

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Glenties** Ref: **702**
County: **Donegal** Mark: **293**
Category: **C** Date(s): **14/06/2006**
08/08/2006

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	44
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28
Litter Control	50	41
Waste Minimisation	20	12
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	31
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	293

Overall Development Approach:

Maintaining the high standard that you have set yourselves over the years has been quite remarkable, keeping Glenties' place at the head of the county - a real achievement when standards are rising everywhere. It is counter-productive to disparage in your documentation the work achieved in other centres which have earned slightly higher marks, especially when you could not possibly know the particular difficulties that they have overcome. Especially commendable in your achievement is the fact that the work has been done in what you describe as a 'disadvantaged area'. Congratulations on the result.

The Built Environment:

The principal buildings, as usual, were superbly presented. Foliage has grown so dense by the RC Church that only those who pause here can be aware of the masterpiece that it is. The public buildings opposite are maintained to a high standard. The Hotel was resplendent in its yellow and blue livery - in fact the quality of painting on frontages in the main street was universally good this year. The Garda station was looking particularly good. The strong colours of the old Railway Station emphasise the excellence of railway design a century ago; Paddy's Bar with its thatched roof was also a potent reminder of the quality of craftsmanship in past times. The Church of Ireland church retains its period charm. The new Fire Station is most promising. The building stock at the north end of the main street, including Glenmore House, has improved enormously since this adjudicators last visit four years ago. The schools were also well presented.

Landscaping:

One can not fail to know that one is approaching Glenties because the roadsides become so trim and private gardens so colourful and neat. Landscaping at the the two largest housing estates is quite spectacular, especially the treatment of the streamside valley; it is hoped that when building development is completed on the opposite bank that the landscaping project can be continued on that side. An imaginative touch was the

planting of potato drills in a small section. Dr McCloskey Crescent, in its two aspects - the steetside planting and the inner landscaping - resembled a first-class public garden. The distinctive treatment of the mound in the centre of Ard Connell was just as eye-catching, with its rock plants and shrubs. The planting on the rise behind the Garda station is another welcome greeting to the visitor from the Ardara direction. It was good to see a landscaping treatment in the lane to the tennis courts. Last year's adjudicator mentioned the weedy Famine Graveyard; it was still comparatively weedy; perhaps the effort that goes into Ard Patrick could be extended to this. At the sports field opposite the secondary school, beech hedging was admired. *Ponticum rhododendrons* were at their best at the time of the visit in a number of places.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The proposal for Glenties' participation in the ambitious Donegal GAP project, combining sensitive exposition of the natural environment with tourism concerns, reads most interestingly: best wishes for its success. There are so many well-signposted nature walks in the vicinity that only one was taken in full this year, the Altar Road; interpretative sign boards, here as elsewhere, were meticulous in the information given. Residents and visitors have no reason to be unaware of these initiatives. The fish hatchery continues. The photographs supplied showing river, mountain and meadow at other seasons of the year were appreciated.

Litter Control:

Litter control was even more successful this year. The voluntary workers and especially the school students are to be commended for their involvement. On the date of the first visit hardly any disposable litter was seen at the notorious night-lifespots. Additional litter bins may have helped.

Waste Minimisation:

Glenties has taken this new category in hand with greater determination than in the majority of centres. As time goes on, work under this heading will assume more and more importance. The recycling centre was favourably noted. The bring bank appeared to be adequate as there was no debris. Mention in your documentation that the town sewage system was built for a population one-quarter of what it is now is a serious matter which you are correctly pursuing with the Local Authority.

Tidiness:

Major building work in the vicinity of the church, near the secondary school, and in some less obtrusive places has been taken into account. There were some untidy 'corners' on the Rock/Altar road. Generally, tidiness prevails.

Residential Areas:

It is the perennial maintenance of the older houses at the core of the town that gives Glenties its unique quality. The major housing estates at Ard Patrick, Ard McGill and Ard Connell have been favourably mentioned under Landscaping (above); individual homes are uniformly well kept; the neat kiosks, which might also serve as bandstands, are an unusual and pleasing touch. Retention of older timber as well as the planting of young trees is a feature throughout. The new estate at Clos N. Conall is very promising: the variation in house types and the quite subtle choice of colours was admired; at date of first adjudication tree-planting had yet be to undertaken. This neighbourhood should look exceptionally well in a very few years time.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Road surfaces were fair to excellent except on Tullyard Road which is under stress at present due to the amount of redevelopment alongside. The parking bays in the main street, along with the handsome lamp standards and trees, create a sense of care. The undergrounding of cables has helped the visual amenity enormously. Name signs on all streets would be helpful, and bi-lingual signs preferred. Much wall building in local stone, and the cladding of boundary walls in stone, was admired.

General Impression:

Glenties has succeeded through dint of persistent hard work, almost entirely voluntary, as well as a natural appreciation of what the town and its locality has inherited from the past. Recent developments have been designed to blend fairly harmoniously with the existing townscape. A feature has always been this committee's willingness to participate in schemes of wider implication, and also to create its own initiatives for future improvements.

Second Round Adjudication:

As a first time visitor to Glenties your 2nd Round Adjudicator was immediately impressed by how Glenties appears to handle its role as an important tourism centre with that of a village where environmental

considerations are so important. In this context it is interesting to remember that Glenties first won the Tidy Towns Competition in 1958 – nearly fifty years ago; in that time the community has accumulated so much important experience in environmental presentation and development. It is perhaps the magnificent landscaping evident at various locations in Glenties and the quality of the presentation of the built environment that are the keynotes of the village in Tidy Towns terms. The adjudicator noted that a brave use of strong colours was evident on many buildings including the Community Centre, the Highland Hotel and beautiful Paddy's Bar. At the end of the long Main Street the Garda Station painted in pink closes the view in a satisfying manner. Some problem areas were however noted. A few of the narrow lanes or small openings off the Main Street revealed back areas that did not meet the presentation standards of the Main Street. The display of retail good on pavements was noted and this is a practice that should be discouraged. It looks untidy and can cause unnecessary difficulties for the disabled. Occasional litter was noted on the Fintown Road and on the Ballybofey approach road some banks and verges were due for a trim. These problem areas apart Glenties was beautifully presented and it was a pleasure to visit this most attractive place. Good luck with your 2007 projects that we await with great interest.