

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clashmore - Clais Mhór** Ref: **243**
County: **Waterford** Mark: **333**
Category: **B** Date(s): **28/06/2023**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	46	47
Streetscape & Public Places	80	43	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	45	46
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	38	39
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	20	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	66	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	36	37
TOTAL MARK	550	326	333

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 group's collaboration with the Community Council & Foróige is an excellent strategy as you have a small committee & volunteer base. The ability to bring in other local groups as the need arises is crucial to the completion of projects & ongoing maintenance. It is great that Clashmore's youth are involved from primary school through to secondary students. This is imperative for the future of the village, as they need to have a stake in both decision-making & work on the ground. With all of your communication mediums, it would be hard for any Clashmore resident to say they were not informed of your activities.

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

What a lovely village you have in Clashmore. Your community is to be commended for undertaking over a significant time period the repurposing of the old Church of Ireland church into a Heritage Centre. It is an amazing achievement for a small community & it was a delight to walk around the building, as it was not open to the public on adjudication day.

The Main Street has some lovely examples of houses that have retained some of their original form & fabric with rendered dressings differentiating the composition in the terrace. It is lovely to see the ground floor of some buildings corresponding with the topography of the sloping site. The shopfronts incorporating traditional raised lettering really does enhance the artistic design distinction of the composition & adds greatly to the streetscape. The variety of colour palettes is wonderful to see & there are some with a real artistic talent. How fantastic to see the free standing cast iron water pump retained on the Main Street – a fresh coat of paint would restore its appearance. The National School was looking splendid on adjudication day & their signage is one of the clearest this adjudicator has seen on their visits to date.

Many a community would envy Clashmore their lack of derelict houses & the renovation of the house on Chapel Lane will be warmly welcomed by all. It would be hoped that the available grants might encourage the owner of the Old Lodge to look at its restoration. It has such potential & would add greatly to Clashmore's streetscape. Perseverance pays dividends in the end!

A walkable & accessible village is essential for all residents & it would be hoped that Waterford County Council would add lighting to the pathways at the Heritage Centre & the old School House & investigate the problem with the Kilmore Road lighting.

The new signage "Clashmore Village Streetscape" is unique & what an interesting read for resident & visitor alike. Now this is an article perfect for the Tidy Towns newsletter. The "Heritage Trails" map is well presented & easy for the walker to follow. The blackboard "Nature Sign" is once again a unique alternative & a sensible approach to adding new sightings – the colour identifications for butterflies is a lovely addition for educational purposes. Are

there plans to upgrade the Clashmore Distillery sign to a similar standard?

The four-arch road-bridge is a very attractive feature especially as one looks down the river towards the Distillery with its surviving chimney & footbridge.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The care of the old graveyard at the Heritage Centre is an example to all – minimal interventions & grass pathways cut through long meadows with seating provided for those wishing to avail of the tranquility.

The Grotto landscaping at either side is excellent & your uses of spirea, hydrangeas, geum etc, are good choices for pollinators. The Jerusalem Sage you have planted is a new variety for this adjudicator & has a wonderful upright habit. Some of the perennials here can be slipped & transplanted to fill in some of the larger spaces. The wood chippings provide a low maintenance option as the plants mature. The area at the back is lovely with the ferns although you may have to tackle the scutch grass that is attempting to take hold. As there are a lot of plants in the Grotto area, is there a need for additional containers? They appear surplus to requirements in this space. With your plans for the pond for later this year, it will be looking lovely next year. The Grotto plan is a great framework to have as it keeps everyone involved focused.

It is wonderful when residents take on the responsibility of a green area as in the case of the Chapel Lane plot & the results are successful & can be replicated elsewhere.

After 4 years of establishing themselves, the fruit trees should be ready to provide a harvest this year. If there is a good bounty, you could consider an “Applefest” – showcasing what can be done to preserve or use the harvest e.g. apple tart/crumble demonstrations; juicing of the apples, jams/chutneys etc.

St. Mochua's Walk is a wonderful amenity & the entrance at the bridge on the left hand side along by the river is delightful. Are there plans, in time, to screen the business activities on the right hand side?

Increasingly, there are fewer resources available in many villages & towns to assist with regular maintenance works & this creates an increasing burden on a small group of volunteers. One idea adopted elsewhere was to assign a one hour blitz weekly & ask the community to assist. We know many people are time constrained & when they know they can contribute one specific hour a week, they are more predisposed to lending a hand. This strategy may be worth a try.

Thank you for including photos from the spring & autumn seasons as we adjudicators rarely get to see these vistas. It is heartening to see you have tulips in addition to daffodils although a better food for pollinators would include crocuses & muscari. The added benefit of these spring bulbs is that they multiply quite quickly.

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

The securing of funding for a large-scale parish Biodiversity Survey & an updated Biodiversity Plan will provide you with a template for the future. We look forward with anticipation to learning its outcomes in next year's submission. You have so much opportunity here after establishing a baseline & logging regular sightings. The National Biodiversity Data Centre is a fantastic store of information as well as the location to record species in the locality. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/>

Your focus on your local rivers through your participation in the Fresh Water Watch programme is so important & involving Clashmore's primary school students in this endeavour is opportune. If the next generation understands the importance of protecting their environment, we have hope for the future. It would be interesting to include a short synopsis of the results, year on year, of the water quality in both rivers. As was mentioned by last year's adjudicator, make contact with your local NPWS Conservation ranger prior to performing any work on River Greagagh. The removal of timber & rubbish brought downstream & blocking the arches at the Distillery Chimney is not problematic however the removal of silt is not advisable. It has been noted that there appeared to be Giant Hogweed plants on the banks of the river. Please do ensure you are aware of how to identify any invasive riparian species & report them immediately to the local Council. www.invasives.ie

It is wonderful to be able to use the orchard plot green area for annual demonstrations of traditional meadow maintenance – a rare event today & worthwhile establishing as a Clashmore tradition.

