

# Tidy Towns Competition 2016

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Glaslough** Ref: **609**  
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **324**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **17/06/2016**  
**31/07/2016**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2015</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2016</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	47	47
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	45	45
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44	45
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	29	30
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	65
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	35	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	38
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>324</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Thank you kindly for the very comprehensive entry form which was, if a little on the over attention to detail side, expertly put together.

Galsough is welcomed to the 2016 Supervalu Tidy Towns competition.

It should be noted at the outset of this report that because the final submission has to be confined to 3 pages max covering 8 categories the adjudicator was not in a position to reflect everything that was in your lengthy entry form and supplementary support material.

Rest assured that the adjudication was done in a fair and impartial manner as per the adjudication guidelines as well as any comments from last year's reports that need referring to.

The map supplied was excellent and well done to the young person that undertook this task.

Similarly the numerated resume of work under each category heading was most useful to the adjudicator in his job. I suppose when one enters Glaslough one realises that it's a place that has a different character or resonance that one does not find finds in other villages in Ireland.

The adjudicator noted that it was more closely associated with the adjoining villages of Tynan and Caledon in counties Armagh and Tyrone respectively both of which have Ulster Scots links

You are very fortunate also that Glaslough is probably the only estate village in Ireland that has an "active" Castle and Estate

The village benefits greatly from the commercial activities of Castle Leslie and on adjudication day in mid-June there were fair number of visitors noted.

It is very clear that there is a great sense of pride of place in the village as there was on-going basic maintenance being undertaken by residents in Tullyree and grass cutting near the Oakland playground with grass cuttings no doubt bound for the self-composting system.

You have a very proactive committee of 30 with additional supplementary volunteer personnel that you can rely on for additional duties.

The 3 year multi annual plan is detailed under each category and is practical and objective.

The Junior Tidy Towns Section is the most organised that the adjudicator has come across over the years, this is exceptional in the context of tidy towns given the size of the Village.

As with most Tidy Towns committees you strive earnestly to improve and the results of your interactions with the local authority, other agencies and most importantly the local community organisations have paid handsome dividends.

The adjudicator just wondered, given the impressive list of agencies and other organisations that you engage with, was there any involvement with the seniors of the parish through Active Retirement or Mens Shed if there is one in Glaslough.

This age group have acquired a lot of knowledge and skills over life and could be a valuable resource.

As a village that aims for perfection you are probably in a position to attract more business support that other

villages could ever aspire to.

Also as jewel in the crown in the county the local authority would be more likely to look favourably on your requests for additional support resources.

There are some very innovative new ideas included in this category, too many to mention but the adjudicator was very impressed with your web presence and the manner in which you have used social media to inform and effect change.

Thank you also for your very favourable comments on what the Tidy Towns competition means to you as a community.

One slight negative under the section "groups work contributing to the community" the comment "one which is envied by many!" Not sure if it's a necessary input

Think of your neighbours in the village down the road, who have to contend with constant heavy volumes of traffic that impact on the life of its residents.

### **Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:**

The standard under this category was extremely good with all the key constituents of what good practice is all about adhered to.

The striking thing that one observes is that the basics of good maintenance are applied throughout the village and its surrounds.

Premises are kept in good condition by owners and on the day in question some were undergoing painting and other basic improvements

The Village infrastructure is one in keeping with that of a planned landed estate village and efforts have been made to retain that legacy.

The village of course was saved the curse of the boom years – mass development and amen to that.

The core of the village is blessed that it has virtually no traffic problems and the road and footpath infrastructure is in top condition. No need for traffic calming in Glaslough !

The village has benefited from having cables being put underground years back, hence there are no obtrusive overhead wires spoiling the skyline.

The street lighting is very impressive and lampposts are placed a suitable distance apart

The following are a few highlights that appealed to this adjudicator during his visit, The Church of Ireland Parochial Hall such a fine stone building of similar construction to buildings observed in the neighbouring Tyrone village of Caledon

The appropriate plaques honouring Glaslough's involvement in Tidy Towns were admired as was the donation box, all sponsored and supplied by local companies.

