

Tidy Towns Competition 2021

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Glaslough - Glasloch** Ref: **609**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **352**
Category: **B** Date(s): **11/08/2021**
11/09/2021

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	51
Streetscape & Public Places	60	48
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	49
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	34
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	24
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	69
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	39
TOTAL MARK	470	352

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

9 Sustainable Goals addressed in this category.

Fáilte Chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2021. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn. Go raibh maith agaibh as ucht bhur dtacaíocht le linn na paindéime. Lean leis an dea-obair. Welcome to the 2021 SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your entry and for your commitment to your place in these difficult times. Keep up the great work.

Your 55th year involved in this competition is marvellous milestone. The press release that accompanied your application noted both the highs and lows associated with your prestigious win in 2019 and brought home to me the stark reality that the pandemic has had on such a vibrant community. The documentation that supported your application was of wonderful assistance during adjudication and I thank you for same. Your Multi Annual Plan deserves particular mention. This I would describe as clear concise with outcome's identified. A committee of 25 with up to 30 volunteers ranging in age from 16 to 85 years from a village of this size is remarkable and suggest a shared learning. Well done to each and everyone involved. What is also clear from your application is the importance your committee places on partnership. An international dimension is noted here with your involvement with CIB International Canada. This looks like an interesting connection; more information would be helpful. I would be grateful if it could be provided in a future application. A supportive local authority is vital to any Tidy Towns Committee and Monaghan County Council is certainly supportive, as is evidenced by the range of funding provided and the prestigious civic reception to honour your committee's marvellous win in 2019. The wide range of communication techniques used ranges from the modern social media to the traditional information desk assures that your message reaches all demographics. The 2019 adjudicator noted that Glaslough is a community that puts children and youth front and centre and this year's application reinforces that. The good work of the Junior Tidy Towns continues. The WOW and COW days are fantastic initiatives for the National School children however, the aptly named Hands Free Youth Hub is fantastic on several different fronts most notably the help provided to the Cocooners during the Covid crisis, well done to all involved. Nine different COVID related projects are noted, however the Close-Knit Community Group deserves recognition, to have 300 people participating and your association with front line workers and care homes is remarkable. A total of six new projects are noted in the development category. Of note is the rewilding Castle Leslie Estate. It is reassuring to see the continued cooperation between the estate and your committee. The free mushrooms from Monaghan Mushrooms provides a positive link with a strong local brand. The 'hope is growing' theme associated with the communities in bloom competition is apt and delivers a powerful message. The 2019 adjudicator defined Glaslough as a 'Community in absolute Unity' and while it is difficult to assess a competition of this nature without a visit, it is clear that continues to be the case.

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

5 SDG's identified in 10 of projects in this category

The 2019 adjudicator noted the village core as having a sense of place with a strong architectural heritage. This is a fitting description. I am delighted to note the upgrade of the street lighting to LED standard. I am keen to establish if the lighting columns were replaced in their entirety or just the heads, this is not clear from your application or the attached photos; regardless, this is a positive development. The progress of your plans for a new street layout and pedestrian crossing is significant and notes a detailed public consultation process with a subsequent approval. I thank you for including a copy of the proposal for these works with your application, while helpful the legend was not legible which is one of the difficulties associated with online applications - best of luck with the project. The donation of the old railway scales was a kind act of philanthropy which must be acknowledged and will be a fitting addition to your village, careful consideration should be given to its final location. The outdoor seating area in the coach garden is a welcome addition in Covid times and noted is the significant contribution that Community Employment has made to this wonderful project. I am delighted to see the completion of resurfacing works at the sports courts, noted as a future project in 2019. To have secured 90% of the funding from Sports Capital assisted greatly. I am keen to establish where the funding came from for the remaining 10% if a future application could consider. The installation of the old-style clock is a real positive. I am delighted to learn that before final installation, due consideration is given to its final location using a full size 'mock-up' notes good planning, well done. The recent refurbishment of Poconos shop front looks great and I particularly like the colour chosen for this profile location. The handball wall looks modern and will prove a welcome recreational facility in the area which can be utilised by a wide demographic. Within this category you have achieved a good balance between maintaining existing projects to a very high standard; and both planning and developing a number of new projects that are relevant.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

