

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **CLONASLEE**  
County : **LAOIS**  
Category : **B**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 07-08-2002

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2002	Mark Awarded 2001
Overall Developmental Approach	50	41	41
The Built Environment	40	32	31
Landscaping	40	34	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	24
Litter Control	40	32	30
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	23	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	33
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>238</b>

# **Clonaslee, County Laois**

## **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

This was this adjudicator's first adjudication visit to Clonaslee. Anticipation that the village would be well presented was well made and in general the experience was very pleasant with many aspects very impressive indeed. The Tidy Town's Committee has now concluded its 2000/2002 development plan and can be proud of the progress achieved. The ongoing preparation of a 5 year plan 2002/7 is an excellent foundation on which to continue this progress. One of the positive parts of the 2002 plan was the committee's determination to take on only as much as it could realistically achieve and it is hoped the 2002/7 plan will follow a similar course.

## **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The architectural centrepiece of the village is the old Church of Ireland building, now the Clonaslee Heritage Centre. It is beautifully maintained, its colour scheme attractive, strong enough to establish the building's primary place, but complimenting rather than contrasting the other buildings on the main street. The built area on the Birr side of the Clodiagh River has an old world ambience in Hickey's Pub and the residence on the opposite side of the main street. This is nicely reflected in the flower bed and seats in the nearby triangular car park. Although there is a problem with the damaged roof over a derelict shed adjacent to the Green, the camouflage on the derelict cottages works well. The Health Board building looks clean and tidy with nicely maintained lawns, as are the Coilte buildings on the opposite side. The Church on the Tullamore Road is very tidily presented. The small national school at the village entrance from the Mountmellick sign was particularly nice with its display of window boxes and well maintained lawn. Although the public light fittings are not of attractive design they do maintain a proportionality with village buildings. Colour schemes used throughout the village are in sympathy with its quiet ambience with the exception of Valmers Restaurant. There was a good supply of litter bins and it was good to see the amenity map displayed at Heritage Centre.

## **LANDSCAPING**

The trees set in the cut verges are maturing nicely and adding to the visual approach to the village. The seating, plant and grassed area along the community centre wall and entrance balanced by the shrubbery on the left continues to build a fine impression. The adjudicator was very pleased to note the maturing of trees along the main street. The Capparaban Green and the Village Green at the Birr end of the village are particularly attractive with raised flower beds, maturing trees, and shrubberies. The Millenium Stones at Green and Slieve Bloom Park add to village features.

## **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

The riverside walk towards the Brittas Wood forest walk and Brittas lake is a fine introduction to the wildlife and natural amenity attractions of the village. All are very well presented and reflect the progressive relationship between the community and Coilte. A suggestion here would be to provide some interpretation explaining what to see and look out for. It was very pleasant to see the walking route sign posts. Brittas lake is a small but attractive amenity. On adjudication day it was colourfully surrounded with wild foxgloves and banks of rhododendrons. Surprisingly, there was no seating for picnicing etc. The lake was closed for fishing - presumably due to the re-stocking programme.

## **LITTER CONTROL**

Clonaslee is virtually litter free. The community is to be commended in this regard and clearly the educational process being adopted by the tidy towns committee is achieving results.

## **TIDINESS**

The old VEC has been well maintained even though it is marked for sale. There was the remains of a broken sign for the Gorrrough River attached to the bridge railings. At both ends of the town, the 'Welcome to Clonaslee' signs are attractively displayed. Although in a very definite minority, the odd plastic shop sign is displayed above a few premises, and each is not in keeping with the more 'gentle' atmosphere of the village.

## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

Residential areas are well presented with good use made of open lawns. With few exceptions houses are well maintained. Slieve Bloom Park has a nice maturing shrubbery at its entrance, but it is disappointing to see part of this area used as a parking area for coaches. Hill View estate is nicely presented as are the school and community centre. Litter free.

## **ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS**

The approach roads from both the Birr and Mountmellick sides are cleanly presented with many fine stone walls, mature hedgerows and cut verges. There was a small show of kerb weed but nothing of real significance. Generally the approach roads are good and lift visitor anticipation levels. The railings on the Clodiagh River bridge had been recently painted and along with the river name signs looked well. The footpath in front of the store beside the Garda Station is damaged and requires maintenance. Some of the fencing along the Tullamore Road requires replacement or at least screening. The approach from the 'Welcome to Clonaslee' sign is good and the tree lined river retaining wall is an attractive feature.

## **GENERAL IMPRESSION**

Clonaslee is set in the foothills of the Slieve Blooms. It is virtually 'folded' in a landscape of rich woodlands of fine old trees and more modern commercial forests. Overall the adjudicator was very impressed with Clonaslee. Some isolated items need attention such as the growth from the spire of the Heritage Centre, improvements to street lighting style. Kerb side car parking somewhat damages the quality appearance of the main street. There is a little evidence of wirescape but not too obvious. The increase in incidence of plastic windows is noted.

## **SECOND ADJUDICATION (07/08/2002)**

On a grey morning the fresh paint created a brightness against the forested backdrop. In general the village again had a very neat and tidy appearance with in, most cases merely small details as described above, not up to scratch. Despite the wet summer grass cutting was to a high standard. Scarcely a paper was evident - a commendable achievement. The use of stone walls especially in the context of Birch trees is most effective. Do try not to clutter commercial frontages with superfluous advertising. Whenever you are considering erecting new lamp standards please choose a simple design, not a reproduction Victorian type which have turned so many villages into stage sets.

We look forward to returning next year.