

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Glaslough** Ref: **609**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **289**
Category: **B** Date(s): **22/06/2009**
26/07/2009

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	46
The Built Environment	50	39
Landscaping	50	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	17
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	12
Tidiness	30	22
Residential Areas	40	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	36
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	289

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the very comprehensive application accompanied by map, which was very helpful in identifying relevant places in the village and its surrounds. The excellent supplementary and photographic records compilation was examined in the context of the overall application. This was the adjudicator's second visit to Glaslough and on this occasion was very impressed with the infrastructural changes that have occurred; they have certainly enhanced the village. You have a very proactive committee of 13 with an additional 50 volunteer personnel that you can call on; this is of course exceptional in the context of TidyTowns, given the size of the Village.

As with most TidyTowns Committees, you strive earnestly to improve and the results of your interaction with the Local Authority, other agencies and most importantly the local community organisations such as the Musical Society are there to be seen. The Multi Annual Plan launched earlier year is both practical and achievable in its objectives and its implementation will see the positive progression of the village into the future. There are issues that will always be outside the scope of a voluntary committee, but as a committee you seemed to have succeeded admirably in having all sections of the community supporting you in a common goal that being the betterment of Glaslough. It is good to note that you have a strong relationship with the local school as children, when encouraged, will react very positively. Finally, a comment on your good relationship with the owner of Castle Leslie, it is first class and contributes handsomely to the welfare of Glaslough village. Thank you also for your very favourable comments on what the TidyTowns Competition means to you as a committee.

The Built Environment:

The standard under this particular category was extremely good with all the key components of what

constitutes good practice under built environment being adhered to. The infrastructure is one in keeping with that of a landed estate village and efforts have been made, in the course of any modernisation that has taken place over the years, to keep that intact. Glass Lough is fortunate that it has not been subjected to legacy of the now departed Celtic Tiger - mass development - a fate that many rural villages have suffered over that period. Congratulations to both the Local Authority and indeed the residents for ensuring that the planning laws were applied in a manner that was supportive to the village. The following are a few highlights that appealed to this adjudicator during a fairly lengthy stay in the village, which had a lot to do with the tranquillity of the place, as well as the job in hand. Pillar House Hotel with its appealing frontage complete with ivy, although this can be a nightmare to control, the very aptly named Ambledown Cottage Tea Rooms, who serve a very tempting apple tart, give its proper rural name. The Coach House was in good condition and it looks like the sign referred to in last year's report has been repaired. Treanor's Daybreak Shop and PO, with its excellent hanging baskets, have mixed modernisation with tradition very well. There are many fine private village older residences that have been complemented by the newer ones, such as those that have been developed in association with the Castle Leslie holding company.

On adjudication day, a building was being restored painstakingly by two tradesmen. The design of the bus stop is exactly what I was referring to earlier in this section, keeping things in line with the traditional infrastructure of the village. The phone box, which was the subject of a remark in last year's report, seemed to be fine and, hopefully, it will be retained, although I would not be too sure what Eircom have in mind! The physical condition of the Historic Trail Notice Board was good with very historical information for the visitor. Castle Leslie, with its various facilities such as the equestrian centre and accommodation units and of course its famous grounds, was in excellent condition. Finally, a word of praise to those entrusted with the upkeep of public buildings such as the Oakland Centre, what a fine facility for the community, and the refurbished National School on the outskirts.

Landscaping:

The amount of work undertaken this year alone under this category has been quite substantial; some thoughtful planning has gone into this process. I would certainly concur with comments in your submission in relation to the Caledon Road entrance. To this adjudicator, this is the most attractive entry into Glasslough and your future plans, such as the proposed new flower bed around the village sign, will further enhance it. The replenishment work done on existing flower beds and the treatment of green areas makes for a very inviting first impression, when one approaches the village from the different entrances. 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. It is noticeable that the core area is not overbeautified with masses of the traditional trailing lobelia and petunia, what is in place is sited appropriately. The planter that houses nasturtiums at the ESB pump hoes is most unusual, so well done to whoever came up with the design. The Charles Powell Leslie Monument benefits from nice planting arrangements, bollards and the attractive green seats where one can rest and take in the beauty of Glasslough.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The village is indeed rich in wildlife habitats and the steps that you have taken to encourage the proper promotion of wildlife are laudable. Having the support of the owner of Castle Leslie in this context is huge bonus, as in effect the lands, lake and wonderful trees are at your disposal. This adjudicator took some time out to do a short trail walk and will no doubt be tempted back again when time allows. The Blackwater Heritage Trail Noticeboard is an excellent piece of informative work. The Wetlands Project has gained National significance for its obvious environmental benefits and new natural approach to waste treatment, but it has immense ecological plusses as well. Is it possible to get the local school children more involved in a practical project that will give them a greater appreciation of what this exceptional Wetlands Project is all about.

Litter Control:

A good deal of innovative approaches has been taken by the Committee to encourage local people and visitors to respect the fact that Glasslough does not tolerate litter. The Village is quite small, so therefore easier to manage than larger centres, that said it wasn't totally litter free on what was very fine "real" summers day. There are a few watering troughs in the village that contained litter and, as was the case last year, the playground area had pockets as well. Whether it was by design or the fact that somebody noticed the stranger perusing the village, but a few solid citizens were picking the odd wrapper here and there.

