

# Tidy Towns Competition 2018

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Glaslough** Ref: **609**  
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **338**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **21/06/2018**  
**28/07/2018**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2017</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2018</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	47	49
Streetscape & Public Places	50	45	46
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	47	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	30	32
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	19	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	67	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	37	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	38
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>338</b>

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte róimh chuig Glasloch /Glaslough Comortas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu agus chuig Céiliúadh go Bliain an Chomortais! The TT committee may be surprised to learn that this adjudicator passed through Glaslough many times on the Great Northern Railway without stopping! It was only latterly that he rediscovered the village as a biologically diverse and townscape high-spot, and came to admire the energy and vision of the TT committee and its associates. Congratulations on your gold medal in the Entente Florale. It is very encouraging to learn that you have a well-established Junior TT: the entries below are infused with the activities of the school and young people generally. It is also good to read that you have a Youth Officer and a Climate Change Officer: such designations place you far ahead of so many other centres in advanced thinking. Your interaction with the Local Authority is exemplary. There is evidence of immense community spirit that includes the practical support of local businesses. The Multi-Annual Plan, now in its final year, must have been an exceptionally useful yardstick by which to measure progress under a number of headings, many of which will remain ongoing. “Developing the community is about developing the social capital” may be taken as your quintessential motto.

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

The curve of the main street, the articulation of the old houses on the hill near the old Laundry, the spaciousness of The Diamond, conspire to create a picturesque streetscape that is possibly second to none in this country. Until reading your notes this visitor would not have realised that the somewhat Scottish-looking gate houses are vacant, so well kept are they by the Leslie estate staff. It is seen that Castle Leslie is not among the buildings included in the TT submission, presumably because it is private property: yet it is ‘public’ in the sense of being famous for its hospitality; if it were included there would clearly be additional marks under Buildings and Landscaping. Renovation of the Old Laundry Building is a great success. Best wishes for your restoration of the GNR station; the signal box was looking splendid. Lott’s Architects absorbing critical Survey, with its recommendations for planning and development stemming from details of Glaslough’s growth from the very distant past, is of exceptional interest. Signposting and illustrated information-panels throughout the village are useful and easily comprehended. Dignity and charm combine at St Salvator’s church, half-concealed by immemorial yews. The Roman Catholic church has an unusually plain look while the Presbyterian church is more decorative in its architectural stylishness than is normal; it is notable for its superb beech and copper-beech trees and for the caring manner in which the churchyard monuments are maintained.

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

The importance of the polytunnel can hardly be over-estimated in the production of your plants, of which you note 6,000. Purpose-made planters at the Diamond monument create a sense of care as well as colour at this significant

location. The Coach garden is particularly inspirational: this visitor did not know that its shape is inspired by the Donagh cross. It is interesting that there is now a management plan for Donagh graveyard: this visitor was fascinated by the well-scripted account of its history on view at the site. Glennan graveyard with its stout timber fencing was favourably noted. The new Sensory Garden was visited having read your description of its involvement. The secluded garden at Pillar House with its climbers, perennials and shrubs was admired – it is good to note that you are promoting perennials more and more. The young beech hedging near the Oatlands Centre appeared to be doing well. Well done to all those households who display and maintain hanging baskets, window-boxes and tubs that add to the overall sense of pride.

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

The Multi-Annual Plan contains a useful definition of Biodiversity among its other essential information. The updated (May 2018) Biodiversity Map gives an instantly understandable idea of the different land categories with clear classification. This visitor was particularly interested in the integrated constructed wetlands – GM1 on the map. – and wonders if any of the ponds can have been used for steeping flax? a practise that died out in the mid 20c. The illustrated 'Natural Heritage & Greenscape Plan' is relevant here. The three trails – Hoey's Tree Trail, the Wild Life Trail and the Heritage Trail – brought to bear the thought of how well Glaslough is positioned for 'green' tourism. The Tree Survey and Management Plan from Denis Flannery impressed by the thoroughness of its detail and its very varied recommendations and comment – such as 'Crown lift for public safety' and 'A noteworthy specimen'. The biodiversity friendly garden was visited having read your notes about recent updating, and the enlargement and advancement of the Butterfly garden was favourably noted. It is interesting to read that you took the advice of the Entente Florale judges in planting three oaks on the Emyvale road. The fact that both the Local Authority and the Castle Leslie gardeners help in managing your trees speaks well for the cooperative effort.

