

Tidy Towns Competition 2023

Adjudication Report

Centre: Clonea-Power - Cluain Fhia De Paor	Ref: 918
County: Waterford	Mark: 256
Category: A	Date(s): 29/06/2023

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2022	Mark Awarded 2023
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	38	40
Streetscape & Public Places	80	34	36
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	30	31
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	24	25
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	12	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	51	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	26	27
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	31	32
TOTAL MARK	550	246	256

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 adjudicator is astounded at the level of community involvement - a participation rate of 30% is remarkable these days & speaks highly of your collective community spirit. Indeed, if you did not possess this spirit, you would never have completed the conversion of the old School into a community space. It is so important for members of the government to see for themselves what these projects mean to a small community. Thank you for including the lovely photo of the occasion.

You are kept busy with the various communication mediums you employ to keep all generations informed of local events & activities further afield. It is good to hear you receive support from other community groups in addition to local agencies & local businesses. The proposed amalgamation of yourselves & the Hall committee makes sense in a village – why divide when you can conquer together. The active engagement & support of a local National School cannot be underestimated & it is fantastic that the principal, staff & students are willing participants in your endeavours.

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

There is no doubt that the Community Hall & Church are picturesque landmarks in the centre of Clonea Power & contribute greatly to the historic character of the village.

There is hardly a village or town in Ireland that is not dealing with some level of dereliction. The semi-detached three bay two storey houses, although vacant, are attractive as they retain most of their original character & are of vernacular importance. You are to be commended for maintaining the doors, camouflaging the windows & keeping the front weed free. Is it known who the owner is & have they been approached in relation to any future plans? Do let us know in next year's submission. The detached single storey galvanized roofed house is complimented by an attractive range of outbuildings that contribute to the village's historic character. It would be hoped that the Vacant House Improvement grants & the Vacant Site levy would encourage property owners to make decisions that would result in buildings either being repurposed for commercial or residential use.

Clancy's Bar is very well presented with its attractive façade, blooming window boxes & colourful seating.

The heritage signposting at the bridge is well chosen set as it is set against the stonewall with the backdrop of the church. Once again your perseverance has paid dividends for the village streetscape.

Clonea GAA clubhouse & grounds has a large footprint in the community. There is now a GAA Green Club Toolkit designed to support clubs in implementing simple & effective sustainability actions. It would be worth bringing to your club's attention & they could then assist you in a number of areas like nature & biodiversity & sustainability. <https://learning.gaa.ie/greenclub>

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The area at Ballyneale Cross with its oxeye daisy verges & clipped clover edges was looking well on adjudication day. The heathers are growing nicely although it is time to cut back some of the grasses, nipplewort, willowherb etc before they set seed in amongst the heather. The rowan trees are maturing nicely either side of the deer.

The raised bed across from the Community Hall adds some lovely colour & contrast to the stonewalls beneath. A planned & coordinated colour scheme here with nectar rich perennials would be very effective. The beauty of perennials is that they also can be subdivided or slipped in order to create more plants thus reducing the financial outlay. The Community Hall front garden is maturing nicely & the verbena was flourishing as was the lavender. A few gaps exist that, if filled, would create a picture perfect. It is a stunning space to rest awhile.

The bright containers in the car park were blooming with snapdragons & other perennials. Have you considered establishing in situ beds here that would negate the need for containers & thus reduce watering & maintenance? The Church graveyard has a lovely entry through the merged yew trees. It was suggested by last year's adjudicator that some areas could be left as short meadows. On adjudication day, all grassy areas in the graveyard were cut tight with no flowers on display. If a decision has been reached to let the grass grow longer do include photos. The native hawthorn hedge here bordering the river is wonderful to see & very healthy. Is there a reason for the netting running the length of the hedge?

The planted boats are a lovely nod to your riverside setting. The water pump was looking resplendent with its flowering bucket & flowerbed & the short meadow here was full of clover.

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

Clonea Power is fortunate to be immersed in nature – mature woodland, pastureland, hedgerows & the River Clodagh. It is heartening to see verges only cut at the outer edge & the remainder left to thrive as nature intended. The National Biodiversity Data Centre is the place to record sightings. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/> The best way to start is with the Irish Garden Bird survey that commences each year in December. It is a fun & engaging activity for all the community & offers you the opportunity to feature a species & put up pictures taken locally on your social media feeds. <https://birdwatchireland.ie/our-work/surveys-research/research-surveys/irish-garden-bird-survey/> There are so many volunteer led groups actively working in this area & they are extremely open to doing talks & walks with local communities – The Bat Conservation of Ireland <https://www.batconservationireland.org/irish-bats> The Barn Owl Project <https://www.thebarnowlproject.ie/> BirdWatch Ireland <https://birdwatchireland.ie/> As you have the River Clodagh & woodland it seems highly likely Clonea Power is home to many species.