Your collaboration with the Irish Bee Conservation project is paying dividends & the plans for the Bee Trail sound fascinating. Are you working with The Barn Owl Project <https://www.thebarnowlproject.ie/> or Birdwatch Ireland <https://birdwatchireland.ie/> on the installation of the owl boxes provided by the Men's Shed? We will be interested to know next year if the nest boxes installed were occupied. Also are there bats resident in the Distillery? Bat Conservation Ireland is an amazing volunteer group who do walks & talks in communities. <https://www.batconservationireland.org/irish-bats>

The pictures of Clashmore's wildlife included in your submission are simply stunning & what a coup to have such a talented resident photographer.

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

There is no doubting that Clashmore National School has a sustainable ethos with their Walk On Wednesdays (WOW); celebration of World Earth Day with workshops & learning outcomes & their ongoing work to achieving their 6th Green Flag for Global Citizenship – Litter & Waste. Ballycurrane National School is to the forefront in managing their food waste with a wormery – an excellent use of the local waste prevention grant. It would be hoped that it is managed actively in the summer period & we look forward to receiving an update on the output & its use. Well done to both Clashmore & Ballycurrane schools on participating actively in the Green Schools initiative.

Your annual Plant Swap is a great opportunity to impart knowledge & share resources. There are few gardeners who are not generous with both their time & plants & what better way for novice gardeners to learn than from those in the know.

It is heartening to see information evenings being held on solar & PV panels. There is a lot of information to be distilled on this topic & where better to be educated than at a local event. It would be hoped it would be well

attended.

The Tidy Towns Handbook is an excellent source of ideas on this topic & well worth a read on winter evenings when time permits. <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Sustainability-Doing-More-with-less.pdf> The platform, ChangeX also has lots of ideas & funding in some cases. <https://www.changex.org/>

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

A strategy for dealing with weed control where paths meet the road or where paths intersect boundary walls is required. There may be a simple solution where gaps exist & can be repaired or the removal of silt that allows a medium for weed growth. The removal of weeds in these places creates a much better first impression for the visitor. Perhaps residents located close by might be prevailed upon to adopt an area outside their homes.

An annual audit of street furniture is a worthwhile job to undertake. It is often surprising to residents the number of redundant poles, obsolete signage, discarded safety equipment, down at heel lighting standards or bollards etc that exist. Their removal or upgrading has a significant impact on a village's tidiness.

The village was litter free although there were quite a few items of litter in the river, down past the playground.

Unfortunately the road to the GAA Grounds was badly littered & the area at the Bring Banks was chronically littered.

An Taisce's annual Spring Clean is a wonderful national initiative & it is great to see you participate each year in addition to holding local litter walks. Are you noticing a reduction in the litter collected year or year?

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

The thatched cottage & gardens of vegetables & perennials is a showstopper & no doubt photographed frequently. It is wonderful to see such pride by the majority of Clashmore's residents in their abodes.

St Mochua's Terrace has some lovely stonewall boundaries & the green area will be an asset to them once ownership is established. It certainly will create a better first impression on entering the village. The new development alongside St Mochua's Terrace will complete this area & it would be best to liaise if you can with the developer on their landscaping & front boundary plans.

The entrance to Village View had lovely short clover meadows & the verges inside the entrance had flowers that were just finished flowering. The bench outside offers the walker the opportunity to catch their breath whilst walking uphill. The container here could be dispensed with & a mounded flowerbed established instead. The green area has space for some further tree planting. Pocket Forests & Easy Treesie are two volunteer led groups that work with residents associations, school & Tidy Towns groups to create mini forests. <https://www.pocketforests.ie/>
<https://easytreesie.com/>

Clós Naomh Mochua has a lovely grove of trees at the entrance. An area left long under these trees would be a haven for insect life. Some of the trees to the front left of the entrance require attention as suckers are forming & some of the Mountain Ash is not thriving. Once again further tree planting might be considered in the small green verges in front of the houses.

Bánta na Seithe is fortunate to be facing trees & meadows. They have adopted an interesting approach to their wide green margin, mowing the interior strip & leaving the external margins loner. This will result in a greater amount of weeds on the roadside along by the kerbing.

It would be good to see a cohesive approach to estate naming, ideally a bilingual plaque as seen at Bánta na Seithe.

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

The roads leading in to Clashmore had hedgerows full of blossoms & wild grasses. The road surfaces were in good conditions generally. Unfortunately on adjudication day, Chapel Lane was closed off to traffic other than residents. Your adjudicator walked part of this road to see projects however it could not be traversed by car. The orchard on the R671 approach road creates a lovely & unexpected diversion for the visitor & is a welcome change of visual scene from the hedgerows.

Concluding Remarks:

It was a delightful visit to Clashmore. As a community your achievements to date need to be applauded as significant work & perseverance is required so see projects to completion. There is no doubt that your treasured late colleague, Davy Foley, played a pivotal role in those achievements. Your future plans are well formed & we look forward with interest to their progression. Clashmore's community spirit is remarkable.