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

Days before the visit the adjudicator received notification of St Mary's school's success with its 6th Green Flag award, "for Global Citizenship, Litter and Waste": heartiest congratulations to the pupils, teachers and parents. The Green Flag programme has been the most successful initiative in creating an understanding nationwide of this increasingly important topic. The school grounds were not entered but it was observed that the allotments were more extensive and productive than the norm. Plastic-free lunches, walking and cycling to school, the creation of functional art through recycled material and the highly serious Cycle against Suicide campaign are among the activities described that impressed no end. The Greener Glaslough campaign impressed too, embracing the circular economy. Well done in bringing your initiative to the public by means of workshops and exhibitions. Reuse and Reduce: the community library established from books is one of the highly creative components. The clothes swap reminds this adjudicator of similar, though less well organised, during the 1950s when economic need was the driver. You are connected, so to speak, with all manner of water management and harvesting projects; it is likely that these will become a necessity before long. The final results of the Better Energy community pilot project will be looked forward to. It is extremely heartening to read that over sixty people attended your Recycling Workshop, a high percentage of the population. The Drumlin Trails E-bikes initiative with PMQ Stores looks like the start of something that will proliferate to the advantage of whatever communities take it up.

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

It is symptomatic of the attitude of your voluntary helpers, and especially the young people, that they vie for who returns from patrols with the least litter! It seems to have been a very effective move to institute the 'Beautiful Glaslough' awards. The village and its surroundings were virtually litter-free on the date of the visit; congratulations to those who take part in your rostered litter management programme. The litter bag dispensers, diversely positioned, are a bright idea. The Bring Centre is remarkably well kept, a tough obligation. Good to read that you take part in the national clean-ups. A visual blemish is a rusty corrugated-iron roof near the Equestrian Centre.

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

Almost all of Glaslough is residential. Traditional street homes are presented with pride and where there is vacancy it is understood that the TidyTowns committee carefully looks after the exterior of the (few) properties. With time the Village Square has blended well with the older streetscape and no longer has the look of 'pastiche' 19th century, in fact from a distance (or from photographs) the dwellings look as if they have been present for a very long time. It was the opinion of this adjudicator when these houses were planned that the scheme was to be welcomed. (If anything, it is the suburban estates on the edge of the village that look out of place by comparison!) Lisbanagher, Culbanagher and Ardbanagher are very well presented, the former with a bright and clean playground. On arrival from Monaghan the profusion of colourful planting on the green at The Cottages caught the attention immediately; among the child-friendly features are individual swings. Safety measures were admired at the Oakland centre where there is a really first-class playground.

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

Old stone walls on two approach roads are reminders of a highly significant part of our history; successful repairs were seen. Absence of a directional sign to Donagh graveyard where it is most needed at the foot of the lane should be rectified. Verges on all approaches were trim on the date of the visit: it is hoped that work on the improved sidewalk to St Mary's school will shortly begin. The school car park was seen to have been recently resurfaced. The car park at the Roman Catholic church was spic and span; your solution to parking at Barrack Hill is applauded. Regarding approaches, there is no doubt that the TT committee is very much aware of first impressions as well as, and more importantly, local safety and convenience.

## **Concluding Remarks:**

Reading in advance your submission with its many attachments and appendices – brochures, reports, surveys – was thought to be as interesting as visiting the village itself: but, in the event, nothing can compare with being present in Glaslough and absorbing to the full the extensively conserved inheritance from the past, the sensitive care of the present, and the deeply considered provision for the future.

## **Second Round Adjudication:**

It was a pleasure to revisit Glaslough for second adjudication this year and witness how the committee has managed to maintain the achievements of previous years while at the same time bring on board new projects; the presentation of the village was superb throughout the summer. It is a pleasure to note the benefits to the Glaslough community of participation in the Tidy Towns Competition. The information provided with this year's entry was very well organized and facilitated adjudication.

The overall appearance of streetscape in Glaslough is one of high visual amenity with its handsome period buildings and beautifully presented street furniture. One is not disappointed on leaving the main thoroughfare to explore the periphery as the same high standard of presentation features throughout the village and there is so much of interest to explore.

A good balance has been attained within the village between summer flowering displays, permanent planting, well maintained green spaces and roadside verges. Both the Tree Trail, Wildlife Trail and Sensory Garden are a delightful and rewarding experience and of course the Constructed Integrated Wetland and Amenity Development is fascinating also.

Well done on recording Glaslough's biodiversity and uploading to the National Data Biodiversity Centre and on the Wildlife Workshops and training together with Water Protection measures.

The recycling point features good visual amenity and the overall appearance of the village was one of tidiness with no visible litter, dumping, fly posters or other unsightly elements; your treatment of vacant premises is excellent. Residential developments are beautifully presented and the open plan arrangement at the Village Square / Green is both orderly and ascetically pleasing.

Approach roads and entrances to Glaslough raise expectations of the settlement ahead and one is not disappointed upon arrival. All signage and street furniture are attractively presented. The approach from the school with its high stone wall, neat hedgerow and pedestrian pathway behind a well-maintained grass verge is exemplary and contrasts to a degree with Caledon Road (past the Gallops estate) with its stretch of stone / brick wall in need of refurbishment.

The deep commitment of the Glaslough community to their home-place is evident in all aspects of the management of the village; community spirit is obviously strong and vibrant!