

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Glaslough** Ref: **609**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **311**
Category: **B** Date(s): **24/06/2013**
30/07/2013

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2012	Mark Awarded 2013
Overall Development Approach	50	46	47
The Built Environment	50	42	43
Landscaping	50	42	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22	24
Litter Control	50	38	38
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	13	14
Tidiness	30	25	25
Residential Areas	40	33	33
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	36	36
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	306	311

Overall Development Approach:

Your adjudicator would like to welcome back Glaslough to the 2013 National TidyTowns Competition. You have a great number of members on your committee (30) as well as a high number of volunteers for the various events and activities that you organise. The wide range and number of individual and businesses that support your work indicates the pride across the community of Glaslough. The sustained efforts and the development of a community plan through consultation in Spring this year is to be commended. The report was viewed and has a great emphasis on sustainable business development across the community. Thank you for the detailed submission and good luck with the entry to the separate awards. The maps provided were good – perhaps the writing could be in white (not red) to make it easier to read please? At this standard in the competition your entry could be on 100% post-consumer recycled paper and folders should also be from recycled materials.

The Built Environment:

The work on the signal house looked very well and will be an excellent asset here when complete. The road at the signal house was surprisingly busy and care should be taken in attracting pedestrians here. Horse pond is a lovely area – be careful to keep planting here quite natural to fit in with the rural surroundings. The estate buildings, railings and all related infrastructure is exemplary. The homes and business premises on the main street of Glaslough mostly presented very well bar those with more recently rendered walls. Even the local pizzeria blended in well as Ambledown cottage had the traditional split doors. The community should be highly commended for the historical and information signage provided through Glaslough. Details of past stars (Honest John McKenna) and present stars (Charlene McKenna) of Glaslough were great to read. It was no surprise also to read of visitors attracted to your community including Yeats and more recently Paul McCartney.

Landscaping:

Your adjudicator liked the use of sunflowers in planting schemes by the estate walls which will look wonderful for second round adjudication. The line of yew-trees in the 1892 graveyard were admired – these trees were grown in graveyards as they provide a straight, strong wood suitable for arrows, but are poisonous to cattle. The recycling of the fallen oak as a planter, by the information board on oaks and trees in Glaslough is an excellent touch.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The wildlife trail, information boards and QR codes are an excellent initiative. Your adjudicator could not get the code to work though due to the notice bolt being positioned in the middle of the QR code. The information on these is excellent and your adjudicator did see a jay as a matter of fact just before reading panel about the seven species of crows that can be seen around Glaslough! It was a wonderful close-up look at a jay, a first for some years. Thank you for arranging that. Your biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2014 was inspected and it is good to read that it links in with the County's biodiversity action plan. The proposed amendments will be good to implement. Both the functional and educational benefits of the integrated constructed wetlands are to be highly commended. Herons were also seen here during adjudication, not just on the notice board! The dedicated biodiversity action plan for St Mary's National school 2012/13 is highly commendable and the breadth of subjects covered from seed collection, garden bird surveys to mini-beats and bee days were great. On adjudication day the green flag was flying high – justly so. You have had a great number of experts to visit the community. It was heartening to see similar workshops for the wider community including the dawn chorus and the tree identification workshop. The bee workshop would no doubt be of interest to the GIY volunteers. The labours of the seed collection will be interesting and hope you get a good crop of young trees to replant in the community. Your adjudicator particularly liked the links made between ash seeds, and future achievements of Monaghan's hurling team!

Litter Control:

Thank you for the pictures of your community helping out at the clean-up days. The message to pick up litter whenever you see it was a good one to share. You also ran a poster competition for correct disposal of gum with some great images and slogans. Your adjudicator particularly liked the poem 'With gum in their beak, The birds grow weak, They can't eat, Never mind tweet!'. However it has not been proven scientifically that gum has any direct impact on birds, no matter how offensive it is as an item of litter.

