

# Tidy Towns Competition 2012

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Glaslough** Ref: **609**  
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **306**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **06/06/2012**  
**01/08/2012**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	50	40	42
Landscaping	50	41	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	19	22
Litter Control	50	36	38
Tidiness	30	23	25
Waste Minimisation	20	12	13
Residential Areas	40	32	33
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	36	36
General Impression	10	9	9
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>306</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

There are so many instances of 'new' appearing in your submission – new volunteers, new website, new village signage, new tree-planting, new tourism entry – it is salutary to match this to the perception of an old village. Perhaps this balance between innovation and tradition is one of the secrets of Glaslough's success. Your first class documentation demonstrates a remarkable sense of organisation under each heading. (You may indeed find that the act of writing the submission consolidates your own view of your activities. Incidentally, the type of binder used makes page-turning awkward and is not suitable for carrying in wet weather.) Do continue your excellent PR via the website, the local press, church notice boards, etc. Some committees have formed a Junior Tidy Towns, creating an official stamp on young involvement and ensuring the future: you may already have done this? Congratulations on your National Pride of Place competition placing. The neighbourhood of Donagh – seen when visiting the ancient graveyard – is very interesting, with evidence of a considerable population in the fairly recent past: do you consider this to be part of your remit?

### The Built Environment:

This adjudicator had not been in Glaslough for 5 or 6 years and some sensational restorations have taken place in the meantime, among them the conservation of the Diamond monument and the extensive 19c stone boundary walls. The rehabilitation of the Garden Lodge, the old Laundry and Trinity House has continued apace. The frontage of the Pillar Hotel with its Ionic motif was admired as was the handsome Coach House pub. Castle Leslie has been and is the progenitor of so many village features it is good to see how well the present hotel leads the way in conservation and sympathetic improvements. The Village Green housing has settled in well. This adjudicator found the restoration work on two street houses slightly coarse in comparison to what is seen elsewhere but the enterprise has been commendable. St Salvator's Church with its square tower is eminently picturesque. Is the Roman Catholic church some distance outside the village included in the competition?; presumably the Presbyterian church, being even further removed, is not – its wonderful

sylvan churchyard was admired. The Heritage Trail links important features in an interesting way.

### **Landscaping:**

The grounds of Castle Leslie could almost be described as an arboretum. On the date of the visit ponticum rhododendrons were still in flower – despised by many, they make a wonderful show. Shrub planting was admired. The landscaping at Tullyree is exceptionally well maintained, the mass of colour greeting visitors vividly on the Monaghan road. How were the advanced displays of annuals in beds, tubs and hanging baskets throughout the village so well achieved following the cold snap when other communities were complaining that they were not ready for judging? Flowering plants are presumably grown in your own polytunnel. The old graveyard with its quaint lych-gate is well kept. The ancient Donagh graveyard is also well kept and access is easy though a signpost at the foot of the lane would be a help; this is a remarkable vestige of the remote past. The illustrated information board was useful. The general roadside landscaping – hedges and wide trim grass verges – looked extremely orderly. The sculptural group recalling the railway era is ingenious.

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

The planting of trees is usually considered under this heading and the planting and management of hedgerows also: your achievement over the past year has been excellent in both. The Wildlife Trail with its connection of appropriate features was seen in parts. The wetland was favourably observed through a gate in sheets of rain. The horse-pond is thought to have been seen on Barrack Hill – maybe it is not yet readily identifiable. The willow structure was admired as was the recently improved entrance to the Oakland biodiversity garden and the 'still water' pond. The inventories of birds, butterflies, trees, hedgerows, with descriptions and notes on their importance, makes fascinating reading and we hope will be widely studied in the community. Your Biodiversity Plan is comprehensive and explains the topic in simple terms; key sections of the Action Plan appear already to have been implemented. It is encouraging to read that there is co-operation with groups in Co Armagh. The Constructed Wetlands document is especially interesting. The biodiversity garden at Scoil Mhuire impressed tremendously where the variety of plants seemed to be doing well, especially the cabbages! This is an immensely rewarding initiative and its impact should stay with many of the pupils for the rest of their lives.

### **Litter Control:**

Very little disposable litter was seen. As your dedicated litter pickers well know this is a variable. The Action Plan is clearly responsible for the excellent record but has it been ascertained where and by whom litter is regularly dropped? If littering could be prevented at source it would save many hours of energy spent on the not altogether creative activity of picking up.

### **Tidiness:**

So many categories come together under this heading. Rehabilitation of vacant houses in Main Street and the improvement of the entrance at Tullyree are among the major projects but in fact the overall sense of care and responsibility among householders and business people and the ongoing work of painting and repairing throughout the community makes it impossible to be specific: in other words, Glaslough is a very tidy village.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The greenhouse at the school built from over 2,000 recycled plastic bottles is extraordinary and highly commendable. Allied to this is your much needed scheme for green-school travel, Walk on Wednesdays to school and allied themes, the associated activities illustrated in photographs where the children are seen enjoying educational days out of doors. The involvement of pupils and teachers, and no doubt parents too, in school activities is splendid. The awarding of Green Flag status will it is hoped show how highly their work is regarded. This reader found the report on waste water disposal quite alarming yet hopeful where it is seen that the Local Authority is taking serious measures. It is good to read that you have recycled builders waste, an unusual activity. The recycled bottle initiative reads well too and especially so does the recycling of spruce trees from the Castle Leslie estate for use in kerb construction and other structures.

### **Residential Areas:**

It is the houses of the older core of the village that give Glaslough its special character. A series of new housing estates dating from the mid 20th century are less interesting and are judged on the way they are maintained by their residents: except for the Village Green development of a few years back which manages to bestride both worlds harmoniously. Tullyree is notable for its community feeling and for the vibrancy of its communal gardens and garden adornments, entirely in contrast with the nearby Village Green. Culbanagher was seen to be spic and span, its approach particularly admired. The formality of Liosbanagher for a modern development captured the attention. In a few years' time with the weathering process the houses of the Village Green will appear to casual passers by as something brilliantly preserved from an earlier age. At present tree planting seemed somewhat insufficient: trees would not be inimical to the spirit of the concept. The houses on all estates are maintained with real pride. Several individual suburban homes with fine gardens

were seen. The converted Railway Station is exceedingly handsome.

**Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Road surfaces and road marking are of high quality. Paving is also of good quality. The maintenance of approaches to the town give a very good first impression. Signposting is clear and adequate except in one place mentioned above. There do not appear to be any nasty corners or unpleasant entrance and alleys.

**General Impression:**

The combination of sustained physical work and confident scientific research has placed Glaslough at the head of its county. The involvement of the entire community is evident and in particular the creative input of school children. It is hoped that the village will go even further in the course of time.

**Second Round Adjudication:**

Your 2nd round adjudicator had not visited Glaslough before and this was a great experience. It was noted that a 3 Year Tidy Towns Plan was not submitted with your entry this year. Some projects seemed to be repeated in various adjudication categories. The excellently presented approach roads on all sides set up very high expectations for the village in the mind of the first time visitor. These expectations are delivered in full on entering this attractive village of great character. Heritage seems to dominate the view in all directions and the many well presented stone buildings were greatly admired. The Oakland Recreation Centre as a modern architectural statement sits well in the wider heritage context of Glaslough. The Bring Centre here was neat and tidy. Landscaping has been used creatively here to add to the character of the village but without dominating the visual appeal. For example on New Line the interesting use of an old fallen log to add some colour to this area was admired together with the nearby railway feature. Various housing areas were visited and the Village Square area is superbly presented. The overall presentation of the village in the tidiness context was found to be excellent.