4 SDG's identified in 8 projects.

The 2019 adjudicator noted that they were satisfied that your planting was not focused on a single season and described it as 12 months 365 days a year commitment. There is more evidence of your committee extending your commitment with extra winter flowers planted in the village centre - well done to all involved. I am glad to note a move away from annuals to perennials at Tullyree Lower and the Percy Monument. Your maintenance requirements in this category are appreciable, considering the 4 gardens at Oaklands, Caledon Road, Pillar house and Barrack Hill alone. However, from photographic evidence provided high standards continue to be achieved. The use of mulch as a weed suppressant alternative to herbicide treatment as part of a hedge row management regime is admirable. Your committee has clearly identified the important role farmers have as custodians of the landscape; with a particular reference to restrictions associated with the nesting season - an important message, well done. The perennial planting at the Percy Monument will help soften this beautiful feature. The photos provided were excellent and noted different generations and community employment all working together. The new sign giving information on Glaslough's equine heritage is a big addition in a good location. Last year's adjudicator noted the wonderful publication Glaslough Village Green guidelines and the need to include information specific to trees. I am glad to read in your application that this is under consideration. The flower sale is a good initiative and brings in some well needed funds and uses surplus stock. It is understandable that only emergency tree surgery works could be carried out due to COVID restrictions, but I am delighted to read that important works such as adjusting ties and stakes continues to be carried out on younger establishing trees. The works to refurbish the station gates is a credit to those involved with the before and after photos clearly demonstrating what was achieved.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

10 SDGs in 20 of the projects.

Your ongoing engagement with the National Biodiversity Data Centre through individuals and local schools uploading information is important work and I commend all those involved. I would have liked more information regarding what plant or animal species the information collected pertains to. Your recently completed draft biodiversity plan is a fantastic and wide-ranging and very relevant document. I note significant support from Monaghan County Council and the involvement of Castle Leslie Estate. A slight caution noted in the document is a section titled Plants for Pollinators: Non-native but Beautifully Beneficial Buddleia is noted as a suitable species. I would have concerns regarding this species as an invader. The Bioblitz and biodiversity training involving a one-day workshop was well attended and dealt with an important issue relevant to Glaslough 'Catchment Care'. Removing invasive rushes from Glaslough Lake and the provision of signage made possible by cross border funding is hopefully completed by now. The Planned rewilding at Castle Leslie Estate is a fantastic initiative and I wish all involved the best of luck in delivering the project. The hidden biodiversity providing microscopes, magnifiers, and nets to both national schools is a wonderful initiative on so many fronts but, as I have come to expect with Glaslough, the children and youth are front and centre. The guided trails like so many other initiatives were affected by Covid. However, I am confident that they will make a welcome return and note a strong partnership with Castle Leslie Estate. The 2019 adjudicator noted the Grow My Tree Project had a strong educational dimension and addressing provenance by securing saplings from Castle Leslie Estate was a nice addition. I am delighted to see the project continued with new children to the school continuing to engage. The planting of the 6,000 Birch and Alder trees by a local resident is a significant contribution. I am keen to establish the location of the plantation noted as adjacent to their home along Hoey's Tree Trail but from what I can see it is not marked clearly on the village map. Water is an important part of this category and your committee understand this. Trips along the catchment the work done with Ben Malone LAWCO and the water conservation workshops clearly demonstrate this. Your application notes a no Pesticide policy. A pesticide is a substance that is used for destroying insects or other organisms. While a herbicide is a substance that is toxic to plants used to destroy unwanted vegetation. Just to be aware, the terminology used in your application is confusing and should be addressed. The map noting all 3 trails that assists with guided walks is fantastic. Creation of new 'Lakeview Wildflower Area' in Village Green Estate contains a nice mix of trees and shrubs and I am delighted to read that the projects are establishing well. As your

committee is aware our pollinators are in decline. The efforts of the Junior tidy towns pollinator plan projects associated with Bees, Birds and Butterflies (The 3 bs) address this important topic.