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

You have provided details of many different examples of waste and resource management good practice. The water butts installed at the community centre were noted and will help in having a free supply to water planters etc here. The sharing of the food waste video with all staff who work in the community on food production is another good example of work to date. Hopefully you will have had a large number of relevant and interested attendees at the Food Waste seminar planned at the community centre this Summer. You have many other novel activities such as cycling proficiency classes, and the creation of the community wildlife notice boards from recycled street poles, and water cistern floats. Again all very commendable and will have a knock on effect across the wider community to instil actions to reduce wastage. Perhaps the installation of a push tap at the fountain could conserve more water? Are these Christmas lights in situ here?

Tidiness:

The phone box on the main street was dirty, and the phone was not working. Some TidyTowns communities have converted their phone box into a local information area displaying their TidyTowns medals! Be careful regarding the number of signs at the Post Office – it was good to see this business busy so early in the morning. The Post Office in Smithborough could be an example of how a post office's colour décor can be of a heritage theme.

Residential Areas:

The range of private and estate homes through Glaslough were nicely presented. The cottages at TullyRee were very well presented. The steps at Cul Bannagher were surprisingly stately for a residential estate, and they appeared clean and well kept. Hanging baskets and planters in this and all estates looked very well. Trees and individual homes in Ard Banagher were well. The wildlife garden here is a wonderful corner to the estate – a great find behind the entrance walls. It was noted that grass cuttings here were dumped at the back of the estate – perhaps these could be composted also? The village square was nicely presented and every house had the ubiquitous name plaque – maybe allow some personality of homes to develop here so as not to seem too regimented? The native hedging looked well – perhaps a willow sculpture for resident children could be an addition here in the central grassed area?. Is there a Residents Association here? What would they like to see? There were numerous bird tables and feeders noted. The old chicken house is now nearly totally obscured with overgrowth en route to the Horse Pond.

The Gallops communal area needs some attention – what is the plan here for the unfinished homes? The large auctioneer sign here was dirty and should be removed/replaced.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

It was felt that you have tightly mowed all of your verges up to the edges of the estate walls or hedges. If you graduated the mowing here, or just mowed circa a width of around 50 cm you could allow more plants to flower thus creating 'bee-lines' further enhancing your biodiversity. Hedges looked wonderful with wild roses and elder flowers all in bloom on adjudication day. Hoey's trail was being resurfaced and will be a lovely amenity when finished.

General Impression:

Glaslough is an excellently presented estate village that has used the refurbishment of the estate to its advantage. You have excelled in many different categories of the competition and continue to deliver inventive actions of relevance to your community that will also help gain marks in this competition.

Second Round Adjudication:

This adjudicator was most impressed with the level of attention that so clearly has been devoted to the TidyTowns Project over recent years. Evident also is the community-wide involvement that must be required to achieve such results. The quality of the interpretive material was seen to be excellent albeit with a few typographical errors. The bird panel at the watering place was much admired. A real sense of history is achieved by a visit to Glaslough, the notable persons of the area include some great characters. Roadsides were very neatly kept indeed. A little litter was seen during the 2nd Round Adjudication. However, this was more than compensated for by the pristine and floral condition of the bring centre - not easily achieved - well done! The utility pole which bears the Birch tree sign has a damaged (ESB) plate which should be removed. The nearby 'caution children' sign is also damaged.

The adjudicator was forced to conclude that the roadside hedgerow on the left hand side of the road entering the village from Monaghan had been cut since the end of February. This contravenes the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, which forbids the cutting of woody vegetation, including hedgerows between the months of March and August (inclusive), as is stated on one of your own wildlife signs. A point will unfortunately therefore be deducted from the Wildlife and Natural Amenities Category score. It must be said however, that the efforts of the group in this category have otherwise been exemplary.

The way in which Glaslough celebrates its long heritage was very much admired. In particular, the monuments to its railway past was much enjoyed. Congratulations to Glaslough TidyTowns.