

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Clonegal** Ref: **37**  
County: **Carlow** Mark: **299**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **24/06/2009**  
**29/07/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	48
The Built Environment	50	39
Landscaping	50	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	31
Litter Control	50	38
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	20
Residential Areas	40	31
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	9
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>299</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

The adjudicator would like to welcome Clonegal to the 2009 Tidy Towns Competition and this was the first visit of this adjudicator to your beautiful village. Thank you for the most detailed, relevant and informative entry documentation that this adjudicator has received in some considerable time. The Map document was really helpful on adjudication day. You have a large committee of fifteen people and this represents very strong support for your work. It was great to read that you enjoy such strong agency support and your publicity initiatives are comprehensive. The Committee member on the Green School Committee provides that essential link. Many aspects of Clonegal impressed this adjudicator but it is your treatment of history that stands out. You have succeeded in bringing the history of the village back to life and blending it successfully into your overall village presentation. This is not easy and many communities have failed in this endeavor. Your use of old photographs to illustrate your progress over a number of years was most useful and it helped to put your present position in true context.

### **The Built Environment:**

The repair of the Watch House Wall and the opening of the Weavers Cottages are important steps forward in your treatment of history. Hopefully, the work necessary on the 1798 farmhouse will be carried out by the County Council without delay. St Brigid's Catholic Church impressed, with a most suitable external wall colour and a very well presented grounds. Is a new Grotto being developed in the car park of the Hall, beside the Church? Work seemed to be in progress here on adjudication day. The timber door of the Hall needed to be treated. The School, in its prominent village location at the focus of roads, was presented to a high standard and what a lovely village, in which to be educated, it is. Restoration work was in progress on the 1835 Methodist Church on the day of the visit and we really look forward to seeing the completed project. What is to happen with the curved, corrugated iron roofing of the stone building built onto the Church? The Church of Ireland commands an impressive site, looking down on the valley and village below. The fine trimmed hedging

here caught the eye. In the village core, the PJ Dunne premises occupies a critical location, as it closes the view to the village on the Parkbridge Road approach. The dark green and white colour scheme works well here, and shows off this large building to maximum advantage.

The Weavers Cottages dating from 1690 have a real sense of history and one wishes that these walls could speak of what this building has experienced so long ago. The signage at the Roma Take Away does not sit well with the surrounding buildings in the village. This is an important village facility and improved signage might be considered for next year. The 1798 Hanging Stone panel was noted and presumably this is what the adjudicator thought it was for! Clonegal House dating from 1610 still commands a prominent place in the village street and the presentation here was admired. At the Sha-Roe Bistro, the unusually proportioned timber casement windows caught the eye. The Weighing House is a wonderful restoration based on the photographs that you provided before work started here. The use of the Irish language in Clonegal is commended.

### **Landscaping:**

Your involvement of professional skills in the development of some of your flower beds is a wise move and this is a great investment for the future. The demise of the old boat was appropriate, as it had served its purpose and one must move on in landscaping terms. The 2007 – 2008 tree Survey wades interesting reading and a great benchmark document. The Map Park is an attractive village centre area to spend a little time and the adjudicator liked the way that you brought village history into this space. The flag poles would be improved if painted and the timber framework for the map needed to be painted. Unfortunately, a very bad litter problem was noted here. Landscaping is one of your strongest performance areas and the many small incidental landscaped areas add much to the charm of Clonegal. All landscaped areas visited were well maintained and colourful. In your future plans, it might be worthwhile to further consider the role of planting for year round colour.

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

The Habitat Survey initiative is highly commended as is the introduction of the 20 Mallard on the river. Some of them seemed to be present to meet the adjudicator on the day of the visit together with one Swan; the other was asleep on the small island in the river, at the bridge! The Sli Na Slainte sponsored walk was a great concept and is one that can be repeated annually. The adjudicator really enjoyed the Soc Cois Abhainn area and an excellent interpretation is provided here. You appear to have a problem with Mink?

### **Litter Control:**

Litter control is another of your real strengths. Well done on your Litter League performance and hopefully you will get the new bins that you are seeking. The Recycling facilities were well presented and the center at the Church car park was especially admired. With one major exception, litter control was excellent on the day of the visit. This exception was at the Map Park. Extensive littering and rubbish was noted in the area by the railing, at the Map panel. The fact that this area is outside the Map Park area is irrelevant – visitors will see it and might form a slightly different opinions of the village. Unfortunately, at your high performance level in the Competition, such problem areas must be reflected in your marks for 2009. Litter was also evident on the Bunclody approach just before the cross-roads. The litter bins appeared to have been emptied recently and were neat and tidy.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The event that you organised around the issue of waste minimisation is welcomed and should be repeated each year. Hopefully, the composting initiative will go ahead without delay. Can you encourage the School to make further progress in The Green School Programme?

### **Tidiness:**

You have done good work on weed control and spraying was in progress on adjudication day. The removal of the ESB junction box at the Watch House is a welcomed development. It is suggested that the sign poles in Clonegal are painted to an agreed colour scheme, with the approval of the Local Engineer. Black seems to be an obvious colour. The signage for Radhairc Na Doiri in the village centre appeared totally out of place, in a village of such environmental quality. Can you get agreement on a definitive date when this will be removed or have a much smaller and well designed sign substituted? What appeared to be a car, no longer in regular use, was noted in a garden, at the bridge. If this is the situation then, could this be screened from public view?

### **Residential Areas:**

The various estates were visited and Valley View impressed, but very minor kerb weed was evident. At St Brigid's Terrace, the fine Granite sculpture was much admired and the fine mature grass areas, and trees made for an excellent overall presentation here. At Radhairc Na Doiri, the well cut clopping grass bank was

impressive. At Moyacomb Meadow, poor road surfaces are a problem and, especially, the dangerously raised manhole covers.

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

Most approach roads impressed. The short stretch of the Bunclody road marked on your map needed attention. Here, the narrow brown verge area near the cross-roads was uncut. A little cutting on the Shilleagh approach would also have been welcomed. The main routes however, created a great first impression of Clonegal.

### **General Impression:**

It was a great pleasure to visit Clonegal for the first time and your approach to Tidy Towns is impressive. Good luck with all your projects for next year when we look forward to returning.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

While your village was a little bit hard to find, once here it made a great first impression on this adjudicator. The 'Sos Cois Abhainn' is a beautiful place from which to enjoy the wildlife. Alien invasive species are a problem along the river bank (e.g. Giant rhubarb and Indian balsam) as they present a threat to the native flora. The village looked fantastic on the 2nd day of adjudication. Colourful planting was noticed throughout and the mature lime trees along the river's edge create a wonderful year-round impact. The Tidy Towns display in the window of 'M.J. Hickey's' is a great way to communicate your achievements to the local community. Once again the village was litter free so congratulations on your continued efforts here. The shops and other businesses along Main Street are extremely well presented and Huntington Castle seems like a wonderful attraction. The bilingual wildlife display by the river is excellent.

Clonegal is a charming village in a beautiful natural setting – congratulations on all your hard work  
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