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

12 Sustainable Goals addressed in this category for 20 projects. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. SDGs are now an important consideration in this competition, and I recognise your efforts to embed these goals in the work that you do, well done. As one of only 2 communities in the country and the only village, your recently established SEC network on sustainability notes your committee to the forefront nationally on the important topic of sustainability. Your vision/moto of been kinder to our shared planet, people's pockets and to be a Model Village for energy sustainability is both admirable and achievable. The appointment of consultants which should be completed will drive this project on to the next important stage. I am delighted to note the completion of the replacement of all water pipes in Glaslough Village. Such works involves a lot of disruption but as your committee realises these are important works. Your ongoing efforts to achieve Greener Living using the Greener Glaslough booklet for guidance and online campaign is clearly reaping rewards, keep up the good work. Greener Glaslough Reusable coffee cups & containers with sales of 250 mugs denotes success. The Food Waste Prevention initiative has been a victim of Covid, but I would encourage you to reactivate as planned when it is deemed safe to do so. On the other hand, the Community allotments have benefited from the lockdown and have provided a wonderful community resource throughout the pandemic. Wastewater prevention and best practices promotions notes the considerable effort that your committee put into this topic and the facilities that exist in your community. Your efforts to Ditch the Single use plastic reduce the use of plastic straws bottles have found good project partners with Glaslough Harriers Athletic Club and the Hands-Free Youth Club. The kids Eco workshop was well attended and, if needed, further evidence the value that your committee places on the younger generation. Waste Prevention in both schools was obviously curtailed due to the pandemic, however it was great to note 7th Green Flag for St. Mary's National School with the catchy slogan We must all do with less or Our world will be a mess, and the annual poster competition carried out online in 2020 with the theme, 'Hope is growing' is apt for the times we live in. It is nice to note that the locals availed of the E Bikes during the lockdowns. It was a significant achievement to even host the Greener businesses event considering restrictions associated with Covid having 40 retailers involved certainly made the event worthwhile. The Gazebos were a very timely investment and it is important to note a supportive local authority in that regard. The efforts of Castle Leslie Estate to reduce its Carbon print stalled as a result of Covid should be reprioritised when restrictions allow. The use of the phone box as a community library would have proved a valuable resource in recent times.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

4 Sustainable Goals addressed in this category for 13 projects. The 2018 adjudicators commented on the corrugated farm building at the bottom of Barrick Hill as a blemish. The 2019 adjudicator noted a tastefully worded information panel giving information on difficulties in developing this site. An update on this project would be helpful and should be considered in a future application. Your investment in new tools is wise considering the vast amount of work carried out by your committee is positive, anything that makes these tasks easier is a good investment. Your application and the supporting photographs clearly show that your hard work is continuing. Tasks such as sweeping, cleaning, painting and works associated with dog fouling are monotonous tasks but so important. From the photographic evidence in your application your committee and the community face these tasks head on even throughout Covid. Your slot on local radio combined with social media is paying dividends. Desk top adjudication is difficult, but particularly so when considering litter. However, a range of initiatives from two-minute clean-ups, seasonal clean-ups, litter patrols all done under the stewardship of area Leaders continues to achieve remarkable results. Well done to all involved. The beautiful Glaslough Competition has served your community well since it was first established in 2016. I am delighted to read you plan to have the competition return in August, noting a good compromise achieved in 2020. Recycling/Segregating at Oakland Centre and Bring Centre shows what can be achieved through partnership; in this case the Glaslough Development Association, the Greener Glaslough Campaign and Monaghan County Council. From the photographic evidence provided in your appendices, the high standards noted at the Oak Land Centre by previous adjudicators has continued.

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

6 Sustainable Goals addressed in this category for 9 projects. The 2019 adjudicator noted very high standards in this category. Your current application under consideration supports this with further evidence that high standards continue to be achieved - well done to all involved. I am encouraged to note that despite Covid, and associated restrictions delaying the progress of the Autism Garden, a commencement date is scheduled for later this year. I want to acknowledge the perseverance of your committee for sticking with this fantastic project. Works in this category involve a lot of maintenance operations such as power washing footpaths, painting planters' signs and fixing fences. Considering the large number of estates and residential area served, I am happy to report from the detail in your application and photographic evidence high standards continue to be achieved. Allotments involve a lot of maintenance, the support given by Community Employment must be acknowledged here. The village Square and Green is a high-profile location, I am delighted to note adherence to the design guidelines regarding colours and finishes in all the work that is carried out in the area. The new play equipment and seats for this area is a good investment. The funding source is noted as Community Development funding, more information would be great to specifically identify the exact funding source however, I suspect it is Monaghan County Council. The new flower beds at Tullyree to soften the Irish Water facilities will be even more effective as they mature. The roster used in Ardbanagher ensures nothing is left to chance and it is great

