

# Tidy Towns Competition 2017

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cloneen** Ref: **557**  
County: **Tipperary(South)** Mark: **303**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **10/07/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	50	51
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40	41
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	29	30
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	12	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	62	64
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33	34
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>303</b>

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

We are pleased to welcome Cloneen to the 2017 tidy towns competition and it is great that you enjoy such a high level of participation in your village with a total of 25 members on your committee and a further 13 members who volunteer. This means that almost 40 people work on tidy towns projects each year and this illustrates a very strong sense of community and pride of place in Cloneen. We note that there are an additional 5 people from other groups in your village involved in your projects and we wondered which voluntary groups supplied these volunteers? The list of statutory organisations and agencies that provide you with support is notable comprising; Fas / Tus, the PPN Tipperary, Tipperary County Council, Biodiversity Ireland, the Heritage Council, the EPA, the Local Authority Waste Prevention Network, the Southern Region Waste Management Council and Voice Ireland. These links are impressive and it demonstrates that your committee has been very effective in identifying and using all potential sources of assistance. It was noted that the South Tipperary Development Company was not listed and we wondered if you had been in contact with them as they have proved to be a valuable source of advice and funding for other tidy towns committees in your County. Your communication strategy is most impressive and it is great to see that you have focused on communication methods that minimise paper usage in order to cut down on waste. We are very pleased to read that a junior tidy towns committee has been set up in the local school in order to ensure effective collaborations between your committee and the schoolchildren on projects such as the spring clean. We applaud your decision to follow this approach as it can be a very effective way of boosting participation among young people, sourcing new ideas for projects and raising environmental awareness. We were delighted to read that your participation in the competition has been so well received locally and that it has fostered a greater sense of pride in your village. Thank you for your comprehensive application form and excellent map as they were very helpful during adjudication. Your new action plan is acknowledged and it was read with interest. It appears to be very comprehensive document and we look forward to seeing the ambitious projects included in it come to fruition in the years ahead.

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

Cloneen has a range of attractive and interesting buildings in its compact village core. The Church is a historical style building with large entrance pillars and it is maintained to a good standard - although the capping stones on the boundary wall and pillars may need a fresh coat of paint in time for 2018. The national school building looked particularly well with its carefully maintained grounds, attractive mature trees and colourful windowboxes which adorn the windowsills and front boundary walls. It was noted from your application form that the local Hall is being refurbished and we look forward to seeing these completed in the years ahead. The standard of presentation of commercial premises in the village is deserving of praise. Anglims Bar looked smart with its fresh coat of paint, and its bright and colourful windowboxes and the Post Office was similarly impressive. We will also like to commend the committee and volunteers on their high-quality maintenance of the old Cemetery and Church as they looked well

kept during adjudication. The new Cemetery opposite Mountain View achieved a similarly high standard. The projects that you have completed for 2017 under this category are acknowledged. You are commended on your continuing work to the local Hall and for fixing the Stonebridge and stone walls on the Killusty road. The pallet fencing that has been provided around the bring bank was also appreciated as it looked well on adjudication day. We were unable to find the derelict house on the Mullinahone road and we wondered if it is located outside the 50 kmph zone? If so, can you include directions to it in next year's application? The provision of a water feature in a quarry in the village is also a clever reuse of an underutilised area.

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

We enjoyed seeing the work of the committee and volunteers for the landscaping category this year. The extensive rose bed that flanks the small car parking area opposite the school was admired as it contains a colourful range of roses in full bloom. The large landscaped planters at the Millennium Monument beside the church looked well as it helped to draw attention to this distinctive feature. The number of windowboxes stocked with seasonal flowering plants was striking with bright red and yellow floral displays to be seen in the planters that adorned the front railings and wall of the church, Anglims Bar, the national school building and along the front boundary wall of the school grounds. This landscaping brought warm summer colours to the centre of your village. Colourful hanging baskets were also observed at the wildlife information signage at the entrance to the Hall. The planting at the entrance to the old Cemetery looked well and we liked the range and diversity of plant species that could be found here. The small flowerbed at the corner of the green space in the Mountain View estate was also observed and the plastic bottles that were attached to the fence of the wildlife sanctuary appear to work well as upcycled planters. We note that wildflowers were at the base of the green security fence but they did not appear to be thriving during adjudication - perhaps a different native seed mix is needed? We did not see the upcycled planted wheelbarrow during our visit but the untidy (and rather weedy) concrete recycle bin base was observed close to the entrance to the estate. It is noted that improvements are ongoing to the verges on the approach roads to Fethard and to the rockery at Kilburry Lane. We note with interest that is your intention to switch emphasis in your landscaping schemes from seasonal flowering plants to more bee friendly native shrubs in the village. Given that seasonal flowering plants are used extensively in Cloneen, this will represent a major (and welcome) change in your landscaping strategy and we would welcome more details of this in 2018.

