

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Glaslough - Glasloch** Ref: **609**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **361**
Category: **B** Date(s): **18/06/2022**
26/07/2022

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	51	52
Streetscape & Public Places	80	48	50
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	49	50
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	34	36
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	24	25
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	69	71
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	38	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	39
TOTAL MARK	550	352	361

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2022. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór... Welcome to the 2022 Supervalu Tidy Towns competition. Thank you for your commitment to your place in these ever changing times. Many thanks for entry form and map with the locations clearly marked and for including your Annual Plan and Biodiversity Plan. The photos that accompany your application were very helpful. Your committee has 25 members and your impressive numbers of volunteers that you can call upon illustrates a well knitted community. GTT makes good use of technology with a strong online ethos in addition to traditional methods to promote your activities. You have links with a wide range of agencies to support your work and it is obvious Junior tidy towns plays an important role. It is encouraging to read that you have set up a Hands Free Youth Club focused on building skills in 13-18 year olds. These teenagers have been instrumental in designing the new Autism garden in partnership with GDA-Busy Bees pottery and engaging with Cruinniú na nOg, the flagship initiative of the Creative Irelands Programme for Youth Plan. Their work achievements will be celebrated on the 11th June when the programme goes live with an open day and exhibition planned to coincide with the official opening of the autism garden. We wish to thank the 30 members for all their work. A fantastic achievement. Your involvement in the competition for 56 years was crowned in 2019 when you won the Overall tidy towns Competition after 41 years since you last won. This has strengthened the groups focus and inspired and motivated communities all across the country. The proactive approach your group takes in giving advice to other groups is much appreciated and allows you spread the ethos of your work. We wish you success for Communities in Bloom competition which was cancelled in 2020/21 and you can now look forward to the visit of the international adjudicators this June with your theme 'The Year of the Garden'. Continued success.

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

Glaslough is a picturesque village with so many aspects to explore. We enjoyed the natural stone walls and the yellow benches. Oaklands Centre & Park continues to grow in strength with the new Autism path offering a series of garden rooms designed using a variety of surfaces, materials, seating, utensils and structures, combining old and new. The appeal of novelty is as strong in this garden as it is in other areas of the park; personalised tiles, tree stumps, pots & pans, musical instruments and the planting is equally naturalistic featuring ornamental fruit, birch and clematis threaded through the new pergola. The groups attention about the provenance of the products and the benefits of sustainable practices reflects the GTT forward working ethos. More space has been constructed in the internal wall of the biodiversity garden to grow more perennials. The work done to the basketball, handball wall, limestone walls was admired. The outdoor seating area in the Coach Garden proudly displays a replica of the winning trophy 2019, surrounded by a garden of roses, daisies, and geraniums. The installation of the Gazebo is an excellent facility to host events and we note the CE workers involvement in its construction. Pathway to Florale

fountain feature is nicely presented, and the cerise geraniums and lavender are the perfect complement to any summer garden. The old cart at the horse pond is a nice splash of colour. Castle Leslie was busy all morning and a great asset to the town. Credit is due to their staff and the Glaslough residents that ensure upkeep of their premises. Many businesses and homes are dressed with flower boxes. The standard of maintenance is extremely good all over. The committee is commended on the many new and maintenance projects undertaken this year. Great work.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Well done to the GTT committee, CE, and volunteers for all the work involved in the seasonal displays in numerous locations in the village. Photos confirm all twelve months of the year are colorful. The three village trails enables one to move between projects and be fully immersed in different environments. There is a renewed vigor to convey the importance of gardens to our well-being and our climate, and no garden with charm or character can be created overnight. It can be challenging and often backbreaking but is certainly rewarding by the active engagement of those for whom the gardens are created. Despite the Lockdowns you have managed to plan work safely and continue to deliver plantings in many areas; Ambledown cottages, Caledon Road, Coach house, Oaklands, Station Gates, Tullyree, Ardbanager and more. Walking around these glorious gardens it is clear the greatest success is the relationship between the user and nature. Giving the gift of flowers as a reward to residents is generous and helps connect the community and brightens up those winter months. Very commendable. Mulching, hedgerow maintenance and the choice of a more user-friendly hedging in the new Autism Garden are very informed & considerate. Following discussions with the owner and Castle Leslie tree surgeons, this year progress was made on the Tree Management Plan. The sustainability of a 40ft poplar in the biodiversity garden was limited due to safety concerns and was removed. Twenty new more appropriate trees were planted. This will avoid any more issues of fallen branches and was an unavoidable loss. Once again, concerns about ecology and environment are central to all your work. You have done a lot in this category so that it is not possible to comment on all your activities in this report.

