during the second round adjudication. The floral display at the Leslie Monument and the landscaping at Tullyree caught the attention of the adjudicator, while the hanging baskets from the centre of the village to the junction of the Caledon Road added lovely summer colour. The landscaping in the grounds of the school and at the entrance signs to the village also impressed and like the first round adjudicator, I would encourage the committee to continue with their ambitious tree planting programmes. The comments of the Committee with respect to the Wildlife category are noted and you are to be commended on your efforts for the 2010 competition as they are positive steps in the right direction. The constructed wetland is a very interesting project as it sets out to combine good environmental management practice with habitat provision and development. A completed survey of the wildlife in the wetland area would also be useful and there seems little doubt that it represents a major opportunity for the Committee under this category. Are there plans to provide flora and fauna information signage in the wetland for interpretative purposes?

The adjudicator was very impressed with the standard of litter control in Glaslough with virtually no litter to be found on the day of the second round adjudication. Well done on this performance as it is clear that your hard work is making a difference and your approach to litter control is working well. Your actions with regard to waste minimisation are also to be commended, particularly your close working relationship with the school and the management of the Community centre to limit waste. However, additional actions such as a waste audit to ascertain how much recycling is taking place in Glaslough should be considered to further improve your performance under this category.

The standard of tidiness was generally very good (the abandoned car identified in the first round adjudication appeared to have been removed!) but some small improvements are possible. The speed limit signs on the Monaghan and Caledon approach roads were in need of a wash while the field gate opposite the railway sleeper bed on the Caledon Road was in need of paint. However, these are minor points and the standard of presentation of individual properties was very high with the residential area of Tullyree providing a highlight for

the adjudicator. The approach from Monaghan is of the highest standard, with lovely mature trees on one side and the natural stone estate wall of Castle Leslie on the opposite side. The verges are immaculately maintained and the highly original entrance signage is most attractive. Approaches from Caledon and Emyvale were also very good.

Glaslough is a lovely village and it is deserving of its title of one of the top performers in County Monaghan. With continuing good work from the tidy towns committee and improvements in key categories such as waste minimisation and wildlife, I have no doubt that you will continue to progress in the competition.