

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clontibret** Ref: **1414**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **242**
Category: **A** Date(s): **08/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	30	31
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	30	32
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	30	31
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	23	24
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	8	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	53	54
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	28	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	30	31
TOTAL MARK	450	232	242

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome Clontibret to the 2015 tidy towns competition and we are pleased to see that you are building on the progress made in 2014, which was your first year back in the competition. We are delighted to read that your hard-working committee of 10 members has developed good links with all of the other community, sports and voluntary groups in your village. It is also great to see that you enjoy the support of local businesses but we wondered if any contact has been made with Monaghan County Council or your County Leader or Partnership group? All of these organisations have proved to be essential project partners for other tidy towns groups in your County and we encourage you to contact them for advice, funding and other forms of assistance. Your communication strategy is considered to be good and we suggest that you give some consideration to developing a website in the years ahead as it is a very useful way of showcasing your work and capturing feedback from residents and others. Well done on involving the local school in your efforts and please let us know what projects the schoolchildren get involved in next year. Why not undertake some joint projects with the school children as this is an excellent way of raising environmental awareness and local participation and fostering a sense of ownership of the projects among young people. Thank you for your kind words on the competition and we are pleased to read that it has brought benefits locally. Your completed application form was also gratefully received. It was concise and easy to read and your tidy towns plan for the year ahead is considered to a very good document. The map supplied was helpful but as the village appears to cover a wide area, we would appreciate if you could mark the 50 kmph zones (i.e. the boundaries of the village) on your map for 2016. A scale on the map would also be useful. We also encourage you to continue to try to identify projects for your action plan in the coming years. A final point relates to your stated population of 166 (category A). This seems to be quite low for a village the size of Clontibret and we wondered if this includes all of the houses that appear to be part of the village.

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

The village of Clontibret appears to be quite a large and extensive settlement that comprises a wonderful mix of old and new elements. There appears to be three distinct focal points to the village, with the historical core to the south of the village (where the interesting historical buildings of St. Colmans Church, Graveyard and School (now used as a hall) are located) forming one focal point, the Garage, Braeside stores and apartments and Reneghans Bar comprising the second while the third focal point consists of St Marys Church and Moys National School (and all other adjoining buildings). There are numerous buildings of interest throughout the village of Clontibret with the historical structures of St. Colmans and St Marys both attracting positive attention and looking well. St Marys Church (to the north of the village) is a magnificent building and we also admired St. Moys National School (which dates from 1815) and we wondered if it remains in educational use? The Community Hall to the rear of the Church also looked well and we wondered if the prefabricated building beside it is being used as a temporary structure? The National School Building (adjacent to the Community Hall) also looked well and we were pleased to see its green

flag proudly flying. The committee is commended on the new sculpture (and pleasant seat surrounded by a gravel bed) that can be found at the crossroads to the south of the village. We were interested to read that this sculpture (which appears to be of a well) symbolises your area and identity and we wondered if there were plans to provide information panels explaining this. The sculpture to the north also looked well and the committee is commended on its choice of locations for the sculptures as they appear to signify the entry and exit points to Clontibret. Like the adjudicator in 2014, we spotted some vacant buildings during our visit – a number of which were in poor condition. It is recommended that the assistance of the Council is sought to help deal with this issue as the Council have the necessary powers to compel the owners to take remedial action and clean up derelict and vacant properties. A small number of untidy sites (such as the one adjacent to Reneghans Pub) were also observed and we wondered if there were plans to either develop or screen these from view? Well done on cleaning up and painting the parish pump as it is a nice distinctive element for your village and the new signage is also particularly useful (and informative) for visitors.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

We admired the perennials that were planted in the bark lined bed adjacent to the sculpture (and seat) at the northern end of the village as it helps to enhance this new feature. However, no landscaping could be seen in the gravel bed adjacent to the sculpture and seating area to the south of the village. Is this a work in progress? The landscaping bed was spotted at the commemorative stone for the 1595 Battle of Clontibret (which is located a good distance outside the village) and it comprised of low maintenance hedges. This is considered to be a nice feature but it is becoming a little untidy looking as a result of the weed blocker being visible in the gravel base and the presence of a small amount of weeds. The timber fence to the rear will also need to be painted or treated in time for 2016. We also liked the landscaping at the base of the sign outside the garage. We wondered if the suggestion of the adjudicator in 2014 to provide landscaping and planting displays on the approach roads to your village had been considered? In addition, it is recommended that the extensive car park area to the rear of the Church would benefit from colourful planting – perhaps in the form of half barrel planters?