Waste Minimisation:

Some excellent work is being done by the committee to promote the whole ethos and culture of best practice waste management and minimisation. The Bring Bank Facility at the Oaklands was excellent, well managed, clean and free from loose refuse bags that one encounters in some towns and villages. Good to note that

Scoil Mhuire is about to secure Phase 3 of the Green Flag, well done to the pupils and their teachers. Very Good standard in this particular category, which merits an increase in marks.

Tidiness:

All the approach roads and outlying extremities of the village were very tidy and credit to homeowners for keeping frontages and side areas in good condition. The core area was very tidy and the building site in the centre was well screened and safe which is, of course, the most important aspect of any building project. An internal back road (cant recall name) down by the Ambeldown had some broken signs strewn across it, adjacent to Lios Beannagher. A untidy gate and fencing were sited in this area also. What looks like an old chicken breeding hut in a state of disrepair and dilapidation was noted on the outskirts on the Monaghan exit. I can appreciate that it may be outside your remit to go and talk to the owner, but even though it's a bit out from the village, it stands out in such a lovely place. All directional and name signs were clean and painted, and more importantly visible. Overall, the standard seemed to be on par with last year.

Residential Areas:

The standard of presentation in this category was of the highest order in both Local Authority and Private Housing Developments.

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

The Lios Beannagher and Ard Beannagher developments were of a most unusual and eye catching design, and the residents are to be complimented on keeping individual premises in very good condition. Just one negative, there is a little overgrown area near the steps to the upper level, as one enters from the "Ambledown" Road, that needs to be cut back. Tullyree is a very well maintained older bungalow type housing area where the residents have an obvious pride of place mentality. Again, some well tended and colourful gardens were seen in this peaceful little estate.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

All entrances were kept in accordance with recommended guidelines, with allowances being made for the preservation of species of wildlife such as birds and insects. Additional improvements, noted in your submission, have been made since last and there are more plans for the future. The Failte and Slan Signs are most attractive and the green background blends in well with the greenness of the Monaghan country side. The Support Glaslough Tidy Towns – Keep Our Village Tidy signs are an excellent idea and like the Failte signs are tastefully designed to fit in with the surroundings.

General Impression:

Glaslough has that idyllic rural charm that we like to associate with rural Ireland. It has prospered in a fast growing era without having to subject itself to the downside of so called progress – mass development. You are to be commended as a committee for your work over the last number of years in trying to ensure that the Village achieves its maximum potential in the competition. You are wished well for the future and one hopes to see Glass Lough up there with the best in the years to come.

Second Round Adjudication:

One is immediately impressed when reading your submission by the numbers involved in the Tidy Towns support structures for Glaslough. The appearance of the village confirms that total village support. Your submission mentions engagement with the Monaghan County Council on numerous occasions. The planning department of that body evidently supports the village appearance the inhabitants of Glaslough wish for their village. One reads that you are previous winners of this competition. Your generation honours the memory of the 1978 Committee in the manner in which you plan for the well-being of Glaslough and in the manner in which you present the Glaslough of 2009.

This adjudicator was particularly interested to read that you intend 'removing the ivy from estate walls on the Caledon Road'. Even though this stretch of wall is outside the speed limit and might be deemed to be outside your remit, it is an integral part of the village heritage and it is a pity that its condition is not of the same standard as the wall on the school approach road.

One senses restraint in the provision of the usual hanging baskets and window boxes along the street. This adjudicator would fully endorse such restraint, as the buildings proclaim their heritage and their appearance proudly, and do not require embellishment.

You must be sick of hearing that Glaslough is a wildlife paradise, but so it is. The easy access to Castle Leslie

is welcome. The wetlands and the Integrated Constructed Wetlands facility blows the mind away in the case of this uninformed visitor who could only marvel at the enterprise and the ambitious plans for the enterprise. Make sure that the information in the proposed pamphlets on the estate wetlands provides information which is understandable and accessible to the ordinary Joe tourist. The very best of luck to you in your application for the Sustainable Development Award. One wonders why there is not more mature hedging surrounding the school for two reasons. The building itself is not in character with the built environment of the village, so landscaping its surroundings could enhance its appearance. Secondly hedging would provide shelter.

One steps back in time on arrival in Glaslough. The road from the school draws the visitor into the era of the landlord and his estate. Turn the corner and the residents of that beautiful crescent of houses at Tullyree take you in their embrace with their richly colourful communal garden. The gardeners, the dairymaid, the blacksmith of yester year greet one further up the street and will tend to one's needs, as they tended to the needs of the Leslie family in another age. The unique wonder of Glaslough is that the Leslie family is still in situ and are still honoured right down to this day. The present Glaslough could be straight out of the nineteenth century. Therefore, your village is a tourist attraction creating, as you acknowledge, both opportunities and challenges. The awareness of your committee of the heritage, the attractions and the amenities of Glaslough guarantee that opportunities will be grasped, but that the accompanying challenges will also be met. Glaslough is a delight.