

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: Glounthaune - An Gleanntán	Ref: 130
County: Cork(South)	Mark: 323
Category: B	Date(s): 15/07/2019

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	46	47
Streetscape & Public Places	60	40	42
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	42	44
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	38	40
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	19	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	34	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32	33
TOTAL MARK	470	310	323

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

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Glounthane – An Gleanntán páirt a ghlacadh i gComórtas Náisiúnta SuperValu na mBailte Slachtmhara 2019. Glounthane is very welcome to the 2019 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your very concise entry form which was informative and clear, your updated 3-year plan which is also very clear and specific, and for the accompanying map with locations for projects clearly marked. Your entry exudes a strong sense of community action and organisation which is very commendable. This is no doubt reflected in your success in 2018 in winning the Muintir na Tíre 'Pride in Our Community Award' and we congratulate your achievement. We note you have 8 people on your committee who are certainly getting through a huge amount of work, and their efforts are helped by up to 20 extra people along with support from local businesses, other groups in your community and various public bodies. We also note your range of outreach activities including your annual party, street party and community day, healthy village awareness morning, sustainable energy community events and planning workshops with UCC. Your Tidy Towns website and Facebook page and the Glounthane Community Association Facebook page provides a good overview of your activities but perhaps could do with a little updating which we note is planned in 2019/2020. We also suggest a little more regular posting to your Facebook platforms to highlight your projects and showcase the wonderful work you are doing as well as raising general awareness. We noted the banner at the railway bridge marking the 200-year celebrations of your village and wondered what events or activities might be taking place to mark this significant milestone.

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

The dispersed layout of your village is somewhat unusual and challenging and yet you have managed to achieve a sense of cohesiveness through planting long stretches of hedging, trees and landscaped beds to provide linkage and visual continuity and by being consistent in the style and detail of planting throughout. The new townland namestones are an excellent feature and we also commend your ongoing progress in installing heritage signs at various locations throughout the town – both are a lovely reminder of the towns historic past and help to project a strong sense of place. The old railway station house is a lovely characterful building in need of attention at this prominent location and the half-barrel planters out front and on the station platform required renewal of their planting. Fitzpatricks shop and the Great O'Neill both looked well with attractive floral displays further enhancing their overall impression. The upkeep and presentation of the church and its grounds along with the car park and church centre were outstanding – just a little attention was needed to repainting the car park barrier. We admired the very attractive wooden box planters which were well planted with vibrant, healthy-looking begonias and noted the very discreetly positioned labels acknowledging sponsorship by Glounthane Mens shed and AIB Little Island – this is a very commendable initiative. Well done also on your success in securing village enhancement funding in 2019 for your roadside park development 'An Crompan' and we look forward to seeing further development of this

project next year

In the old village, we admired the community centre, and The Rising Tide with its fresh and vibrant colouring is very eye-catching, while the terraced houses create a lovely characterful setting. In Craig's Field, the childrens playground and outdoor gym both enjoy good maintenance.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The landscaping scheme along the roadside between Fitzpatrick's shop and the railway station is nicely presented and makes a striking impression with a wide variety of species for year-round interest. Visibility of the weed barrier membrane somewhat detracted from the overall finish in spots but is easily resolved with increased depth of mulch material. The included area identified as the railway garden is dominated by the overly large and very unsightly advertising sign and we wondered if this sign could be relocated out of this otherwise very attractive amenity display. We enjoyed a stroll along the Ashbourne walkway, taking in the naturalness of the watercourse and admired the Remembrance Garden and picnic area. The inspirational quotes carved into the seats along the walkway are a nice touch. Trees in the three containers at the village end of the walkway were in decline and needed replacement while life buoys along the watercourse were becoming obscured by vegetation. Craig's Field is a very nicely presented amenity area offering recreational opportunities for all ages with the playground and outdoor exercise equipment, picnic benches, views over the estuary and interesting features like the human sundial and informative bird sign.

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

This aim of this category is to encourage people to recognise, engage with and celebrate the biodiversity and riches of the wildlife habitats in their surroundings. The Harper's Island Nature Reserve is a remarkable asset in your community and we commend your Tidy Towns group and Community Association on your collaborative involvement with Birdwatch Ireland and Cork Co. Council in its management. Congratulations on your combined success in securing €165,000 from the Recreation and Outdoor funding for the development of the new 2km nature trail at the reserve. Unfortunately for your adjudicator, Harper's Island was closed for this development work at the time of adjudication, but we viewed the New Horizon's for Nature video clip section on youtube and the drawings and description of the ongoing development works sounds so exciting that we look forward to making a visit when the centre re-opens later in the year. Well done to all from Carrigtwohill National School and the local Beaver scouts who took part in planting over 500 trees at Harper's Island this past spring.

