

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clogher - An Clochar** Ref: **459**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **323**
Category: **B** Date(s): **12/07/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	44	45
Streetscape & Public Places	80	39	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	41	42
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	42	43
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	66	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	31	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	34	34
TOTAL MARK	550	317	323

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2023. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúr gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór.

Welcome to the Super Valu Tidy Towns Competition for 2023. We thank you for your entry, and wish you all the best in all your future work. Good luck.

Clogher - An Clochar, a mid-sized village with a population of 500 people – has entered the competition for 14 years and has a committee of 10 members with support of another 8 volunteers.

- You arrange regular monthly meetings in the community centre to consider ongoing projects. Regular village clean-ups are carried out to ensure roadsides and verges are kept litter free. The local primary school are also involved in keeping the area tidy. The FEAD programme is used to support those most in need in the community
- Support is received from FAS, Rural Social Scheme, South West Mayo Development Company, Mayo County Council, Coillte, Community Litter League, FEAD, Department of Rural and Community Development. There is also ongoing engagement and support from community members, businesses, and farmers.
- You communicate with the public via your website, FB page, Community newsletter, public meetings, Church newsletter etc.
- The Holy Angels Primary School is located adjacent to the community centre, so there is continuous engagement with staff and pupils. The entire community takes pride in the school's green flag achievements. Sustainable living and biodiversity are principles engendered in young people in Clogher. Local schoolchildren visit the heritage cottage, forge and polytunnel as part of their history, heritage, and biodiversity projects.

The coloured map provided with your Entry Form showing the main features of the dispersed village of Clogher provided a good overview of your village and environs. However, this could be made more user friendly by including road names and a numbered project list on the map. The location and precise description of all the various projects completed over the last year, should be included on the map, with a separate legend listing all of these. This helps the adjudicator in navigating around the village and aids the assessment process. Furthermore, it is recommended that in your application next year in the section marked 'Estimated Location' that this information could be in bold type font to stand out from the general text on the form, as the village of Clogher is not that easy to locate.

The quality of the application form was good. The Clogher Community Tidy Towns 3/5-year plan included good proposals for the future sustainable development of the village. However, the plan deals with three categories of the competition. Perhaps this can be expanded to include all 8 categories next year.

The adjudicator's assessment is based on a recent site visit and the contents of the application form, which is suitably concise at 12 pages long - well done. The text inserted on the form is the same font as on the form itself

which can make it difficult for the reader to distinguish between the two. As mentioned above using a bold/different font is advisable. The use of bullet points however, worked very well.

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

- The projects listed by Clogher Environmental Group under this category this year include the maintenance of public green spaces, floral decoration and maintenance of stone walls and restoration of heritage properties in the village.
- The adjudicator called to Clogher on a warm mid-July day. Clogher is a dispersed community with its many features a distance from each other. On the day of adjudication, we enjoyed visiting the many features identified on your map. There appeared to be two centres of main activity, the cross roads near the Community Hall, and the Heritage Centre, Forge and Grotto.
- We called to the site of Drum Graveyard, Castle, and Church Ruins. The dry-stone walls are a feature on both sides of the entrance road to the graveyard. The information sign located at the entrance to the graveyard providing historical details on the cemetery and Church ruin was noted positively. A particularly feature in the graveyard are the stations of the cross, created using natural stone inserted along the main pathway with accompanying conifer tree planting. Overall, the standard of presentation throughout was very good. The elevated site provides scenic views across the wider landscape. The Grotto located in the corner of the graveyard is beautifully presented.
- Clogher Community Hall, is a handsome building with attractive floral displays and window boxes. The nearby Holy Angels NS, is enhanced with attractive stone walls along the boundary fronting the road, providing a suitable habitat for mosses and ferns. An herbaceous planting bed and signage opposite the Community Hall looked well and enhanced the streetscape here. Finger post signage in this area would benefit from cleaning or replacement. The Clogher name stone at the crossroads looks very well but is obscured somewhat by vegetation, the pruning of vegetation here is recommended. The Drum Inn licensed premises and car park provides an important meeting point for your community and is very well presented.
- At the Clogher Heritage complex we were treated to a wonderful tour by a local gentleman by the name of Tommy. We learned much about the traditional life of the Blacksmith and the typical Mayo cottage and the living conditions experienced in former times. The general presentation of this area was very good and is an important educational resource within your community. The polytunnel and orchard in this area and assorted heritage farm equipment were of great interest to the visitor.
- The nearby grotto is encased in glass at a prominent location on the road. The floral displays enhance its presentation.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