to note the support of new residents in Culbanagher, welcome and well done to all involved. The photos included with your application (13 Presentation of homes) in this category are stunning, and particularly the floral displays are incredible. While photographs are a poor replacement for a stroll through your village, I am happy to conclude there appears to be a greater emphasis on pollinator friendly planting. The use of Vinegar as an alternative to herbicide is an interesting one. It would be great to get some feedback regarding success, more specifically on results achieved using different methods and rates of application. Regardless, it is great to see alternative methods been considered.

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

3 Sustainable Goals addressed in this category for 6 projects.

Attached in your appendices is a summary of projects 2019 to 2021. As noted previously these documents were helpful. However, I note a slight oversight with the same information in the summary for this and the previous category. However, the information in your main application sufficed, rest assured no marks were deducted. The 2019 adjudicator regarding parking at the Green Gates commented that the issue had tested your resolve and you were noted as a community that would be heard on this issue. Unfortunately, it seems there is a way to go yet and I encourage your committee to engage with the local authority to find a more long-term resolution. Most works undertaken in this category like the 2 previous categories involve a vast array of onerous maintenance operations. Here again these are tackled by your committee and project partners head on. The cleaning and planting work at the Horse Pond were extensive. While some photos were provided of the works as they were carried out, before and after photos would have helped to assess the result. The progress of the street works, and pedestrian crossing delayed due to Covid will when complete, provide much needed parking and a pedestrian crossing in a good location.

Concluding Remarks:

The 2019 adjudicator noted Glaslough as a Community in Absolute Unity. Based on the information in your application and the supporting documentation I have no doubt that this is still the case. Despite Covid and the associated restrictions that continue to dominate our lives, your community has shown resolve and your committee an important support particularly to those Cocooning. High maintenance standards achieved that contributed to your success in 2019 have continued. In addition, new and relevant projects have been either completed or are progressing in most categories under consideration since you were last adjudicated. Well done.

Second Round Adjudication:

Thankfully your second round adjudicator was able to visit the village and very much enjoyed a stroll around Glaslough. Even though summer was waning your planted displays still brought great colour to the village with a particularly vibrant display at the Leslie Memorial Monument. The lovely new tidy towns sculpture was much admired in the coach garden with a more muted and pollinator friendly planting scheme here. The array of seating areas allowed for much needed outdoor socializing opportunities during these difficult times. Maybe relook at the positioning of some of your yellow benches to ensure they are accessible to all. As the first round adjudicator said the commitment to community and communal spaces is clear to see. The allotments and edible garden were flourishing. The community hub with its tennis courts and most attractive recycling area were admired. It looked as if locally appropriate materials were being used to the works being done to upgrade the Castle Leslie entrance on the day of the visit.

Your new streetscape proposals will transform the village core for generations and how great to see that you have been actively involved in its design and development. Given Glasloughs commitment to sustainability, ensure the street is completed taking this ethos throughout the whole life of the project. Reuse and recycle materials. Ensure the fabulous legacy of stone work in and around the village is reflected in the material palette and workmanship. Can some hard surfaces or parking bays be removed to fit in raingardens or other sustainable drainage solutions given Glasloughs commitment to water resources? This could be an excellent chance for Glasloughs to again be a leader in promoting a new street that reflects the history of your place, promotes active travel, implements new ideas in the circular economy and builds with nature based engineering and drainage solutions. As a committee push to be a leading exemplar of sustainable streets in Irish towns and villages. We can't wait to visit once the project is completed. I fully agree with the sentiments of the first round adjudicator and would like to thank you all for your patience and understanding with the required adaptations to the competition format during these past few difficult years. Thank you to the community of Glaslough.