We applaud your efforts to promote and maintain wildlife habitats within the village landscape also. The roadside frontage along the watercourse at the Ashbourne Walkway is a great example of how to effectively present a semi-wild habitat in this type of setting with its narrow strip of tidily mown grass along the outer edges to show that the wildness behind is deliberate. There is an interesting array of birdlife and other wildlife present in this area and we wondered if any survey of the habitat has been carried out. We also commend your incorporation of no-mow/meadow strips as part of the green area at Johnstown and we were pleased to note in your submission the prevalence of cowslips, wild garlic and dandelions in unmowed verges earlier in the season.

Your ongoing efforts to monitor and control Japanese knotweed are acknowledged, and we note your plan to commence a programme of control for winter heliotrope. In Craig's Field, we noted a small isolated pocket of Japanese knotweed along the boundary with the railway line just behind the car park spaces between the playground and the rail boundary.

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

Your range of waste reducing initiatives including promotions of 'Stop food Waste', introduction of reusable and compostable cups in Fitzpatrick's shop, second hand bookshelf in the Post Office and recycling of Christmas trees by the local scout group demonstrate that you have a clear understanding of the objectives of this category. It is all about changing mindsets so that waste minimisation and resource efficiency becomes an integral practice of everyday life in the community. The activities of the Glounthane Sustainable Energy Community, set up as a sub-group to your Tidy Towns, are exemplary in leading the way on this initiative and we look forward to hearing your progress with implementation of the energy master plan in next years entry. Will the plan be available to access on your website when it is next updated? We note the refit of the community centre with low energy lighting and the various activities and roadside signage to promote energy awareness and wondered if you have any collaboration with local green schools whose activities we would also love to hear about under this category..

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The general level of tidiness and the control of weeds and litter in Glounthane is most impressive given the extended and dispersed nature of your village and the high numbers of passing cars. We were however disappointed to see some opportunistic dumping of a carrier bag of household waste beside the bin at the entrance to the church car park and some isolated litter, mostly drinks cans, in the watercourse at the Ashbourne walkway. Overall, your daily litter picks along with your participation in the Cork County Council Anti-Litter Challenge are obviously effective and it would seem that you have good support from the community in dealing responsibly with litter. Well done to all involved and also to those who carry out the Coast Clean-ups. The 2-minute street clean litter pick installation near the children's playground in Craig's field is an interesting innovation and we wondered if you have been monitoring its usage.

Whilst a very high standard of tidiness was achieved, some small improvements remain possible. In the church car

park, one of the bins is broken and needs replacement. Some traffic cones were noted in the estuary frontage of Craig's Field and we wondered if these could be fished out. In general signs are clean and well maintained throughout the village – the finger post sign pole at start of the Ashbourne walkway beside Ashbourne House needs repainting while the old postbox beside Ashbourne House would benefit from some attention but we suggest seeking guidance from the Council's Heritage Officer before carrying out any improvements to its appearance. At the railway bridge leading to the old village, there were a number of temporary promotional signs causing visual clutter.

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

The standard of presentation of individual houses within the village environs, on the approach roads and in the residential estates we visited in Glounthane was generally very good and we applaud the many home owners and occupiers who clearly take pride in their place and keep their front façades, road frontages, gardens and boundary walls well-presented and neatly maintained in support of your work. A small number of roadside frontages and boundary walls on properties on the road leading from the village centre towards the Dry Bridge require repainting where walls have become weather stained. There is an air of horticultural excellence throughout the locality with a notable abundance of very well designed and attractively planted front gardens, many especially outstanding in Cois Chuain, The Highlands and Johnstown. New planting on the access road to the old village and around its green area is appealing and green areas are generally maintained to a high standard. In one residential estate, we did however notice use of herbicide to control grass growth along kerb lines - we strongly advocate minimising this practice as it is bad for the environment and the scorched and dead vegetation is unsightly. While it is more time consuming, hoeing, using a spade to create neat edges and manual removal of weed growth is preferable. We note from your 3-year plan a proposal to develop a tidy estates/localities competition and wondered if this has been progressed?

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

The approach roads to Glounthane generally look very well with neat hedges, lovely stone wall boundaries and grass verges trimmed to a very high standard. We noted mention in the May 2019 newsletter on your website that cutting grass was delayed on approach roads to allow the dandelions to bloom providing pollen for the bees and we highly commend this initiative. We also note that you have extended your verge maintenance and it is appreciated that grass cutting is a significant task which we note is carried out on a weekly basis by a rota of a small number of people. We thank them for their commitment. The stone village name signs which are modelled on the 'Dry Bridge' heritage feature and located on both approaches along the L3004 were much admired and are set within an eye-catching selection of plants for all season interest. The impressively high standard of these entrance features raised great expectations which were not disappointed. Road and footpath surfaces are generally good. We suggest consideration of a walkability audit of the village as pedestrian linkages could be improved particularly in the vicinity of the train station.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a pleasure to spend some time exploring Glounthane and we congratulate the obvious commitment and hard work of your Tidy Towns committee and your wider community in progressing and maintaining your village to a high standard in this competition. Continue to develop and enhance your area and build on the many excellent initiatives and projects that you have achieved and we look forward to seeing your further progress in the future.