

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clonmore** Ref: **38**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **283**
Category: **A** Date(s): **16/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	40	41
The Built Environment	50	41	41
Landscaping	50	41	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23	24
Litter Control	50	36	36
Tidiness	30	21	21
Waste Minimisation	20	10	12
Residential Areas	40	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33	35
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	277	283

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator welcomes Clonmore to the 2012 National TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your comprehensive application form and report including photographs and lovely hand drawn map. The works you have done in consulting with the community to see where issues within the village need to be addressed are applauded. As you say this has now lead you to the stage where you can begin to formulate plans to commence real improvement works and indeed formulate strategies to protect the lovely rural and historical assets of your charming village. You have developed an impressive and inspiring list of objectives for every category in the competition and use this to show people in your community how you hope to proceed and it can even help you gain sponsorship. The plan is in effect the groups work programme and it should reflect the objectives and capabilities of the group. Well done in your continued support from local agencies and your work with Ballyconnell National School. The proactive approach you take to obtaining grants to help fund your works is also noted.

The Built Environment:

In general the village was charming to behold with Byrnes pub and shop front very well presented with its traditional signage. The Community Hall was looking very neat although the gate here could do with a coat of paint. We note from your submission that repainting takes up a lot of your time, but really it is a very worthwhile job as it does much to improve the setting of your key feature buildings. In this regard the railings to the Church of Ireland Church should be next on your list for painting. Chose a standard colour schemes if you can. Perhaps a dark green paint could be complemented by a dark green timber stain when you need to redo woodwork in the village. A repeated harmonious colour scheme can help unify various boundary and street furniture elements and indeed help hide any unattractive features. We wish you well in your longer term plans to promote the old chapel as a theatre venue. A novel way to create a destination and focus for the village.

Landscaping:

Well done in your policy to reduce your dependence on annual planting for colour in the village. The use of perennial herbaceous planting such as cranesbills geraniums on your roadside beds were admired. These will come back year after year but will also bring some seasonal interest to the planting schemes. Given your rural setting and the mature trees which give the area so much character we would also encourage you to invest in tree planting if resources are scarce. Mature oak trees within the well area as well as the fine specimen at the road junction are features that only time can provide and by planting now we ensure future oaks for our children's children to enjoy. The schools woodland area benefited from your allocation for this year's national tree week. For next year perhaps the approaches to the village could be replanted with native oaks? There was evidence of stumps of recently felled trees on the approach from Hackettstown. This could be a great location to establish a new avenue with the co operation of the adjoining landowners? We noted a few self seeded sycamores in the well park area; remove these before their roots damage the stonework here.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You have a proactive approach to this category and the number of bat and bird boxes you have established and the interest you take in monitoring them is heartening to see. So many committees install boxes and then never monitor them or clean them to ensure they become viable habitats and nesting sites. If bats are in the area consider taking part in Bat Conservation Irelands All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterways Survey. It takes place over two evenings in August and is easy to carry out.. Contact <http://www.batconservationireland.org> for more information. We look forward to seeing progress in your wildflower meadow and how great to have a local expert on hand to advise you. Given your rural setting and obvious enthusiasm for this category we see that great gains can be made in marks here in the future. Keep up the good work.

Litter Control:

As in previous years there was very little litter in the village area on adjudication day and your two bins were clean and emptied. Well done to the pub owners in taking responsibility for the actions of their patrons and helping in addressing the problem with cigarette butts. Indeed none were evident on adjudication day. A plastic bag had been left between the wall and the recycling bins at the community centre so make sure this area is covered as part of your regular litter patrols. We note you have plans to enhance the area here so good luck with this project.

Tidiness:

You present a very tidy village so continued success on this. One area where attention is needed is the wall to the Church of Ireland Graveyard. A new coat of paint here and to the adjoining railings would do much to improve the setting of the lovely old church. Also requiring attention is the patch of grass to the front of the post and rail fence fronting the impressive ruin of Clonmore Castle. We understand this is as a result of a hedge being removed as part of road works. Some regrading would improve the ground here and perhaps if not grass some wildflowers could be sown to improve the foreground of this impressive castle vista. Take good advice with regard to cutting back ivy on Clonmore Castle. As a protected structure no works should be undertaken here without sound conservation advice and proper consent. There is no such things as a tidy ruin!

Waste Minimisation:

How great to see a practical application in this category with the use of food from the school garden for the annual school picnic. Not so much a case of food miles as food inches there. We hope it was enjoyed by all in spite of the weather. This has followed through on the success of your allotments and indeed the schemes expansion this year. Is there any spot in the village where you could establish a community orchard to continue with this theme? Use old Irish varieties and it could add another event to the village calendar with an annual Clonmore community apple harvest festival. Well done to all in your efforts here. Also we commend your school for their success in obtaining their first green flag with a second soon to follow we hope.

Residential Areas:

As in previous years the standards here are well maintained so well done to all your residents with painting boundary walls and keeping hedges trimmed. The older properties add so much to the character of the village and some fine newer homes have been added in recent years.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The hedges and verges on the approaches to the village were well maintained and neat. The stop markings on the road were noted so well done in addressing this with the local authority Roads Department. As a first time visitor the lack of approaching signage was also noted so best of luck in advancing this with the council as the village is such a delight it would be a shame for a visitor to miss out on a visit due to poor signage. A

road sign near Byrnes pub was obscured by the hedge here so ensure vegetation is cut back in front of all signs as necessary. A hedge to the back of the field before the church showed signs of decline, perhaps due to the previous poor winters. If it was a non native hedge perhaps a native hedgerow could be planted here with the cooperation of the landowner. This would create an ideal backdrop to the raised planter by the roadside.

General Impression:

Clonmore is a lovely village with an obvious historical richness and an important ecclesiastical heritage. All involved in this year's entry are warmly thanked and congratulated for their efforts and wished well in 2013. With your village's natural and architectural assets and your obvious commitment to the competition we see no reason why you will not make real progress in the coming years. Good luck.