

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Glenbrohane** Ref: **453**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **267**
Category: **A** Date(s): **19/06/2012**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2011 | Mark Awarded 2012 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 36 | 36 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 37 | 38 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 40 | 39 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 25 | 24 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 35 | 36 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 18 | 18 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 7 | 8 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 30 | 30 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 31 | 31 |
| General Impression | 10 | 7 | 7 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 266 | 267 |

Overall Development Approach:

Glenbrohane is most welcome to the 2012 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your entry form with hand drawn map. Glenbrohane is a small, spreadout village in a very scenic location and it is hoped that Tidy Towns helps to bring you together as a community. You continue to have six members on your committee and this is a good number for a village of this size. Do you get new people wanting to join? It is important that the door is always open. Do you have public meetings? How is the broader community engaged? You list a number of regional agencies with which you are involved and it is important that these links are maintained.

Keeping your school involved with your activities is vital as these young people have so much to offer the development of the village. Through the green flag project schools all over Ireland are leading the way in reducing environmental impacts. The challenge for the rest of us is to take these lessons beyond the school gates. Do give more detail on how you engage with the school. Perhaps the principal is on the committee? Do you give talks in the school? Perhaps the students help out with Tidy Towns projects.

Last year's report mentioned that you had a three-year plan however this was not included this year. If you have renewed the plan do remember to include it in the application form as the adjudicator is looking for evidence of a strategic approach to the contest. You may be in the process of preparing a new plan and if so the Tidy Towns Handbook contains a wealth of useful information on how best to do this.

The Built Environment:

Glenbrohane is a rural village in a distinctive setting. It has a scattered settlement pattern and consists of a mix of commercial, municipal, residential and farm buildings. These overlie the landscaping to make the

community in which you live. The challenge for tidy towns is to conserve these elements while simultaneously accommodating the changes that are common to rural communities across Ireland - for good or ill. Stone boundary walls are another important feature of this locality and should be retained.

The whitewashed walls with pre-independence post box is a beautiful point of interest. The school building is looking well although needs to be painted in one section. The grounds meanwhile are very well maintained and enjoy a beautiful backdrop of the mountains.

The old national school is very well presented and it's natural stone boundary is a particular feature. The roadside here needs weeding however.

The Sliabh Ríad is a highlight of the village and the wonderful mural is perfectly complemented by colourful flower displays, neat furniture and paving and a display of past achievements in the window - well done!

Further up the road the church overlooks a wonderful panorama of rolling countryside and mountains beyond. The church itself is a wonderful building that is very well presented. It was nice to see its clean tricolour flying on adjudication day. The interpretive panel is attractive although the car park here needs to be swept of gravel.

Landscaping:

In a rural location such as this the principle landscape features are the hedges, woods and tall trees that come right into the heart of the village. Conserving these, and enhancing them where possible, is worthy of your efforts. Annual flower displays have their place but will be limited to drawing attention to particular features, such as doorways. Elsewhere planting beds should avoid being too formal and include perennial shrubs, roses for instance can be very effective.

Landscaping at Paddy and Bríds need some attention as planting here has become weedy. The lovely painted display of trees and flowers was admired alongside the small wooden welcome sign. The bed here has some attractive features but it needs to be weeded and heather trimmed back.

The well on the Port Road is an attractive and interesting feature but is neglected and needs to be weeded. The stone bed across from here is very nicely maintained with a range of shrubs. It is not recommended that ESB poles be used for hanging flower baskets as they pose a safety concern. Baskets adorning the old national school are very effective here. The bird panel across the road is excellent. The wall here needs some attention however as shrubbery has overgrown.

The Marian shrine by the church is attractive with a good display of colour and greenery. It is in need of some attention though as it is weedy in places.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your landscape is bound to be full of wildlife and has a range of habitats within easy reach of walkers e.g. Glenbrohane River, hedgerows and uplands. Do note that beech is not a native tree in Ireland and should be avoided in hedging in favour of hawthorn.

In the previous category you mentioned that you have been clearing giant rhubarb and this would be commendable. However, as pointed out in a previous report some years ago the plants here are not giant rhubarb but another, native River plants: butterbur. Both have similar leaves but the latter is a native plant of riverbanks. Clearance of vegetation along rivers is poor practice as it promotes erosion and damages fish habitats. Intervention of this kind can therefore be damaging to the rivers ecosystem. Other undergrowth (briars etc) is part of the riparian ecosystem, valuable for nesting birds and invertebrates the provides fish with food. Always consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland before doing works near the river as they can advise on best practice.

You appear to have a number of walks for example you refer to a loop walk from the church and the walks at the top of your local mountain, are these waymarked? They have great potential to allow people to greater enjoy the outdoors and your local natural heritage.

Litter Control:

Do note that this category is solely concerned with litter management. Do you participate in the national spring clean? How often do you carry out litter patrols? Perhaps there is little need but vigilance is always required. Great to read that there is zero tolerance in the school, such a message tends to persist past the school gates.

On adjudication day litter control was excellent with no litter items noted during the walk around well done.

Tidiness:

Do note that recycling is dealt with under the waste minimisation category. Glenbrohane fortunately does not contend with major issues of tidiness but minor issues could perhaps be ameliorated. The footpath at Paddy and Bríds needs to be weeded. The black field gates at the bridge would look very well if painted. The badly corroded school sign was noted and your efforts to have this replaced are acknowledged. An old 'man at work' sign is leaning against the wall at the bridge and should be removed.

Last year the adjudicator made a number of suggestions in this category. Where these considered by your committee for further action?

Waste Minimisation:

It is very impressive to read about the range of projects that are being undertaken in this category. It demonstrates that small villages can participate fully in addressing big problems. Your liaison with eggproducers.ie is a great innovation and shows how one person's waste can be another's resource. How do you make fire logs from newspapers? Is this done throughout the community?

The school's involvement in the green flag program is excellent here. Well done to them on the second green flag. How can changes they have made to reduce waste and save energy be applied across the village?

Residential Areas:

Glenbrohane has a small stock of houses and no estates. Houses viewed on adjudication day were mostly in good condition. The old farmhouse with blue and white colour scheme is particularly attractive.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Port Road approach from Garryspillane is a magical entrance along the fern cloaked banks of the Glenbrohane River. The name sign on the school road is in quite poor condition and needs to be replaced. Road conditions are reasonable while footpaths leading from the bridge needed to be weeded.

General Impression:

Glenbrohane occupies a wonderful location in the hills of Limerick and has a fine stock of vernacular architecture. It is suggested that you focus on tidiness and the landscaping issues for 2013 to boost your marks under these categories. In addition, do get advice before proceeding with any additional work along the riverbank. Best of luck!