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

This is becoming a strong category for your village with a number of exciting projects presented in 2017. We are delighted to read that you are in the process of getting a new ecological survey of the area which will include recommendations on how to improve biodiversity in Cloneen. This is an excellent project as it will provide you with a valuable record of the wildlife and biodiversity that can be found in your village. The completed survey will also enable you to monitor wildlife and biodiversity effectively as you will be able to track changes in bird populations and plant species diversity from one year to the next. Don't forget that we strongly encourage tidy towns committees to involve the schools in projects under this category and we would encourage you to get recommendations included in your ecological survey on how the school children can be involved in monitoring and implementing specific wildlife projects. We note that your wildlife officer monitors changes in biodiversity and we wondered if he / she has given any talks on wildlife in the school? Well done on hosting an information evening on beekeeping and we suggest that you try and host a wildlife information evening each year. Birdwatch Ireland should be able to advise you on this. The provision of additional wildflower areas in the village is considered to be a great idea as they have the potential to enhance biodiversity and you are commended on providing new bird boxes and monitoring the existing bird and bat boxes throughout the year. We are interested to read about the bird box discovery trail project and we look forward to seeing this project unfold in the years ahead. Can your committee see a role for the schoolchildren in this exciting project? Please let us know in 2018.

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

It is great to see that your committee is taking its role in raising awareness of the need to reduce waste and sustainably use resources seriously. This is evident from your diligent posting of information on how to reduce food wastage and conserve energy in the home. It is noted that the principal means of achieving this is your website and we wondered if there was any way of capturing feedback? For example, can you ask the people who have followed your tips on reducing food waste and conserving energy to let you know if they are following these tips and if they have any suggestions based on their experience? This would enable you to track the effectiveness of your awareness raising projects and allow you to work out if behaviour is changing in the wider community. We applaud your decision to adopt a zero waste communication strategy and we would appreciate if you would keep us updated on how this is going. Be sure to include a means of communication for contacting those in your village who do not have a smart phone or internet access - phone calls and texts should be sufficient to get the message to this group of people. We are pleased to read that you are leading by example through your up cycling of waste products (such as an old wheelbarrow being used as a planter, old pallets providing fencing and old plastic bottles as pots for shrubs) and it is hoped that this will lead to additional up cycling of waste in your village. We read about your sustainable planting programme with interest and we noted that this project is included in your three-year plan. However, we wondered if percentage targets has been set for shrub and seasonal planting (e.g. 70% shrub and 30% seasonal)? Can this be included in next year's application? Well done also on using harvested rainwater and making your own compost.

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

An excellent standard of litter control could be observed in Cloneen on adjudication day. As the adjudicator in 2016 also commented on the cleanliness of your village, this is the second successive strong performance under this

category and it demonstrates that you are making very significant progress in dealing with litter. We have no doubt that your clean and tidy village is the result of your participation in the annual spring clean, the operation of a litter patrol rota and requesting that walkers pick up any litter that they may see. It is noted that a number of actions are also undertaken to ensure that your village is neat and tidy and they include; sweeping and weeding streets and paths, power washing walls and signs and removing flyers and posters regularly. The result of your diligent tidiness programme was clear to see during our visit as Cloneen was as clean as a new pin! A small number of improvements are possible. There was a very untidy litter bin directly outside the school grounds and this is in need of power washing while a black and yellow road sign here also has a dusty appearance. We were somewhat surprised to see that grass cuttings are being stacked at the entrance to the old cemetery and this looked untidy and it creates a poor first impression for the visitor. It is recommended that this material is stored in another less visible part of the cemetery.

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

The standard of presentation of individual houses and gardens throughout the village on adjudication day was particularly good and it is clear that the residents paid heed to your request and took great care in the upkeep of their homes. The Mountain View estate, also looked well with its neatly trimmed amenity areas and interesting wildlife sanctuary. Well done to all concerned and keep up the good work!

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

The work of the tidy towns committee could clearly be seen on the Fethard approach road where the green netting was being used to obscure the barbed wire fence. However, the base of the green netting was weedy during adjudication and begun to act as a litter trap so continuous monitoring will be required here. It was observed that the village name sign on the Fethard approach is located much further out than the 50 kmph speed limit signs and the grass in the verge around the village name sign was longer than that surrounding the 50 kmph signs and we wondered if the maintenance regime differs in these two locations? The work carried out to the natural stone boundary walls on the Killusty approach was clear to see and they looked very well during adjudication. This approach could be further improved by cleaning up an untidy green boundary gate that is located inside the 50 kmph zone. The Mullinahone approach is reasonably good but the road surface at the junction with Kilburry Lane needs urgent attention.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

We are delighted to see that your hard-working committee and volunteers have broken the 300 point barrier and we would like to congratulate you on your excellent performance in the 2017 competition. Well done and we look forward to returning next year!