Practical community support at its best as alluded to in the previous section.

The bollards and seating at the Charles Powell Leslie Memorial were in pristine condition and the flower containers were ornate and well preserved.

The themed signage is a feature of the village and again this has been sponsored by local development association and tidy towns. Branding at its best and the use of the Irish language was noted.

The Oakland Recreation, a change from the ubiquitous Leisure, Centre was in excellent condition and surrounding areas were clean with railings freshly painted.

Credit is due to the personnel that look after its upkeep.

The area in front of the recycling centre was nicely cordoned off with attractive panelling.

The 1916 plaque simple in design and centrally located was very impressive.

The 1798 plaque erected in 1998 looked as if it recently had been cleaned.

Pillar House was nicely kept and the adjoining area had the flags flying for the Euro Qualifiers.

The Coach house and the under construction Coach House garden were also visited and the adjudicator was taken with the old horse trap filled with jute bags with one of Monaghan's oldest merchants name stencilled on them.

St Marys National School on the outskirts was very well looked after and its unique community garden was visited, well done to the children that were attending to flower beds on the day.

There were many fine private residences observed in the core area of the village and credit due the owners for the manner in which they maintain their premises.

Castle Leslie, with its various facilities such as the equestrian centre and accommodation units and of course its famous grounds, was in excellent condition.

The construction work mentioned here would be outside the remit of a tidy towns committee one would have thought!

Finally Treanors the village shop and upstairs quirky and inviting coffee dock is a hub of activity and interaction with the very engaging and communicative staff gave one a further insight into life in Glaslough.

Overall the standard was very good.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

The amount of work undertaken year on year in this category has been quite considerable and this year is no different some thoughtful planning has gone into this process.

For instance not too many would have thought of trimming trees to allow light for the better growth of wildflowers.

It is noted in your resume of work that much of what is done is basic replenishment combined with some new planting arrangements.

The first impressions of any village or town are created at entrances and the entrances into Glaslough have been so enhanced by green verges and planting/ flower arrangements of high quality

An array of colour greets you when you enter the village itself and compliments to the residents that have put hanging baskets and individual planters in place.

The involvement of the Junior Tidy Towns in this category is very much evident in the creation of the new fairy

garden in the Oakland Biodiversity Garden.

This type of project is very much in keeping of what is required under the special Youth Award which GJTT has entered in.

The other works carried out since last year and outlined in your main document were visited and noted.

Tullyree both Upper and Lower were very impressive and the stoned beds populated with some old reliable annuals appealed to this adjudicator.

As one approaches the village via the Middletown road you can see the change affected by the planting of hornbeam and whitethorn hedge as recommended in last year's report.

Just to note that a number of numerated projects in your main document were down as commenced in November 2016 which is incorrect of course as the evidence of your efforts were very much to the fore when these areas were visited.

What you have done in the course of a year necessitated inputs and monetary contributions from many sources.

The participation of school children in this category should be highlighted not alone are the children making a worthwhile contribution but they are also learning skills that they may well develop as they get older.

So well done to the teachers, pupils and parents of both national schools

To have been able to harnesses these and manage them effectively and get the work completed as well is some achievement.

The adjudicator was very impressed with the provision of a wildflower verge on the Caledon entrance this of course also contributes to the promotion of various forms of insect wildlife and acts as a permanent wildlife habitat.

Finally a word of praise to one of your newest volunteers for her work in designing such attractive landscape and wildlife signage.

Overall some excellent work done since last year and very much deserving of an increase in marks

### **Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádurtha:**

First off for the detailed explanation and the circumstances that led to the hedge cutting on the particular day one has to say that this was outside everybody's control.

These things happen and life goes on after all the passing of one of the parish's oldest citizens had a more pronounced effect on the community than a loss of a mark in tidy towns

Consider your mark restored.

For many centres this is a category that has presented certain difficulties simply because they did not have the where with all to engage effectively with the guidelines.