- Your activities this year under this category include the maintenance of local walks, upkeep of flowerbeds and work in the community Polytunnel and orchard. We called to the Ray Prendergast Park, the site of the Ballintubber GAA grounds. The adjudicator was very impressed with the outstanding facilities provided. The newly painted colourful boundary wall and building façade enhanced with floral displays add greatly to this area.
- During our visit we noted the 3-bog loop walks well-marked with standing posts and had the opportunity to experience part of the route through Clogher Bog with its extensive wildlife habitats and unique flora and fauna.

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

- It is noted that you are engaged in a wide range of activities under this category including the further development of a new bog loop through local bogs, forest, and grassland, which are rich in biodiversity. You are encouraging school groups to experience this wild area which is free of pesticide and herbicide use. Your community is very lucky to have an area of bog so close by, as these landscapes have a very interesting fauna and flora which need protection from inappropriate harvesting and burning activities into the future - well done.

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

- Your main focus this year is on the overall sustainability of your village community and you continue to promote issues around sustainable living throughout the community, using FB posts to introduce local residents to the wildlife around them. Your rainwater harvesting system is in place for your polytunnel and garden and the polytunnel is a source of vegetables for your local Active Age group.
- It is pleasing to read that you now have an active remote working hub established in the community hall, which will reduce the amount of commuting for work and local fossil fuel usage.
- When considering new projects under this category it is worthwhile first of all considering how the proposed project will align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The information provided in the Tidy Towns newsletters is very informative in this regard.
- You might in the future consider installing a community composter in the village. These are useful and provide a quantity of mulch to use on your planted areas, which will ensure rapid establishment of the plantings.
- Other areas worthy of consideration by Clogher Environmental Group for the future under this category, which is in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals, include the development of small electric microgeneration schemes for Wind, Solar and Hydro in partnership with the Local Authority - these may also attract suitable SEAI or Leader funding.
- You might look at the provision of public e-car charge points and additional bicycle parking/off road cycle facilities in the village or along the loop walking routes, and where there are deficiencies, suggest suitable locations where these could be provided in the short term.
- The Committee might also consider in the future initiating membership of the Sustainable Energy Communities programme run by the SEAI which includes engaging in learning networks, preparation of energy

masterplans and local energy action plans etc. The following are useful links in this regard.
<https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/sustainable-energy-communities>/<https://www.codema.ie/sec>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

- You are fortunate that the local community are happy to assist you with various litter control measures in and around the village such as the monitoring and clearance of litter from your nature trails, the local section of the Croagh Patrick Heritage Trail and the Clogher Bog Loop bottle banks and approach roads. It is good that you encourage local schoolchildren to share in the litter picking arrangements as this will help them to appreciate the need to care for the environment. The Bring Centre located at the GAA grounds was in a pristine condition.
- On the day of adjudication, the village area was found to be tidy and litter free - well done.

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

- The adjudicator is pleased to read that all sections of the community are engaged with the Tidy Towns process and are encouraged to keep their properties, road frontages etc. weed and litter free

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

- The maintenance of approach roads remains a key priority for the Clogher Environmental Group and you undertake regular tasks such as the upkeep of floral displays, planting of native trees along the bog loop walks, and maintenance of road signs, as necessary. The approach roads to the village were presented to a high standard with neatly clipped hedges, stone walls and tidy roadside margins. On the day of adjudication there was some evidence of herbicide use on a short section of roadside margin near to the grotto.

Concluding Remarks:

Clogher is intrinsically a very attractive and vibrant village with significant educational, historical, and recreational amenities in the surrounding area. Despite the dispersed nature of your village, you continue to maintain its important features to a very good standard throughout. Keep up the good work.