Do let us know where you are at with your engagement on the Pearl Mussel Project.

We can see from the poster you are raising funds for the Community Hall & it would be hoped that your plans for a biodiversity play area & sensory garden will be realized in the next few years. In the meantime, the long meadows there present a lovely picture. Perhaps a scything demonstration could be conducted there when the meadow is ready for cutting.

If you have plans to plant more trees, the volunteer groups, Pocket Forests <https://www.pocketforests.ie/> & Easy Treesie <https://easytreesie.com/> are focused on helping communities, schools & housing estates create mini forests. Keep a close eye on invasive species in particular Himalayan Balsam that is very evident in other areas close to Clonea Power in particular around rivers & streams although not exclusively. If seen, report immediately to your local Council as they spread rapidly & are extremely difficult to eradicate.

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

Like many small communities, the impact of large-scale wind or solar farms without the necessary engagement in advance causes consternation. Most communities are in favour of renewable energy however consultation & transparency is key to informing those living locally how the proposed development will impact on them in the short, medium & long term. Open communication is key to arriving at a compromise for all.

It is great to see you highlight National Bike Week in conjunction with the local childrens' cycle to Curraghmore House. It would be hoped that organized sustainable travel activities like this could take place on a regular basis to encourage children & adults to partake & perhaps leave the car behind for short local trips.

The Free Home Energy Upgrade from SEAI was well worth bringing to peoples attention via social media in light of the very high energy costs experienced this year & last.

Have you an opportunity to harvest rainwater from the Community Hall roof? If it were possible, it would meet your watering needs in the village.

There are some fantastic resources available in relation to waste on My Waste <https://www.mywaste.ie/why/> - you could share tips or hold information evenings on a variety of topics – National Food Waste Recycling Week; October's Reuse month; September's Upcycling Challenge; Waste Less List & many many more.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

There was not an iota of litter visible in the environs of the village. The roads were swept clean as was the car park. The Bring Bank facility was spotless.

It was so disappointing to see recent large scale dumping off the bridge out by the marked Biodiversity Area. The bridge & tree lined road here is such a lovely vista that to think someone would mar the landscape is unforgivable. The right hand side of the road at the Biodiversity Area needs some attention as the surface is crumbling.

An annual audit of street furniture is a good strategy e.g. redundant poles, obsolete signage, discarded safety equipment, lighting standards & bollards needing painting etc. All of these impact on the how an environ looks & regular attention either by the community or the local Council makes a marked difference to the streetscape.

The stonewalls around the village are generally well maintained as are the footpaths the latter is important for a walkable & accessible environment for all residents irrespective of mobility.

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

Clodagh Drive has the largest areas of green space this adjudicator has even seen. The potential they have to create woodland, long meadows with paths mown through for childrens play or walks, orchards etc is immeasurable. As referenced in an earlier section, there are many volunteer groups who are willing to assist with resources & funding. ChangeX is a platform for ideas & potential funding. There are a lot of funding streams for estates today. It would be worth sitting down with the residents/residents association & hearing what they would like for their estate & seeing what can be achieved. The possibilities are endless.

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

The entrance signs to the village are one of the loveliest this adjudicator has seen to date with the direct translation of the Irish meaning. They are a perfect height for effective planting underneath. The backdrop of the ferns in the hedgerow on the R678 to Rathgormack is simply stunning. The deer sculpture at the crossroads on this road is captivating & what a location as one approaches the village.

Are there plans by the landowner to repair the stonewall, just out of the village on the road to Mothel? The Dry Stone Wall Association of Ireland <https://www.dswai.ie/> hold workshops on working farms showing how to maintain & repair dry stonewalls. The dry stonewalls on the approach roads to the village present a wonderful panorama.

Concluding Remarks:

This was your adjudicator's second visit to Clonea Power although rather than drive through it was a pleasure to walk around & learn more about your village. The Harry Clarke windows were a revelation as were the carvings of the 3 generations & the deer. As a community you have achieved so much to date, we look forward to the realization of your other projects. There is no doubting your ambition for Clonea Power.