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

We were pleased to hear that you sought assistance from a local gardener in identifying native shrub and tree varieties that will attract bees, butterflies and other wildlife and we wondered if the identified species will now be included in your planting schemes? We were particularly interested to read about the Monaghan vintage club who ploughed and planted a field with oats using traditional farming methods and we wondered how this event went? Is it proposed to do this on an annual basis? We note the suggestion of the adjudicator in 2014 to involve the school children in a bird survey or habitat survey of a small area and we wondered if this project was given any further consideration? Remember, that this 'learning by doing' approach is considered to be the most effective way of raising environmental awareness of local biodiversity. Why not do a survey of the wildlife that visits one of your planting schemes and then repeat the survey after you have planted wildlife friendly plants, trees and hedges to see if there is any difference? This would make an excellent school project and it may also be beneficial in their continuing efforts to get green flags. Finally, like the adjudicator in 2014, we noted the signs for the wildlife centre and as we couldn't find it, we wondered where this is located? Perhaps you could provide some further details in 2016?

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

Your committee is advised that this category is now significantly more important in the competition than was previously the case as it has been allocated 50 marks – the same points total as the built environment, landscaping, wildlife and approach roads categories. Therefore, it is an excellent opportunity to improve the performance of your village in the competition. It is noted from your entry form that you work closely with local schools and that they have been awarded their green flags in May 2015. But please let us know if you have undertaken any waste minimisation and elimination projects with the school children. Remember, you are encouraged to identify new and innovative ways of minimising and eliminating waste generation in your communities and the schools have proved to be a hotbed of ideas. We are pleased to read that you are taking your role in minimising waste within your community seriously by organising an information evening on the subject and we wondered if this event was well attended? We will also love to hear if there have been any changes in the way local people are approaching waste management as a result of their attendance at this event. Don't forget to tell us about how your committee minimises and eliminates waste when carrying out your tidy towns projects. For example, do you make your own compost, grow your own plants, harvest rainwater or use recycled materials (such as timber or plastic) in your planters and planting schemes? Please let us know in 2016.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Well done on securing the assistance of Tus in your litter control and tidiness projects. The work you have undertaken cleaning and maintaining footpaths, clipping overgrowth, strimming and maintaining verges as well as controlling litter in the village was obvious during adjudication when the village looked very well. Aside from a small number of locations which include the car park of the community centre (around the playgroup prefab), the bring centre, the forecourt of the garage and on the Keady approach Road, the village was largely litter free. This is considered to be a good performance given the extensive nature of your village and the relatively high number of vehicles that pass through Clontibret everyday. We were pleased to read that the schools and the local camogie club are involved in your litter picks but we would like to know more. For example, do you undertake patrols on a weekly or more frequent basis? Is the village broken down into zones (such as south and north) with smaller groups or members concentrating on specific areas within the village? Please let us know in 2016. Your work on weed removal and verge and footpath maintenance was also observed to be good with many locations looking neat and

tidy. Improvements are still possible though. A small number of untidy signs could be spotted around the village (such as the untidy yield sign on the Keady road, a ramps sign opposite hill crest manor and the road sign close to Reneghans bar) and perhaps a survey needs to be done whereby all signs are assessed to ascertain which ones need to be washed, repaired or replaced. The sign to the rear of the Bring Centre receptacles was also in need of a wash while a corner close by was being used to dump old bags and boxes. This appears to be a litter black spot and it is recommended that it gets more regular attention during your litter patrols.

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

Some impressive housing areas were seen during adjudication with Chapel Brae Court looking particularly well. We loved the central circular green space (which is maintained to a high standard), the attractive name stone and the hedgerow boundaries. Hill Crest Manor also looked well with its neat green areas, new trees and distinctive bilingual name stone. Perhaps some landscaping could be considered for this estate in 2016? A third estate beside the Health Centre (no name sign could be seen) also achieved a good standard of presentation. Individual houses and gardens throughout the village looked well.

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

Your work washing existing signs and removing redundant signs and cutting back overgrowth on approach roads was observed during adjudication and we are pleased to report that a good standard was achieved. However, given the extensive nature of the village, it seems to be challenging to try and maintain all verges and it was no surprise to see that some verges were not maintained. It is recommended that your committee should consider approaching verge maintenance on a phased basis with more central village areas getting a high priority in your maintenance efforts while the verges in the more outlying areas should be maintained on a less frequent basis. However, please let us know in 2016 if you decide to take a phased approach (or some other approach) to verge maintenance.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done Clontibret on another good performance in the tidy towns competition in 2015. Please ensure that your work programme for 2016 reflects the fact that your village covers a large area and that you schedule your work programme with respect to litter patrols and sign and verge maintenance accordingly. Keep up the good work and we look forward to seeing you in 2016.