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

To help Irish wildlife we need to consider all our biodiversity, to create healthy ecosystems. By making small changes we're setting an example for others and helping to create a new norm for how the landscape could look. The aim of the New Biodiversity Plan is to detail lots of way the village can become biodiversity friendly. Growing a mixture of pollinator friendly annuals and perennials will help bees and beneficial insects, that provide natural control of pests. The magic behind focal point planters is the inclusion of a 'thriller' (a plant that makes a statement), a 'filler' to hide the soil (alysium) and a 'spiller' that weeps over the edge (trailing bacopa). The Buzz we would love to see is 'fill, thrill & spill.' Active engagement and raising awareness of these small changes is an important conservation tool - Is the village a partner of the AIPP? In a time of 'climate anxiety' counting butterflies, etc. is a great way to help local wildlife. Your new project in this category was the removal of rushes from the lake, provision of new wildlife signage and hosting a BioBlitz attended by 25 children. Living in a rainy country, we often overlook the importance of water, our rivers, lakes, and streams. Cross border funding greatly assisted. By addressing issues like pollution, natural systems will be in a better way to adjust to the uncertain future of climate change. According to a recent EPA report, 47% of rivers are in a poor condition and 54% are at risk of not reaching good ecological status by 2027. Community groups play an important role here and future studies will outline measures to improve water quality in the Lough. GTT has encouraged over 20 new/maintenance projects in this category.

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

SDGs are now a vital part of this competition. I am delighted to note as a member of the SEC, the community has reached an important stage in sourcing funding for an Energy Master Plan (EMP) now being prepared by Action Renewables. This will help the community understand its energy needs and identify opportunities & initiatives to achieve savings over the next number of years for both residential and commercial sectors. The Greener Glaslough Facebook Campaign continues to promote environmentally friendly practices and you have encouraged more than 45 local business traders on board. It features lots of helpful advice and your online events spread the word on all the 'R' words. From reusable cups, food waste prevention, water filling stations, allotments, single use plastic and E-bikes, all great initiatives that other groups can learn from. The Kids Eco workshops are a great way to inform and encourage our younger generations to think critically about the ways we generate and use energy. The scope of awards at the school is a fantastic achievement. You have developed an impressive range of projects involving St. Mary's N.S., Glaslough harriers, Castle Leslie, residents & businesses. The part played by Castle Leslie in your submission was good to read. Apart from a few cancellations due to Covid, the community continues to carry out the good work they had been doing prior to the pandemic. You are progressing very well on the sustainability agenda and the implementation of the EMP will make significant change to the energy status in the town. We look forward to hearing of new projects in this category.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your ongoing and extensive network of litter pickers involving morning and evening practice is noteworthy. Weed picking, painting, sign washing, sweeping by volunteers is incredible. We are pleased you can participate in Communities in Bloom this year and extra effort has gone in with the help of MCC, local businesses, CE workers, Junior & Senior volunteers. Kevin Mc Kinney is a great ambassador for the village and is to be congratulated for his dedication. Glaslough is very fortunate to have such a dedicated following. Unfortunately, you had to delay renovations to the old farm building. Your ongoing efforts at promoting 'anti-litter' on radio, social media, signage, and the children's posters are very effective as on the day the town was clean and tidy. Smart dog fouling posters were admired in Oaklands and this campaign well managed too. Great turnout.

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

Your focus on engaging with residents encourages a high standard of maintenance and planting for pollinators. Ardbanagher, Lisbanagher and Tullyree set great examples. We strongly advise against the use of pesticides and its not easy with vinegar but as they say, slow and steady wins the race. We appreciate your efforts. Your investment in tree planting should be continued. Your approach is sustainable and a win-win. New footpaths transform the appearance of the main square. New benches and play equipment are a welcome addition. Good to hear there are more hands to help. Always welcome.

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

Work are in progress on the New Line but not fully completed when we visited. The plan by MCC for the new street layout at Castle Leslie is badly needed and hopefully a solution can be reached in the coming year. The winning signs are proudly displayed in several locations around the village. The parking bay at the gates is back to its original layout. The horse feature at the national school and planting is a nice feature. Hoey's trail a lovely journey through lush countryside.

Concluding Remarks:

A visit truly is a unique experience. The pride you have for your village is obvious and I wish you more success in the future.

Second Round Adjudication:

The adjudicator was last in the village of Glaslough some five years ago and was delighted to re visit and experience the tranquility of the place as well as observe changes that have occurred during the intervening period. The 1st adjudication addressed the work of the Tidy Towns committee in detail under the 8 category headings. The adjudicator produced an excellent and objective report which formed the basis for this 2nd adjudication overview.

