

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Cloneen - An Cluainín** Ref: **557**
County: **Tipperary(South)** Mark: **313**
Category: **A** Date(s): **27/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	52	52
Streetscape & Public Places	60	40	41
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	42	42
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	31	31
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	15	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	35
TOTAL MARK	470	311	313

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Cloneen - Cluainín - páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019.

Thank you for your submission. We see that this is your 12th year in Tidy Towns and well done on that achievement. You are a village of 129 residents and it is remarkable what you have achieved so far. You have a Committee of 12 and with a further 10 volunteers available when needed. You have recruited new members to replace those who have retired or left.

You have fortnightly meetings a number of committee members meet two evenings a week to work on projects, litter control and village maintenance. That is some commitment. And you have sub committees to look at future projects!

You have support from South Tipp Development Co, TÚS, PPN Tipperary, Tipp Co Co, Biodiversity Ireland, Wildlife Ranger Mr Breen, Local businesses sponsorship, Heritage Council, LA prevention Network, Southern Region Waste Management Council, Voice Ireland and you have Fundraising events e.g. sponsored cycle.

You communicate through the Website mainly to reduce paper usage. Also through local papers, parish newsletter, weekly texts and recently a WhatsApp group was set up.

There is a Junior Tidy Towns committee set up in the school. Your committee is in contact with them and they are involved in the flowerbeds. Also two youth members are on your committee – that is a great idea for both the committee but also for the youths themselves – real life skills training in a real life environment! You also co-ordinate with the local GAA youth members and it is good to see that there is a cross membership of groups in the village.

You provided a very good map and with an adjacent numbered index. However, all of the projects that you are involved in should be included in the index and should, where relevant, also be referenced with the N – New, M – Maintenance and FP – Future Plans letters. For example, M the preservation and maintenance of the Old Graveyard etc could be M1. This really helps your adjudicator to find the projects you are presenting to us.

The pictures that you provided are good idea but trying to link them to the map was extremely difficult for your adjudicator. For example, stone wall repair Picture 5 – not sure where this was (but found it eventually) and Picture 2 – there is no number for the wildflower area but there is a picture! So, our advice is that if you provide pictures please have a number for each and make sure that it is linked to the map number also! Believe us – this will also help you when you are looking for pictures in future years for new submissions!

One idea for your future planning is to prepare a 3 year plan for your work. We would advise that you consider doing this. Doing the plan will bring up lots of “brainstorming ideas” and then what you need to do is to list them for action in a particular year. It need not be complicated. It is good to think ahead, it will provide a focus and your community will see what lies ahead with Tidy Towns in.

Finally, we love your wording on how the work of your group is contributing to your community; “With a population that is small and young people leaving for other towns or cities it the morale building of Tidy Towns that is important

– it keeps the sense of community alive”. So true!

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

The great feature of Cloneen is the compactness of it. You have facilities clustered together right in the heart of the village - the GAA pitches, the Sports and Social Club and the National School also. This provides for accessible active recreation and social interaction for both young and old. Also it makes for a more cohesive streetscape. Cloneen looked clean and colourful on the day of our visit. The buildings are well maintained and painted. There are colourful and well maintained flowers everywhere. On the corner of the Drangan Road there are red, white and yellow roses in full bloom. On the opposite side the flat roofed building (pump house) has some wildflowers growing around it. One of the buildings with a blank wall has Virginian creeper growing on it and it enhances the appearance of the building. The National School has two large trees growing in front – a weeping Willow and a Cherry tree and these create a calm appearance for the school and in turn enhance the village streetscape it is situated within. In your submission you mentioned the work on “The Bank” site. We noticed an old style rose growing beside the area and what struck us was that it would be far more successful to allow this rose to colonise the entire bank, preventing erosion and providing a real splash of colour in the summer. In addition you could also plant flowering bulb plants for the following Spring, e.g. Daffodils and Tulips.

Kiely's Garage looked good but we would consider that the short wall to the front would be far better presented if it had a slow growing hedge (Box perhaps?) planted on the outside and that would reduce the need to paint the wall and which appears to be getting dirty from passing traffic. Also the sign with the prices of fuel on it looked a little bit off centre and detracted from the premises.

The Church and Graveyard are nicely presented but there is quite a lot of concrete in front of the church which gives it a very visually “hard” appearance.

There are beautiful flowers and shrubs on the on either side of the lane leading up to the Old Graveyard after you pass the newly thatched Walshe house. The Old Graveyard is beautiful and well maintained and without being overly manicured. It is a difficult site to cut grass in and all credit to the person(s) who undertake this work. There were lots of wild flowers in bloom during our visit. We would wonder if the Old Church ruins are in a dangerous condition and we suggest that it should be inspected by a competent building conservation expert for advice. It may be that if there was such a danger that funding could be secured through a relevant agency following the making of a submission. This building is part of the history and landscape of Cloneen and it would be a shame to see it deteriorate further.

The new thatch on the Walshe house is wonderful and hopefully this house can be occupied soon.

The Jubilee 2000 feature which won an award previously looks very well maintained.

The Sports and Social Club located within the village and off the street is a fine building but it looks as if the maintenance of the exterior paint work is a problem and it may be an option to plant climbing plants on this to reduce this work – they will have to be maintained periodically and it would be advisable to choose slow growing varieties.

The old pump on the Fethard Road is surrounded by good stone walling but is a project waiting to happen! The pump needs to be painted and the margins on either side maintained just a little better to show this feature off properly.

