

# Tidy Towns Competition 2023

## Adjudication Report

Centre: <b>Glaslough - Glasloch</b>	Ref: <b>609</b>
County: <b>Monaghan</b>	Mark: <b>373</b>
Category: <b>B</b>	Date(s): <b>05/06/2023</b> <b>02/08/2023</b>

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2022</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2023</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	52	53
Streetscape & Public Places	80	50	52
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	50	53
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	36	37
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	25	27
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	71	72
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	38	40
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	39	39
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>373</b>

### **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...your colourful three-dimensional map, identifying the range of projects and undertakings is clear, easy to read and colour coded. The photographs submitted were of great assistance to the adjudicator and considerably facilitated enjoyment of the inspection. These photographs were further reinforced by the additional images contained in your local Biodiversity Action Plan 2021 - 2024 and the Glaslough Integrated Framework Plan. Your expanding and active committee are to be commended on seeking and receiving professional advice on various categories. The list of tasks outlined in your Community Action Plan makes impressive reading, is extensive and broadly based, and your focus on youth is particularly commendable. Your partnership endeavours are indeed noteworthy and successful projects were noted at various locations throughout the village. These projects and schemes considerably enhance their locations. As mentioned in previous reports, you are again commended for applying an even-handed approach to each individual category of the competition. Well done on your success in the Communities In Bloom Competition, achieving a silver medal for Heritage and winning the international challenge. It was furthermore interesting to read that a visit to the stunningly presented St. Mary's School was a highlight on the day. Glaslough now sets a standard countrywide for others to emulate. Well done to all concerned!

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

The Glaslough Integrated Framework Plan produced by SLR Consultants encourages the continuation of public realm improvements and traffic management measures within Glaslough. The creation of a Vintage Village Hub suggested by this plan would develop an intimate network of housing and commercial courtyards linking through from the Diamond to Barrack Hill. The adoption of these suggestions will ensure that new developments will occur in an orderly and appropriate manner rather than in an ad hoc fashion. Recent works carried out on derelict buildings are a very successful undertaking. Work was in progress at a house located at the lower end of Barrack Hill on the day of adjudication. This is a significant achievement as this building, and its adjoining store, encloses an important visual vista in this strategic location. Buildings surrounding the nearby Diamond looked well and here street furniture was being repainted while surfaces were being power hosed on the day of adjudication. The new pedestrian crossing, located between the Village Square and the Sports Centre, is a substantial enhancement here and facilitates safe crossing at a busy central location. Further along Main Street the Coffee Shop continues a very successful standard of presentation, adorned with a particularly attractive colour scheme. The colour co-ordinated flower display provides a fine visual enhancement here whilst enlivening the street. A perhaps finicky observation here is that the fringe of the blind somewhat obscures the name sign of another very well presented premises. Busy Bee Ceramics and Cameo Hair Salon combine to provide a successful muted colour scheme. In the upper village, Castle Leslie was again busy and was presented on excellently maintained grounds, adorned by a number of

colourfully illustrated information boards.

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

There is a nice contrast between the strong urban form of the core of the village proper and the softer mature woodland environs which adds considerably to the charm of your setting. Your work program outlines a well-considered maintenance routine, vital to your long-term success. The list of ongoing projects undertaken by your volunteers and workers is substantial. Well done on promoting the ethos of hedgerow management! It is good to hear that you are now working hand-in-hand with your local farming community on environmental issues. The village has an interesting range of formal and informal walks and a series of incidental open spaces, connected by a variety of interesting link routes which provide great points of interest. The centrally located sensory garden and the adjacent playground are maturing nicely and are a credit to all involved in this development.

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

The biodiversity plan, produced by Flynn and Furney Consultants, provides a structured approach to your work in this category. The summer BioBlitz camps, attended by children in the area, should ensure that acquaintance with local flora and fauna will continue into the next generation and beyond. The provision of nature trails and walks is a wonderful amenity for local residents, guests at Castle Leslie and day tourists alike. We look forward to the Riverbase Management Plan to be launched in autumn 2023. Well done on joining the Blackwater Catchment group to improve water quality in your area, and on the promotion of the Dirty Dozen posters to raise awareness of water pollution.

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

Glaslough Tidy Towns committee continues to add to its list of initiatives under this category. Education, workshops and consciousness raising is key here. Your emphasis is on reducing the volume of waste produced through the 'Greener Glaslough Campaign and Booklet', "Prevention of Food Waste" workshops, reusable cups and "ditch the single use plastic" campaign. Community allotments, water harvesting, slipping plants and reusing bulbs, all contribute to a more sustainable community. Leader funding has been secured to help you progress energy saving and renewable energy options in the coming years. We look forward to developments in this area.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

It was good to see that progress is being made on the renovation of the old farm store on Barrack Hill. Dereliction has been tackled over the years by your hard-working and dedicated committee and Glaslough must be unique in Ireland in having resolved this almost ubiquitous problem. Successful use of social media is paying dividends in the prevention of littering and dog fouling and the provision of a litter bag dispenser is to be commended. Tourist areas are notoriously difficult for litter patrols but you have been particularly successful over the years. Repair works and repainting were noted at the strategically screened bring centre. On the day of adjudication, a small amount of litter was observed here and the clothes bin could be refurbished.