The village has always looked pristine in its presentation a fair feat considering all the work that has to be done to achieve that presence.

One might say that smaller centres have an advantage over larger towns but when you are at the top end of the competition it takes exceptional commitment and hard work to retain that status.

Well done to the committee of 25 and to the local community for this continuous effort and continuity of work.

It was a pleasure to take time out and traverse all parts of the village as part of this 2nd adjudication.

The application submitted was very comprehensive and covered in great detail the work that you have undertaken in 2021 and up to the earlier part of 2022

The adjudicator was impressed the level of interaction that you have with relevant agencies and Monaghan County Council.

These contacts have been developed over the years and obviously have served you well in terms of getting work done and resources allocated to various projects that were critical to the development of the village.

Success in 2019 when Glaslough was the overall winner in the Tidy Towns Competition has made you the benchmark among other groups around the country.

It is noted from your entry form that you have helped other centres with advice on how to go about certain Tidy Towns tasks- well done for being supportive to others.

The adjudicator was also impressed the multi action plan for 2019- 2025 now in its 3rd year.

The plan is detailed and segmented but the work content is very practical.

The map included was excellent and was great benefit to the adjudicator who was re acquainting himself with the village after some years absence.

There is a strong indication in your submission of your involvement with St Marys National School, this was noted and the raised beds were viewed at that location.

Street lighting was also of top quality and the fact that there were no overhead wires gives a clear view as one looks down the street from either end of the village.

Road surfaces and footpaths, including new sections on the New Line, were well maintained.

On adjudication day some contractors were completing an additional pedestrian crossing near the Oakland Centre.

The Village is very fortunate that it is free of overhead wires which give a clear skyline.

Street lighting is now provided by energy saving bulbs and the poles were clean and free from mini fly posting that one sees in other centres.

The new works, detailed in the entry form and map legend section, at the Sensory, Biodiversity and Bee Friendly gardens were noted.

All these works were dealt with in detail in the relevant sections in the main report and there is no need to repeat them back.

Biodiversity for all is the motto of Glaslough Tidy Towns

Landscaping and planting is very much a strong point of the village of Glaslough .

What was particular appealing to some one who might be considered as a tidy gardener was the colourful array of double begonias seen on stand alone poles dotted around the village.

Plenty examples of wild flowering was observed at the Lakeview Wildflower Meadow behind the Village Green

Well done on the various bio diversity projects that you mentioned in your submission and these have been dealt with in detail by the first adjudicator.

The Biodiversity Plan was noted and it is good to see that the actions proposed are of a practical nature

Well done on hosting the Bio Blitz that attracts a large number of school children who will get ideas for life from this event

The projects included under Sustainability were very much in line with the main objective of this category that helping to reduce community environmental impact by doing more with less. Initially "Doing more with less" was a catchy slogan now it has become a necessity so well done on leading the way with some creative ideas.

The village was virtually litter free on the day except for a wrapper or two near the Oakland Centre.

It helps enormously when everyone in the community, maybe I'm presuming!, is on the same wave length when it comes to litter control.

All the signage in the village and at entrances was in excellent condition and no further comment is necessary.

It would be hard to find fault with all the entrances into the Village as all were inviting and created good first impressions

The adjudicator arrived into the village via a side road just outside of Monaghan Town and off the N2.

The following are some personal observations made during a lengthy enough walkabout.

The residents of the established areas Tullyree, The Cottages and the newer housing developments off the Caledon Road are to be congratulated for the effort they put in to presenting respective properties to a high standard as well as maintaining the communal areas around them.

The Coach House Garden was just a haven of tranquilly and excellent planting.

The street seating was of attractive design and there are plenty seats dotted around the village and the outskirts to accommodate people who wish to take a rest or just chill out.

The Centra Shop that was in the village some five or six years back is now an excellent coffee shop.

Some excellent Biodiversity, Heritage and Historical Information Panels were noted and photographs taken for future reference.

The Florale Fountain Panel was particularly interesting.

The adjudicator was bemused at the number of Canadian Flags flying but then realized that it was all part of the Communities in Bloom event which is based out of Canada according to local sources.

There were many fine private residences, some with exceptional front and side gardens, observed during the walk about around the village

Congratulations to these residents on keeping their homesteads in such top class condition.

Finally thanks to the very informative young lady in the Glaslough Chocolate Shop for the excellent cappuccino and the loan of a pen

It was a pleasure to re visit Glaslough to do a 2nd adjudication and you are wished well for the years ahead