Finally, one of the features of Cloneen and indeed other towns and villages in the area are the many old stone buildings with slate roofs and which is part of your vernacular architecture and should be treasured like gold dust! Unfortunately, many of these are deteriorating and, yes, we know that the cost of the upkeep and repairs to these buildings is expensive. However, it looks like your committee is up to a challenge and this may be one to consider in consultation with the owners.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The Old Quarry project looks interesting, the creation of a pond and planting. However, we were curious to know why it was necessary to use plastic to hold the water? If the water would not hold then perhaps it should have been developed as a “dry” quarry? It would appear that sections of the area have been sprayed and in such a natural setting it would seem not to be warranted. Grass is being cut under trees that are well advanced enough not to be restricted in their growth by the grass or other vegetation. We are not clear if this is a private project or a project undertaken by the Tidy Towns Committee. Perhaps you could furnish further information on this in your 2020 application?

You have access to great Green Spaces in your village. The GAA pitch and the school grounds as well as the old and new graveyards can all be considered to be Green Spaces.

As mentioned earlier your village is full of flowers and they are managed very well indeed.

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

You are working on the development of a Bird Box discovery trail and that is a good idea. We see that you have a Wildlife Officer on your committee so it is good that you have expert advice on this project. You have held 3 environmental and biodiversity workshops and that is a great move as it increases your understanding and awareness of the wider issues involved – and they are complicated subjects when you approach them first. The stream under the bridges on both the Fethard and Killusty roads appears to be polluted and it would be advisable to consult an expert on this as soon as possible. This stream is part of the Nature and Biodiversity of your locality and should be treated as a local treasure. In addition, there appears to be Gunnera plants growing on the right hand side of the bridge as you approach Cloneen. It should be identified by an expert as there is a danger that this could be an invasive species. Iascach Intire Éireann/ Inland Fisheries Ireland should be able to help with this identification and the possible pollution threat. We note that you were working to get an environmental report undertaken on how to improve biodiversity in your area and these items should be part of that work.

On the Killusty Road there is a fine margin with a large Purple Beech planted on it and with lots of wild flowers also underneath. The wild flower area on the Fethard Road and adjacent to the L6304 lane is growing well but you should create a maintained cut margin of at least a metre in front of it. This will show the passer by that it is maintained – people often react negatively to wildflower areas as they perceive them as “untidy”. This is one way of reducing this perception. There is gravel on the other side of the wildflower area – are there plans for this? Let us know in your 2020 submission.

Perhaps the GAA could provide an extensive area for wildflower planting in a location within the field that will not detract from the facility or interfere with the sporting activities? In fact, it could be a wonderful attraction in itself.

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

The school has a small garden replete with Rhubarb, potatoes and what looked like beans to me! This is a great education for the children to understand where our food comes from and what can be grown locally. Sustainability in action.

You have undertaken a number of Sustainability initiatives this year:

- You have grown your own flowers
- You have set up a WhatsApp group to reduce the volume of paper being used
- You are encouraging upcycling
- You use a locally made water buggy for watering the plants, the water of which comes from your water butts. Let us know next year the numbers and locations please.
- You use nettles as plant food
- You use compost that you have made locally

All great work. Does your school have a Green Flag? We would be surprised if it does not have one. Please let us know.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Your committee:

- has an all year round Litter Rota,
- encourages residents to pick up litter,
- encourages participation in the Annual Spring Clean
- has organised to remove litter bins in place of one's put out in the morning and taken in at the evening
- held a stream clean up day to remove litter

The village was extremely tidy and we did not see any litter on our visit. The Bring Banks on the Drangan Road were clear of rubbish and there was a wooden surround that disguised the bins and it looks attractive.

Road markings are unfortunately generally poor.

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

Your residential area was well presented and we compliment you on working with local landowners to improve their entrances and, which if not maintained well, can impact on the presentation of your village. On that subject, there is an entrance to a property off the Fethard Road and not too far away from the village with what once must have been a beautiful stone entrance and most of which is intact – however it could do with upgrading and in doing so the village would benefit.

Mountain View is well maintained but there are the remains of weeds adjacent to the kerbing that should be removed.

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

The Cloneen name sign on the Fethard Road is reasonably well presented with the exception of the directional signage placed immediately behind it and which detracts totally from its attractiveness. It is signage clutter. This signage should be moved closer to the village itself and you should consult the County Council about this. The approach to the town coming from Fethard R692 is generally tidy but from the Name sign for Cloneen to the village the bottom of walls and hedge areas have not been maintained as well as they could or should be. We acknowledge the narrowness of the road and the difficulty in working there but the weed growth onto the road should be contained. The bridge on the Fethard Road should have the vegetation cleared from the base to allow the fine stonework to be seen – it is a good example of local craftsmanship. It is unfortunate that the bridge top has to be painted yellow and black but this is obviously a necessity for safety reasons.

The bridge on the Killusty Road has a long “lead in” wall on one side and this too including the bridge should have the vegetation at the base removed for the same reason as above. Further out towards Fethard direction there are some well maintained margins with a variety of trees growing on them. Take care when planting trees that they are not planted in a way that they could interfere with any adjacent overhead wires.

As you approach the village on the Killusty Road there is a bulging stone wall on the right hand side and which should be brought to the attention of the Council. This is a fine stone wall and if work has to take place to repair it then it should be reinstated with equally good stonework.

Concluding Remarks:

We enjoyed our visit to Cloneen and it is great to see the work and effort involving the Tidy Towns Committee. Well done on all of your work to date, try to do the Three Year Plan and we look forward to your continuing participation in the SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition 2020

