

# Tidy Towns Competition 2003

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clonaslee**

Ref: **353**

County: **Laois**

Mark: **243**

Category: **B**

Date: **03/08/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	42	41
The Built Environment	40	32	32
Landscaping	40	35	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	24
Litter Control	40	32	32
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	23	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32	33
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>242</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your detailed map which greatly assisted the adjudication. The Clonaslee Tidy Town Committee's general approach is exemplary. Its work in involving, not only the professional assistance of a colour consultant to work on the village's visual quality, but also in encouraging local involvement in its activities, is providing a sense of purpose and direction. There is little doubt that the implementation of the 2003/07 work schedule will bring the village to the top of the Tidy Town listings.

### The Built Environment:

The Clonaslee Heritage centre is the dominant architectural feature. Its surrounding low wall and red gold topped railings set a fine perspective of the attractive old church building which displays a tranquil colour scheme, but which requires repainting of its right hand corner pillar. The community centre and nearby vocational school have well maintained green areas and the community centre itself, an attractive 'round a' bout' of plants at its entrance. The garda station looked fine, tarmac with tidy shrubberies. The old vocational school has been sold and still displays 'sold' signs. It could do with some freshening up, but there is a maintained bed of plants along the building's frontage. The front wall displays a crack which runs its length about a foot above path level. The national school is pleasantly presented with well maintained buildings and window flower boxes. Its appearance is supported by a tree at its entrance and the plantation of new trees along its wall. PVC windows have replaced some of the original timber windows. Gifts Galore looks to be closed and

due for change in operation. Fallons Bar is nicely presented and a new colour scheme is being advised by colour consultant. Hickeys Bar is an attractive building with an old world ambience but it could do with repainting. The credit union building is not attractive and could benefit from tree or hedge screening. The RC church and gates look well; its tarmac church frontage is clean and tidy, although its gates could possibly do with a touch of paint. There was a good supply of litter bins and good to see the amenity map displayed at the heritage centre.

### **Landscaping:**

The village green with its Millennium Stone and rockery looks really well. Although there is some dereliction in the area it is not intrusive. The flower bed and hanging baskets surrounding the Clonaslee Heritage Centre are colourful and well maintained. The small lawn on the Mountmellick side with its seat and interpretative sign is very pleasantly presented. During the day of the visit, trench digging work was ongoing along the 'north' side of the main street. This work had its attendant disruption, safety barriers, kerb stone stocks and other materials, etc, which augurs well for the future of the village with the prospect of under ground wiring and new lamp standards. The maturing trees along the main street are creating a very attractive village ambience. Millennium Stones at Green and Slieve Bloom Park add to village features. The trees either side of the entrance to the football park help dress what is otherwise an unattractive entrance of loose stone and walled gates.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The development of the Clodiagh River is ongoing and is a very attractive feature in the town. The barrel planters of colourful plants look very well and the wall and access points/seating to the river are very attractive indeed. Brittas Lake is nicely presented surrounded by a variety of trees and rhododendrons in bloom.

Clonaslee offers exceptional walking country and the village offers a range of relevant information through a combination of signs and interpretative maps. The old ruined turret and battlements of Brittas House could offer a point of interest which could be exploited but access, etc. needs to be addressed. The environmental plans to encourage wild life is to be commended.

### **Litter Control:**

There is virtually no litter in Clonaslee and the committee is to be congratulated on its twice daily collection programme. Clonaslee is well supplied with litter bins.

### **Tidiness:**

The use of one section section of Parc Sliabh Bladma as a parking area for coaches is regrettable and the adjudicator is concerned that this, as evidenced by a car missing one wheel, will further degenerate into a mechanical maintenance area with its attendant untidiness. There is a problem with the derelict houses which will remain until their replacement takes place. The forecourt area beside, though not part of, the garda station is a problem storage area for sand, pipes and other building materials. In addition, the footpath kerb is damaged at this point. There are litter and recycling facilities at the back of the community centre. The bi-lingual 'Welcome to Clonaslee' signs are attractively displayed.

### **Residential Areas:**

On the approach from Mountmellick, a well maintained walled park with its maturing trees, and Irish language 'Parc Sliabh Bladma' millennium stone on the left side introduces the Slieve Bloom Park Estate. This estate is beautifully maintained with well maintained green areas and the introduction of a new rockery. There are a number of nicely planted areas and, near the main road, a well sited seat in a green area under a tree

The presentation of the group 6 to 8 housing 'estate' on the approach to the village from

Mountmellick with its frontage of maturing trees and rockery in the left corner is excellent. The 'Hillside View' housing estate has a well dressed entrance floral display and, in general, the estate is well maintained with trimmed grass areas and plantations in place to screen brick walls. There is good linkage path between estate and village

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The approach roads to Clonaslee are very well presented. Verges are nicely trimmed, and walls and hedgings well maintained. From the Mountmellick side the grave yard with its car park frontage is well maintained but road surface is uneven near the Estuary Filling Station. The presentation of the filling Station could be improved with screening of fertiliser bags and machinery stored in forecourt area. From the outer approach there is a cut hedge to the right. The left is generally well presented with house garden frontages broken with the odd vacant site. The approach from Kinnitty is very pleasant with signs and grass areas with seating to left. The road surface is generally good, but breaks up closer to the town. Sign posting to surrounding walks is well displayed with finger posts colour coded to various routes, complemented by colour coded stake signs enroute.

### **General Impression:**

Clonaslee is a beautiful quiet village with much to offer. In particular, its surrounding unspoilt environment makes it exceptionally suitable for walking. The work of the Tidy Towns Committee is highly commended despite the clear difficulties brought about by the trench digging along its main street. There is no doubt that the future for Clonaslee in the competition is very promising indeed.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Clonaslee is a very pleasant village with an understandable plan - a long, wide main street and terminated by an old Church of Ireland church now being used as a heritage centre and library. The building is now very attractively presented with a large stepped, stone faced planting bed enclosing the front of the building and the side stone wall of the grounds displaying a collection of excellent hanging baskets. At the other end Main Street is terminated by Capparogan Green, a large triangular piece of ground, beautifully landscaped with a well kept grassed area, trees, shrubs and seating. The whole composition of these two contrasting terminal features and the broad tree-lined main street is excellent. The shops and houses are quite beautifully displayed with window boxes and hanging baskets which give a wonderful sense of colour. At the Catholic church on the Tullamore road, the front grounds are totally tarmacadamed car parking, however, the sides and rear of the grounds are well landscaped and maintained. Adjoining the parking area is a delightful small stone building - a girls school with a very pleasing fountain commemorated to Fr. Shorthall, a former parish priest. The gates to the church grounds need both repairing and painting. Possibly, at some time in the future, the stone piers of this gateway could be recessed to make for a safe exit from the car park. The committee could also consider the planting of trees - chestnut - around the perimeter of the car parking. Large well constructed tree pits would be needed, but the effect of enclosure to this rather bleak car park area would create a wonderful space. The committee is to be congratulated on employing consultants for the preparation of the Five Year Development Plan and for a colour consultant to advise on an overall colour concept for the village. Fourteen members on the Committee is excellent and the dedication to improve the village and the care and attention to detail can be readily seen. The adjudicator looks forward to the completion of some additional projects in next year's submission.