

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clonegal** Ref: **37**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **291**
Category: **B** Date(s): **16/07/2007**
09/08/2007

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	46
The Built Environment	50	38
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	40
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	18
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	291

Overall Development Approach:

We wish to welcome Clonegal to the 2007 Tidy Towns Competition. We note you have a committee of only 10 people and your appointment and growing success over the years have resulted in several medals. You appear to have a well motivated committee judging by the sheer amount of work and good maintenance over the years. We also congratulate you on your submission this year which included a comprehensive inventory of all physical features which are relevant to the Tidy Towns sections for which marks are awarded. This is a very colourful and informative account with colour photos and lovely clear maps. The volume given to us appears to be original and we have arranged to return it to the Department of Environment in Dublin. Clonegal is already a beautiful and well appointed Village in the heart of the hills of County Carlow and happily on the day it was mainly sunny with lots of hikers with their bags using the Wicklow path with its attractive new park and with all the required information present.

The Built Environment:

The village over the years has been sensitively developed, conserved and maintained and in particular we note the traditional village centre with its single and two storey dwellings. We also note the attractive main street with Clonegal House on the right and smaller stone buildings on the other side. At the bottom of the street the road turns in full view of a magnificent stone bridge which was greatly admired. This bridge crosses the river Derry into County Wexford.

All churches and graveyards are beautiful and well maintained. Well done on your latest project at St. Brigid's church on the Tullow road, where you have successfully removed conifers and poplars from the church grounds and replaced them with grass and flowering shrubs which look beautiful. On the Wexford side of the bridge the work on the forge, stone and upgrading of the corner looked well. The school was clean and tidy. Two sites which are important and should be upgraded namely are the castle entrance and the large ugly lorry

park area behind the new park. This open area contains all sorts of mechanical junk and should be screened from view. As a foot note the plastic sign on the front of a shop on the main street singled out in last year's report appears to have been replaced with a timber one.

Landscaping:

Landscaping in general is of a very high standard with lots of colour on the day of our visit. We encourage your policy of seasonal planting. Planting can be overdone, look fussy and we would not recommend that plants be attached to the bridge because it is a strong enough feature in the landscape as it is. We would recommend that no more planting be done other than replacement in the Main Street area. The planting in the Wicklow Way park is extremely good and colourful.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Landscaping in general is of a very high standard with lots of colour on the day of our visit. We encourage your policy of seasonal planting. Planting can be overdone, look fussy and we would not recommend that plants be attached to the bridge because it is a strong enough feature in the landscape as it is. We would recommend that no more planting be done other than replacement in the Main Street area. The planting in the Wicklow Way park is extremely good and colourful.

Litter Control:

Well done on your winning the Carlow Litter League last year. There was no litter evident on either side of the river. Your policy of continual patrolling is working. The two bring bank areas in the village are operated by different councils (Wexford and Carlow). Both were spotlessly clean and are working well. They are also landscaped.

It was also noted on the day that grass cuttings were separated and transported by dumper from the cutting of the grass at St. Brigids Church. This indicated that you are separating well for composting.

Waste Minimisation:

Composting is taking place. To perform to a high standard under this heading it is necessary too encourage all sectors of the community to survey the amount of waste generated by themselves and to formulate strategies to minimise the amount produced, as opposed to simply collecting waste for recycling. We anticipate a performance of excellence under this heading in the years to come given your track record to date in every other respect. The Race against Waste booklet included in this year's Tidy Towns pack contains a number of good ideas on this.

Tidiness:

Well done on your work with FAS and other agencies. We would support you in your challenges to get poles moved by the E.S.B and Eircom. The poles at the front of the Watch Tower spoil the aesthetics of the scene. We agree with you that the poles and over-head wires throughout the village should be underground. The town with exception of the lorry park is very tidy and well maintained.

Residential Areas:

All new developments on both sides of the bridge were extensively inspected throughout and were found to be generally very attractive, well maintained and well landscaped and places presented well. Treatment of the boundaries, dens and open spaces were also of a good quality. We looked also at the local authority terrace because it forms part of this years programme. It had a new sign. The green area been is being mowed by FAS and generally planting was very attractive, seating and tables require repair.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach areas on the whole were very well maintained presently with good quality roads and footpaths. Boundary walls are in a mix of dry stone granite or pointed which form a beautiful back-drop for a planting and also wilder natural verges just for the village. Cemeteries throughout are beautifully maintained and are attractive.

There are beautifully landscaped village bi-lingual sign posts at entrance roads.

Streets in the centre of the town are clean and well maintained. There are a number of houses in town which are vacant and require work. The area around the dispensary required attention.

The lorry park requires attention and up-grading as soon as possible.

Street furniture is attractive and very well maintained except in the St.Bridget's Terrace. Art work continues to flourish.

General Impression:

The village basically has its original centre on both sides of the river. The bridge area has been upgraded and landscaped sensitively without too much change in scale. Clonegal has absorbed several new housing developments, the most challenging being the terraced development along the Main Street, which has a series of strong gabled frontages facing the road. This however is in scale with Clonegal House near by, and with the two storey shops at the top of Main Street. The Moyacomb development has still to be landscaped.

Second Round Adjudication:

Not having been in Clonegal for some years, this adjudicator was impressed by progress and especially by the terraces of new houses on what was formerly a bare spot on the main street. These houses effectively link up the lower part of the village with the upper, giving a much greater sense of unity to the whole. They, and the new houses currently being built behind them, now form an important element that is social as well as visual, preserving a sense of community that is fairly unique nowadays where in many places new housing is unfortunately being provided in areas that are remote from village life. The style of these terraces was admired too, for taking their inspiration from the charming older cottages. Some beautifully kept old houses and business premises were also seen, only one or two in need of repair. Suggestions made by the first adjudicator, especially in relation to poles and wires, and to the lorry park, should be taken into account. The shrubberies and flowerbeds - including the marvellous boat and wheelbarrows - are the kind of incidental arrangements that immediately catch the eye and give a first class impression of the village. Congratulations to all who have helped to make Clonegal such an attractive place.