This is certainly not a problem for Glaslough as you have embraced the category and are involved in very relevant projects that contribute both the conservation and promotion of wild life in the greater Glaslough area.

The adjudicator was very impressed with the Bee Project and the involvement of St Marys NS pupils in both a poster and slogan competition and with "Butterflies at the Bilis" at Bilis NS.

Also the PATCH network is a very novel type project which this adjudicator was not familiar with.

On looking up the website the benefits of involvement are very worthwhile and again it's good to see both National Schools involved

Engagement with the young people of the community is key to giving them exposure to further knowledge that will be retained hopefully for life.

Other simple measure such as the provision of bat, swift boxes, insect and lady bird houses are all major contributors to the preservation and promotion of various wild life species.

The Heritage and Natural Greenscape plan for 2016 was perused.

The committee deserves credit for recognising in its submission the work of local businessman who made the boxes and donated them for free, all the more noteworthy. because of his personal circumstances.

The bio diversity garden and algae pond were also visited and the information board gives a very informative low down.

Some very fine work that involves the community and schools in many instances is being done in this category.

The restoration of the one mark is very much warranted.

### **Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:**

Congratulations to the committee on winning the EPA Waste Prevention Award in the competition in 2015 this was very much a collaboration of the Tidy Towns and other community stakeholders primarily residents and businesses Some excellent work is being done by the committee to promote the whole ethos and culture of best practice and promote the ethos of the need to decrease the production of unnecessary waste.

The Bring Ban Facility at the Oakland Centre was excellent, well managed, clean and free from loose refuse bags that one encounters in some towns and villages and had excellent identification signs for different waste categories. Didn't get to experience the inside of Ambledown Cottage as the Pizzeria does not open until 7pm but it is certainly unique to find out that each piece of furniture is made of recycled material.

Once again the involvement of school children in this category is very noteworthy as documented per project number 88.

The adjudicator would have liked to know more about the re-usable drink bottle project from a personal perspective – most innovative but straight forward ide.

The use of social media is seen in this category at its positive best as it acts as a go between for the community who want exchange or donate items that can be recycled and reused.

It has been noted in yours and other entry forms that Monaghan Tidy Towns Network organised a conference specifically under this category.

SWARM another new acronym to add to my list.

Well done on the Pop up Shops, Greener Glaslough. Survey by Junior Tidy Towns, food waste education awareness and water collection and consumption monitoring.

All are very much within the Sustainable Waste and Resource Management ethos.  
Very much deserving of an additional mark in this very important category of the competition.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

The Village core area was free of litter on the day but the greater area for consideration had a few pieces of litter here and there.

Plastic bottles and coffee up caps were observed on the path walk into the village from St Marys NS.

Similarly on the Caledon Road some wrappers were found at the relatively new wildlife verge after also at the extreme entrance from this area

I'm intrigued at your insert "effort to reduce clutter at Daybreak" which I presume refers to Treanor's shop?

This adjudicator has seen far more obtrusive shop fronts over the years!

There are a great diverse collection of signs and plaques in Glaslough and by the way it's good to see Honest John McKenna founding member and first manager of Liverpool FC being honoured in his native village.

Most of the signs are clear and visible but a few are fading because of exposure of light and sun.

The old bicycle in the Up Cycle garden looks as if it is going to disintegrate and the adjudicator is not quite sure if it's an exhibit or a relic of old decency.

Maybe it could be re positioned in a less public place -I was tempted to use the obvious pun but desisted from doing so.

The stations for bags and the need to reduce bins are good ideas as it puts the onus on individuals to take their own litter home with them.

Overall a good performance in this category and retention of mark achieved last year.

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

The standard of presentation in this category was very good in both private and local authority houses.

Some very fine properties were viewed on the outskirts of the village and these were complemented by most attractive gardens.

The Lios Beannagaher and Ard Beannagher areas were of a most rare and eye catching design and the residents are to be complemented on keeping individual premises in very good condition.