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

For a village of your size, you have a good number of housing areas consisting of private residences, housing estates and the central Village Green infill scheme. All were visited and a high standard of presentation was observed throughout. Imaginative garden presentations were admired in a number of locations. Name signs at the various schemes retain a high visual quality and have a unifying effect. Their design and colour schemes are well considered. This is particularly well illustrated along Caledon Road between Culbanagher and Ardbanagher where estates are physically linked by stone built estate walls, a newly planted roadside margin and entrances highlighted by attractively designed signage. Up at Tullyrae both the signage and cut out wood train motif create a fine point of interest and are reminders of your former railway history. The Village Square borrows its concept from the layout of former Georgian squares set around a central green. The green itself is nicely landscaped, to provide a children's play-space enclosed by a mature well-maintained green beech hedge.

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

Pictorial announcement signs were observed at a number of approach roads and have a welcoming appearance. At the New Line, the recently painted signal box and white painted railway gates looked fresh and are an evocative reminder of times past. The artifacts here, including the station model, are great points of interest and draw the visitor. The storyboard has faded and was in need of attention and a freshen up. The railway tracks in front of the model have rusted and need to be realigned. Saint Mary's School, at the opposite end of the village, has an excellent presentation and is charmingly coloured. The horse sculpture on the school foreground, constructed from recycled horseshoes, and the locomotive made from recycled tin cans, successfully promote the recycling agenda. Well done to the school on an attractive and meaningful presentation.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Glaslough is a village well cared for by its residents and the results of your partnership hard work ethic is to be seen throughout.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Second Round Adjudication

It was this adjudicator's return visit to Glaslough but definitely not the last. The visit began in the centre of the village at the recently painted Oakland Recreation Centre, with the neat brick banks located close by, and I made my way through your very beautiful Community Garden which is accessed both from Main Street and New Lane. There are diverse sections in the garden dedicated to different activities/topics – the sensory garden, autism garden, butterfly garden and other planted/ wild flower areas. The new Memory Lane looks good and the discrete 'stones' suitable. Elsewhere the path edges need to be replaced as the wood is broken/rotten in quite a few areas allowing the adjoining grass/weeds to encroach along the designated walking area. The Algae Pond was covered in weed growth so it was not visible on the day we visited. I assume that these planting/wild beds are trimmed in October and the grass/wildflower growth removed – perhaps bale it and give it to a local farmer if it's not required in your compost area.

The Every Can Counts bike was noted at the freshly painted school and showing the children that art can be created from what we consider to be rubbish i.e. crushed drink cans, is commendable. The high weather vane behind the school and the beautiful train engine (a theme seen elsewhere on a few occasions) in the green space in front of the school, are on view for the passing motorists to admire. Here too were well-presented planting beds full of vegetables and flowers while close is the orchard. The bird feeder needs to be repaired and cleaned – something for your committee? The school is involved in The Green School Programme and has been awarded numerous Green Flags the last being the Global Citizenship Award 'The whole world is our home not just one small zone'.

Percy and the surrounding planting scheme were admired, and the discrete information panel tells us of the strong connection between Glaslough and the horse. We read elsewhere that there are three miles of famine stone walls in the area. While it is not expected that you maintain all three miles of stone walls, we assume that those within the village boundary are maintained by the volunteers. Ivy is wonderful for insect life and is acceptable/good on rendered (plastered) walls but it is not acceptable on stone structures as the roots penetrate between the joints in the stones, making the walls unstable and leading to their collapse. Natural stone constructions are in themselves great habitats for insect life and also very beautiful in the streetscape – so please remove the ivy.

Your wildlife trail was noted as was the attached QR code giving the visitor access to additional information. Will you add a QR code to Ireland's Ancient East trail? The blue signs with the numbers were seen. The Allotments are well maintained and, like the children's planting beds, were full of vegetables, fruit bushes, herbs and flowers. Please commend the businesses and residents for the manner which they presented their premises along the main streets and in the estates – Tullyree, The Cottages, The Village Green and Square, Ardbanagher, Lisbanagher and Culbanagher. Take care in your plant/floral selections so that, when grown to maturity, they don't obscure the village name signs along the entrance roads. Elsewhere some signs were partially obscured and shrubs, roses etc need to be trimmed back so that they can be read. The Lakeview Wildflower Meadow was visited – the gap in the beech hedge needs to be cut back so that the visitor can access the meadow and have a view of the lake. A path extends from the village to the school making it safe for children to access by foot or bike – perfect.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Glaslough and I look forward to a revisit – hopefully soon. Please commend the volunteers, residents and business owners for their work in making your village such a beautiful place to visit. Your success in this competition is one of grit, determination and no small amount of hard work by the committee and volunteers. Keep up the good work which is reaping its just rewards.