

Tidy Towns Competition 2011

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clones** Ref: **710**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **241**
Category: **D** Date(s): **08/06/2011**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2010	Mark Awarded 2011
Overall Development Approach	50	44	44
The Built Environment	50	36	36
Landscaping	50	29	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15	16
Litter Control	50	31	30
Waste Minimisation	20	11	12
Tidiness	30	14	14
Residential Areas	40	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27	28
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	239	241

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator welcomes Clones to the National TidyTowns Competition 2011. Thank you for your submission and accompanying documents. You liaise well with a wide range of agencies and bodies such as the County Council, Town Council, Clones Community Forum, Supervalu, the Primary School and the GAA. St. Tiernachs Primary Schools' involvement with the TidyTowns group and their contribution to the competition is to be commended. You should harness their energy and interest to your further benefit. Consider appointing an Education Officer/School Liaison Officer to liaise with Largy College, St Tiernachs and youth groups in the area and establish a Junior Tidy Towns Committee, guided by the Education Officer. Could you also seek involvement from youth organisations such as the Clones Youth Centre, Foróige, Macra, Scouts etc. You are communicating well via a number of methods and we encourage you to continue with this. Could you have a dedicated TidyTowns page on the www.clones.ie website that you could regularly update? We welcome your three new committee members this year and hope they have enjoyed their participation in the TidyTowns movement in Clones to date.

The Built Environment:

To get a good overview of the town the adjudicator started by walking the Town Trail. This was very interesting and enjoyable and there are a lot of historic buildings and heritage structures to be admired, including the Diamond and the Celtic Cross, the and St Tiernachs Church of Ireland. A large number of buildings were well presented and those that particularly stood out to this adjudicator included: the Canal Stores, Clones Town Council building, Monaghan County Council building, the Cassandra Hand Centre, the Post Office, the Creighton Hotel and the Roman Catholic Church. The building beside the Credit Union was also admired. We visited the primary school on adjudication day and it was looking extremely well – well done to all the pupils and teachers who work to make their school so presentable. The adjudicator particularly liked the innovative reuse of drinks bottles on the colourful windmills and your polytunnel. The Clones Business

Technology Park would benefit from landscaping around the building. The adjudicator wonders if there are proposals for the site beside the Technology Park? We note that Clones Town Council has compiled a survey of derelict sites in the town, this is to be welcomed and we hope your 2-year improvement plan helps address these sites. The Sacred Heart Primary School on the Roslea Road is getting into a state of disrepair. Hopefully this site is included in your plan and you can liaise with the owners before the situation gets worse. We were somewhat disappointed with the children's play park on Clara Street, this facility could be improved. On adjudication day the swings were all wrapped around the top bars and not accessible to children.

Landscaping:

A lot of planting works were underway at the Diamond on adjudication day. The level of shrubs and flowers in the town centre is good and they are being well maintained. Your 3-Year Planting Plan is an excellent idea and you are to be commended for engaging with a professional landscape gardener. This Plan will greatly assist in your work efforts in this category over the coming years. Be sure to include the Plan with your submission next year. We are pleased to note that the Town Council has secured funding for a major landscaping and drainage project in the vicinity of the Clones Business Technology Park, which has been already mentioned. These projects will no doubt assist you in increasing your marks in relation to landscaping over the coming years.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The work that St. Tiernach's Primary School is doing in relation to the biodiversity survey, creation of a habitat map and their insect hotel, and wormery are very apt for this category and we wish the luck on their quest for their 5th Green Flag. These are the sorts of projects we encourage around open spaces and green areas in towns and villages. We visited the Wildlife Garden in Cherry Park. Consider how this area can be further enhanced through the erection of bird or bat boxes, planting native shrubs to attract birds and butterflies, mowing grass at different times of the year to encourage spring or summer wildflowers, for example. The Clones Community Forum 'Nature in Your Garden' competition sounds like it was a success; perhaps for next year give us some more information on your wildlife and natural amenities projects to allow the adjudicator to get a good insight into what was involved.

Litter Control:

Well done on your successful annual clean up in conjunction with St. Tiernach's Primary School. Unfortunately Clones did not fair well in relation to litter this year. Litter was prevalent in the Town Centre Carpark and rubbish was discarded at the Bring Bank facility. There is a Town Council sign here stating that CCTV is in place, we wonder have fines been issued for dumping in this area? A lot of leaves and cigarette butts were seen outside the Post Office, these should be regularly swept away. Some litter was also noted in the Wildlife Garden in Cherry Park. Broken glass was noted on the footpath across from the building selling coal (near Liscarn Textiles) which is a hazard to pedestrians. Do you as a Group conduct weekly litter patrols? We would advise liaising with the Town Council Litter Warden and drawing up a litter control plan for the town. Encourage residents and business owners to participate and pick up any visible litter in the vicinity of their homes or business premises.

Waste Minimisation:

It is good to read that you have taken onboard a suggestion made in the adjudication report last year and groups and businesses participated in Earth Hour, well done. It would have been helpful to include some feedback from participants on this event. Hopefully this will be an annual event and you can attract even more participation next year on 31st March. Adjudicators like to see one or two waste minimisation projects each year - for next year perhaps you could conduct one project with the school and one community project. You may also be interested to learn about the Green Home Programme run by An Taisce. Green Home was developed as a framework to support and encourage all householders to reduce their environmental impact. The programme can be undertaken by an individual household, or a household can be part of a community or school hub. Contact the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce for more information or visit www.greenhome.ie.

Tidiness:

Unfortunately your application did not contain a summary of projects undertaken this year under this category or any of your planned projects for the coming year ahead. Control of weed growth could be improved in some privately owned, yet community used, areas of the town. For example, weeds were prominent along the roadside at the cemetery on the Roslea Road and at St. Tiernach's Juvenile GFC carpark. However we realise this is the intended location of the proposed new sports development. Regular maintenance can reduce the need for weed-killer though this may be required in very exceptional circumstances. We also noted that a few signs would benefit from washing including the Clones Golf Club and Greenway B&B signs in the town centre. Wooden fencing was being erected at a site between the library and Supervalu shop on adjudication day which will successfully conceal the yard and contents.

Residential Areas:

Well done for providing assistance to the residents groups in the town, do encourage the groups to participate in your work nights. Do you hold any events or competitions for residential groups and associations in the area? Some Groups hold a barbeque evening and invite residential associations, sponsors and supporters as a gesture of appreciation. The 3-year planting plan that also addresses residential areas should assist the residents groups' focus their work plans in their immediate vicinity.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

We noted the new stone wall built with materials from the hospital wing of the Workshop – this was a successful project for the town. In relation to the approach roads, the adjudicator thought that the large blocks at the Target Express premises detracted from the 'Historic Clones' sign on the Enniskillen approach.

General Impression:

Like many border towns Clones has no doubt suffered over the years from The Troubles and the movement of people across the border to shop in Northern Ireland. It was therefore encouraging to see Clones Erne East Sports Partnership's recent success in obtaining funding for the Sports Centre Development in the window of one of your vacant premises. Congratulations for securing this funding and we hope your plans come to fruition in your desired timeframe. Your rich heritage is one of the town's greatest assets, but also consider the scope that exists for development of your natural amenities, particularly given your proximity to the Ulster Canal. We wish you well for the year ahead and hope you find some of the suggestions made in this report helpful.