The entrance into Ard Banagher had a very fine arch stone wall enhanced by on the wall floral arrangements and directly inside on the green mound was lovely designed shrub or flower bed template

Tullyree is a very well established development that has matured with age and that has some excellent stone flower beds populated by colourful annuals.

The green areas are in top condition and trees have added to the attractiveness of the area.

The Cottages down further are also older and established in the village for quite some decades.

Houses here are also presented to a very high standard

Both of these developments have some lovely cottage type front gardens and credit is due to the residents for the manner in which they have presented their properties

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

This is the category that impressed the adjudicator most as first impressions create good/bad feeling about a place.

Glaslough is fortunate to have an array of attractive entrances against a backdrop of lush Monaghan country side.

The entrance from Emyvale could be described as a shrine to the old Glaslough Railway and on the day in question many drivers stopped to view the information board.

The Monaghan entrance has a long path/walkway in from St Marys National School enhanced by fine hedgerow and older trees that one associates with estate villages.

Caledon road entrance has the Castle Entrance, back entrance one would presume, and new wildflower verge.

The adjudicator came into the village via part of the Middletown road and this was being re surfaced.

All these entrances were further enhanced by combinations of attractive entry signs.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Glaslough the Green Lake has been at the high end of the Tidy Towns competition for many years.

A national winner in 1978 it strives to attain the ultimate objective year on year.

This year is no different and you are wished well for this year and future years ahead.

Enthusiasm is one of the key elements of your success but desist from making unnecessary add on comments ( in CIP section) in future entries.

You are the keepers of a rich heritage treasure it.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

It was the pleasant duty of this adjudicator to visit Glaslough for the first time and the experience was one of much delight. It was a surprise that a village would have a list of 124 projects and while these were marked on a map the numbers were difficult to find because they were not in any sequence and one at least we could not find. The order being linked to the criteria, not the location. May we suggest that in future applications, arrange the project numbers first in a sequence in accordance with location. Then attach a separate list with the numbers and the project titles to reduce the problem of going over and back through the application. Since each location has a number of features for each criteria, they can be grouped together and by that means reduce the total number. Please remember that the adjudicator is not familiar with your village or the projects and anything you can do to make the task easier will be appreciated. The Diamond is a most attractive village centre with its main feature being the memorial to Charles Powell Leslie flanked with railings and a backdrop of Yew trees. Charles has a wonderful view of fine two story

stone buildings which frame the streetscape and no overhead wires to obstruct the view. It was noted that newer buildings nearby were constructed with materials which reflect the colour of the stone and therefore blend in well. All doors are painted green which indicates a level of planning/agreement within the community. The standard of the many plant containers/floral displays is very high and we note your choice of colour scheme. Everything in this area greatly pleased, whether it was the comfortable seats, the attractive traditional street lights, an old telephone box converted to an information centre or the various plaques highlighting your success in this competition. We also liked the bilingual information signs and finger post signs. We admired the Coachhouse garden with its attractive layout and high standard of maintenance. The metal plant containers on Piers resemble baskets and are quite unusual. They looked very well. The Village Square with a beech hedge bounding the open space is an attractive focal point for the interesting house styles. The modern Oakland Recreation Centre is well situated and includes facilities such as a playground in an open space and added attractions such as the biodiversity garden. The bring banks were clean and we noted the pleasant screening. Across the road, the allotments seem well used. At St. Mary's National School we saw the polytunnel and admired the lilies which were about to open their flowers. The sculptures of recycled cans also caught our eye. On Caledon Road, we question the need for flower beds at corners of the stone wall; they are not necessary in this location. The Ardbanagher residential estate entrance has a number of items, including floral displays and we suggest that a simpler treatment would perhaps be more pleasing. The wildlife strip along the wall is a novel approach. The old railway station feature is very interesting and well done. We admired the stone wall and stone piers in this vicinity which indicate the quality of the station area in its heyday. The Leslie estate with its fine castle, wonderful trees, walkways and gardens is a wonderful part of the village complex. Congratulations on your 50 years of participation in the competition and well done on your achievements.