

Tidy Towns Competition 2010

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clones** Ref: **710**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **239**
Category: **C** Date(s): **15/06/2010**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009	Mark Awarded 2010
Overall Development Approach	50	44	44
The Built Environment	50	34	36
Landscaping	50	29	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15	15
Litter Control	50	30	31
Waste Minimisation	20	11	11
Tidiness	30	13	14
Residential Areas	40	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27	27
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	235	239

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator welcomes Clones to the 2010 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your completed application form and map which helped on adjudication day. We note that the numbers in your committee have fallen from 8 last year to only 6 this year. This is a pity and we hope it will not impact on the level of activities you undertake even as you state that you now have reduced resources available to you. The support you receive from the local schools is heartening to see as is the support from the various local and regional agencies and bodies.

The Built Environment:

The Diamond contains a numbers of interesting buildings including of course the Church of Ireland Cathedral and the Clones Post. While the new Council and Library building is very impressive with a lovely plaza along side it we wondering if there were any plans for the imposing old Library building at the lower end of the Diamond. It will be a shame if this is to lay vacant as already it is showing signs of its vacancy with some graffiti on the lower wall. We do hope this will have a new lease of life. The Round Tower and graveyard is a bit of a hidden gem. Some signposting may make it easier for a visitor to find. The bed near the gate was full of weeds and should be planted with low maintenance shrubs and perhaps trees could be planted to the boundary to screen views of the newer housing and so improve its setting. The Ulster Canal Stores was a lovely reuse of an old building and the staff here were very helpful in pointing out areas of interest in the town. The Credit Union was well presented and it was good to see the clock in working order. Overall despite the difficulties you acknowledge the town faces we found a pretty and busy town centre on adjudication day. Once again Largy College and St Tiernachs School were well presented and are fine additions to the town. The proposed sports project looks an exciting initiative and we hope will not be impacted by the current difficulties in funding.

Landscaping:

There was a nice mix of hanging baskets and tubs on display in the town so well done in your efforts here. The Cara Street playground was neat and clean and well used on a sunny lunchtime. It was somewhat lacking in features and perhaps the circular stone area could do with a sculpture or other focal point. Possibly a willow sculpture similar to the one outside the Ulster Stores would add interest to the play area. The child's sculpture at the Creighton hotel was a nice focal point for this little seating area. We wondered why there was no planting to the margins of the new Fire Station but the beds on the opposite side of the road added colour to this newer part of town with its brand new buildings.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

We look forward to the progress in the restoration of the Ulster Canal as this would be a huge boost to the town and add so much to its setting. We note you have identified a prospective wildlife garden at Cherry Park and hope to see progress in this category. Good luck in the preparation of the biodiversity management Plan over the coming year. This will help you gain points in this category and should be a sound basis to develop and improve habitat within and on the margins of the town.

Litter Control:

On adjudication day we found very little litter in the Diamond so well done at maintaining the standards here. Continue your close relations with Clones Town Council and we see that they plan to supply new litter bins where required. The positioning of them can be informed by the outcome of the litter surveys carried out by the litter warden.

Waste Minimisation:

Congratulations to St Tiernach's school on the 4th Green Flag they have attained. This is a great achievement and as you say they are the only school in the region to have reached this number. Have they carried out a survey of the scale of waste reduction that has been achieved in the school by their participation in the scheme? In addition to recycling this category also addresses the re use of resources. Consider supporting bring and buy or furniture recycling initiatives which can also be included in this category. Do you know if the Town Council took part in the Earth Hour? All these initiatives should be encouraged and noted for next year's application to help you gain marks in this category.

Tidiness:

On a bright and sunny day the town was well presented however we would urge you to maintain the cutting of grass verges on approach roads as it really does set the scene for visitors travelling into the town. While the issue of derelict buildings is difficult to address try to ensure owners are contacted to maintain the frontage especially where they area in prominent streets. Another area that is sometimes overlooked are the gable walls of building especially where they are seen from busy areas. While the frontage of Packie Willes pub is well presented they could perhaps paint their gable wall as it is very visible from the Diamond.

Residential Areas:

It seems you haven't escaped the spectre of the end of the Celtic tiger and the unfinished estate at Eanaigh Ealto was a pity to see. Have you liaised with the residents committee here to offer support and see if any progress can be made here in consultation with either the developer or Monaghan County Council.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The white road signs were well located and easy to read which makes wayfinding in your town very easy for the visitor. They were clean and seemed to suffer very little vandalism. The Historic Clones sign near Cherry Park was damaged and may need to be replaced. Also try to ensure the verges directly under and in front of the town signs area kept trimmed as the sign here was also somewhat obscured by grasses.

General Impression:

As a first time visitor I was impressed with the presentation of your town and the work the committee has carried out. In particular as you say you seem to have a great support from the educational institutions and the positive interaction with the Clones Community Forum. We recognise the issues that have faced your town and you seem to be facing these admirably. However your town has lots to look forward to and the restoration of the Ulster Canal and the new sports field are fine projects to work towards. Also take care to ensure that while newer buildings are being sited to the margins of the town and along The Avenue, that the Diamond is not overlooked and new uses are found for key sites here.

