

Tidy Towns Competition 2017

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clarecastle** Ref: **1082**
County: **Clare** Mark: **293**
Category: **C** Date(s): **13/06/2017**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2016	Mark Awarded 2017
Community Involvement & Planning	60	40	41
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	39	39
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	40	41
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	37	37
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	16	17
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	53
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	35
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	29	30
TOTAL MARK	450	287	293

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Thank you for the first class entry and the map plus your extensive plan, and you are very welcome to the SuperValu TidyTowns competition. You have a large size committee of ten people and you are fortunate to have around 25 other volunteers. Work continues in a cohesive fashion by co-operating with the other stakeholders such as the Men's shed plus the others listed. There is an impressive list of agencies and bodies mentioned headed by Clare County Council. The parishioners are well informed of your activities and I like the use of the noticeboard in the post office. There is good progress made in the Green Schools programmes and we read you are supportive of their efforts. Thank you for the informative photographs and other information supplied. You have a good approach to the competition.

Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:

Outstanding features of this nice village are the lovely church, and the well-presented Clarecastle National School. Roche have an extensive factory with splendid parking facilities and eye-catching landscaping. I admired the stone in the green unveiled some years ago by a great Clare man Doctor PJ Hillery.

The outstanding GAA complex is a great facility for the area with extensive playing pitches and pavilion. Business houses stand out at intervals in good condition, notably the Pharmacy, The Magpies bar, The Crossbar – Over the bar. We liked the post office with its bilingual signage and nearby Plunkett's Stop looked well. Arts and crafts shop on the corner was busy and nicely decorated. Powers Bar is pretty. These are just samples of the business houses and some others were just as good.

You are fortunate to have new neighbours at the Quay bar and great to find that they are working with you. Congratulations for arranging the walk and talk through the village under the leadership of Dr Joe Power which raises the awareness of the great history of your place. It is pleasing to find that the number of derelict sites and unoccupied buildings is reducing as outlined in your entry form.

The Credit Union looked well in its new coat of paint.
Little Duck Creche on a side-road for Quinn stands out.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

We liked the way a strip of grass is cut by the roadside on the Limerick side with taller grass and wild-flowers inside for the wildlife of the area, and good quality birch trees are pleasant in this area, and then we loved the black and white boat full of flowers. Crossing the bridge we admired the shrubbery and garden seat giving a nice welcome to the village. At the junction for Quinn we liked the grove of trees. Your community garden is pretty, but you could consider replacing the old white tyres used as flower beds and replace them with better quality ones. Flowers, fruit and vegetables were growing vigorously. Landscaping is impressive on the Ennis side with splendid open spaces

and mature trees and shrubs. There are extensive well maintained greens in the housing estates. The children's playground is a great asset for the children and nice to see it in such a prominent place. You are fortunate to inherit such a wonderful stock of mature trees and it is pleasing to see that lots of younger trees have been planted in recent years, and it is a great policy to plant a few every year. Nice splashes of flowers and shrubs, some in decorative boats, at intervals add much colour and freshness making your village pleasing to live in and visit. The people of Clarecastle are to be congratulated for the excellent condition of the two graveyards out past Roche with the splendid stone wall outside the old one. Stone walls integrate well with the native Irish environment, and dry stone walls harbour large quantities of insects for the wildlife. We enjoyed some other stonework notably at the castle displaying traditional building techniques and styles. I admired the very good Peoples Park ideal for relaxation or exercise with the good walk cutting through well -kept grass. The hanging baskets are beautiful especially on the main street.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádúrtha:

It is good to read of the attention now being given to Biodiversity and Wildlife and your meeting will help people to get a better understanding of the importance these subjects. All these plants, birds and insects make up the biodiversity of an area and each has a role to play in keeping the environment friendly. We await the production of your Biodiversity plan and good to learn that you enjoyed the lectures given in Westport. We admired your bug hotel in the community garden.

There is a lovely entrance to The Port of Clare, an attractive waterside area, and we admired the large anchor, seating area and the two signs – one displaying interesting old photographs of Clarecastle. The second sign has impressive details of the fauna and flora of the area, and helps us to look out for the different species. This is a good facility for relaxation and to observe the many birds flying about, as this village is a haven for all types of wildlife especially around the river. The castle gives good cover and winter food for the wildlife especially provided by the ivy.

We also note your plans for pollinators and salute the children for their work on biodiversity notably their work on the creation of a wild garden area. We are therefore not surprised to find that Roisin Ni Ghairbhith was impressed with the children on her trip to the school.

Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:

The people of Clarecastle put on a great show of management for Clarecastle green fleadh collecting over 4 tonnes of segregated material. The park and ride to Ennis was noteworthy and considerably reduced the amount of traffic on the roads which controlled the level of pollution. This is a novel strategy to roof the bug hotel with hurleys recognising the great local tradition, but this is interesting for the children. Savings made by using a solar hot water system at the GAA Club demonstrates to us all what can be achieved with savings of up to 80% on water heating charges.

It is interesting to learn that 69 people have now carried out the green home survey and we await the results of this. We recognise the big push by your committee in this important category.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

It is nice to see that a "for sale" sign is in place at the hoarding on the Limerick road, and we look forward to seeing this area restored to its former glory. Travelling through the village we are impressed at the level of tidiness and litter control. There are some well serviced litter bins around at intervals. It was noticeable that the busy area around the GAA pitch was so well kept – well done to all concerned. Some bits of litter were found outside the Peoples Park around the lovely shrubbery. The ESB poles at the bridge are rusty and faded.

A high standard is maintained over all areas and the walls on the Ennis side looked well after the wash that they received. Weed Control and litter control was quite good.

We are interested to find that litter was reduced as a result for this trial period using cctv.

Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:

There is a great variety of first class houses throughout Clarecastle. I visited a number of outstanding residential estates with spacious well tended open spaces with trees and shrubs. There is a distinct pride of place approach in the village with individual houses so well presented, and we selected Sacre Coer as "man of the match", and down further there are beauties going on towards the quay. I loved the estate alongside the castle with a splendid entrance Sli an Fearghas.

In behind the church we liked some estates like Garden View and Hill View. In further it was delightful to see the lovely new houses being built with some finished and displaying lovely gardens under construction and they have nice good quality new trees. This was a wonderful and welcome sight.

There are is a high standard set by those lovely houses at both sides of the road from the village green going towards Ennis and they always look well.

There are some really beautiful private houses along the roadsides with outstanding lawns, trees, flowers and shrubs. In the village centre some lovely town houses stand out with bright and colourful décor.

I saw a sign for a new housing estate Haggard View, maybe this should be written Haggart but you know best.

Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:

There are good cycle lanes on the main road on Limerick side right through the village out to Clarecastle roundabout and I felt that there could be more signage especially along the cycling areas with the standard image of

a bicycle, and you could bring this to the attention of the local roads engineer. Some cars were actually parked on these lanes at the Ennis side of the village. The cycle lanes continuing into Ennis are very well marked. There also are extensive footpaths all around the village making for comfort and safety for the pedestrians, but I note your concern with some of these footpaths and it is a responsible course of action to submit for funding to upgrade them. The roads that I travelled on have good surfaces except at the Church and Old Road. Clarecastle is now a pleasant village to navigate with nice effective signage. You are aware that a few welcome signs could be installed, and we only find that we are in Clarecastle with the sign on the Maxol Garage coming from Ennis. Good quality boundary walls are in place all along the roadsides, and we admired some lovely stone walls.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a nice experience to visit Clarecastle again. You have benefitted greatly from the reduction of through traffic. This is a lovely village to visit and live in.