

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clough** Ref: **411**
County: **Laois** Mark: **240**
Category: **A** Date(s): **24/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	28
The Built Environment	50	31
Landscaping	50	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	17
Litter Control	50	37
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	18
Residential Areas	40	31
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	240

Overall Development Approach:

It was good to read of your successful fund-raising activities . Committee members are encouraged to visit other centres in the competition, not to imitate but to see how other centres rise to challenges and perhaps also to see how successful ideas could be adapted to local use. Errill and Emo are places that come to mind. It is understandable that there should have been local annoyance at the mast, and, yes, its introduction in that particular spot is very much against the Tidy Towns ethos; presumably the planning application was opposed by the committee but rejected by the local authority. Thank you for your very adequate map. It was a revelation to visit Clough after an absence of about five years and see all the improvements which have taken place due to sheer hard work.

The Built Environment:

It is good to see the Limekiln project completed and also the restoration of the pump on the Aghaboe road. The fine Gothic church that dominates the village was, as usual, beautifully presented in its churchyard, a centre of calm. The school in its spacious grounds was also looking well. The cement blocks of the Community Hall really need to be taken in hand and plastered or painted. The grotto was looking very attractive.

Landscaping:

Hard landscaping comprised of limestone boulders and gravel, with small shrubs, was most imaginative, unusual and effective. (This type of landscaping is a notorious attracter or weeds, so keep a watch out!) It was seen that the landscaping in front of the school was undergoing change; as soon as the plastic sheeting can be got rid of the better. There were plenty of lovely floral tubs and hanging baskets and many individual gardens contribute to the charm of the village.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Trees are properly considered under this heading. Young trees planted only a few years ago are already showing their worth, adding to both the scenic value of the village and the bird life habitats. Fine beech hedges were also seen to be coming along well. Clough is fortunate too in having so much ancient timber. It was good to read that the placing of bird boxes has been successful – it would be interesting to hear how many families were raised in them and of what species.

Litter Control:

Litter control is clearly very successful. Congratulations on the result of your entry to the LCC Litter Challenge.

Waste Minimisation:

The well kept bottle and can bins at Mary's Bar were favourably noted. Congratulations to the pupils of the National School for their green flag, and also to the teachers and parents.

Tidiness:

It is candid of you to point out dereliction. This is a persistently vexing matter. Farm entrances can be well kept, as evidenced by the one opposite the school; other farm entrances simply need a little more care in maintenance. After grass and hedge cutting, clippings should be removed immediately.

Residential Areas:

The gardens of individual homes, as mentioned under Landscaping, add considerably to the charm of the village street, with Virginia Creeper and other plants cascading over front walls. Rose Cottage was looking lovely though its cement block wall is not entirely in keeping. The four suburban-type houses near the school might, in the course of time when repainting becomes necessary, choose different colours to give variety; their stone wall boundaries add considerably to their visual effect. The Limekiln estate was new to this adjudicator and impressed greatly in the layout of roads and houses, in paving, landscaping, hedging and fencing. It was good to see (and smell) the clover in the roadside strips of grass. It is suggested that, depending on the budget, the inner end at the T junction be sown in grass to make it appear to merge with the hillside; or a carefully chosen shrubbery be laid out – preferably the former because the connection with the countryside is a bonus.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The improved footpaths were favourably noted; the new timber fencing opposite the school is excellent. All road surfaces were not of a high standards and almost all road markings were in need of repainting. It was good to see so many stone walls, old and new. The Clough sign on the Rathdowney side was pointing in the wrong direction!

General Impression:

Clough is a village that has come on tremendously since it first entered the competition. What needs to be done to make further improvement is obviously well known to the committee. This visitor was very heartened to see the new housing, indicative of a rise in population, and the cheerful sight of so many children at play in the school grounds. Every good wish for your unceasing work and worthy endeavours.