

Tidy Towns Competition 2022

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clashmore - Clais Mhór** Ref: **243**
County: **Waterford** Mark: **326**
Category: **B** Date(s): **27/06/2022**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2021	Mark Awarded 2022
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	45	46
Streetscape & Public Places	80	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	44	45
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	55	37	38
Sustainability – Doing more with less	55	19	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65	66
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	31	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	36	36
TOTAL MARK	550	319	326

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

Fáilte chuig Comórtas Na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu don bhliain 2022. Táimid buíoch daoibh as ucht na hiontrála a chur chugainn, agus guimíd gach rath ar bhúir gcuid oibre amach anseo. Adh Mór. Welcome to the 2022 SuperValu TidyTowns competition. We thank you for compiling and sending us your entry, and wish you every success in your future work. Good luck! Your competition entry was helpfully very clear and concise and your 5 year plan was well laid out being divided into the eight competition categories. Many thanks also for the Clashmore Heritage Trails brochure. This is a terrific publication filled with lots of information to make a visitor's trip even more enjoyable! It is great to hear of your collaborative work with the local Foróige branch and your perseverance with a Junior TidyTowns despite pandemic troubles. With their help Clashmore TidyTowns should last for another 55 years at least!

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

Clashmore has a beautiful streetscape that is for this first-time visitor surprisingly spread out. There is a good distance between Raheen Quay and St Cronan's church but it features many lovely examples of Irish rural vernacular architecture. The new thatch roof on the cottage was greatly admired – a wonderful display of craftsmanship for all passers-by to enjoy! It is good to hear of the various refurbishments going on around the village with some exciting developments for all. Your Heritage Centre and the surrounding graveyard are a beautiful feature on the main street of Clashmore. Although the centre was closed during our visit, it was lovely to sit and relax in the peace of the graveyard on one of the benches there. There was scaffolding up around the tower – was this in relation to the flat roof work? Make sure to let next year's adjudicator know of the progress here. It is wonderful to see an old disused building be repurposed for community use – a perfect example of sustainability in action. The old distillery/mill chimney spanning the river is indeed unique and one to be celebrated. This special building of such high architectural heritage value needs a little more publicity we think!

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The young orchard at the R671 approach road was looking very well - we could see several young apples forming on adjudication day. We didn't know until we studied your application that this was a community orchard! A small sign indicating this and that you are managing it as a wildflower meadow would be great and maybe a bench to enjoy its lovely location! Also thank you for the photos of your scything demonstrations, hopefully it'll result in some fun heritage activities around Clashmore as these skills are passed on. Many of you have done a lot of work on the Grotto area over the past year – most especially Foróige members. This is such a prominent area in the village, it is worthwhile getting it looking good. There is some lovely new planting here with some more needed as there's a lot of bark mulch on view! Have you thought about planting pollinator-friendly bulbs such as snowdrops, crocuses,

Muscari, bluebells and Alliums? This succession of bulbs are great for giving colour from January through to May annually. The roadside bed in particular was looking lovely on adjudication day with the highly appropriate Lady's mantle and Salvia in full bloom. Are there plans to refurbish the statues of Mary and St Bernadette? There's a beautiful array of wild plants on the back slope with gorgeous pendulous sedges and ferns growing through the Aubretias and marigolds. We noticed the lovely bed of perennials flowering across from the playground. The perennial cornflowers and the blue geranium are big hits with pollinators. Splittings could be made of these plants and others from around the village next spring to help fill out the beds across the road at the Grotto. Tobar Mochua was a lovely, peaceful spot unfortunately marred by several large pieces of litter in the well water. Such a shame and disrespectful of this spot that has clearly been hallowed by many generations of Clashmore people. The stonewall encircling the site indicates the special place this site has had within the community for centuries. We agree with your decision to let nature vegetate here as then the species that can survive on the thin soil will find their way here without our help! There was a lovely display of selfheal, red and white clovers, buttercups and catsear growing amongst the grasses around the well. The woodland walk alongside is very attractive and many elegant foxgloves were on sentry duty along its length as we walked it!

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

Thanks you for including the biodiversity plan which you have drawn up yourselves. Have you thought about getting a professional Biodiversity Action Plan carried out? It could incorporate a habitat survey and maps of the Clashmore area giving you a better idea of all the species in your locality – what is doing well and what needs your help. There are currently several sources of funding for such projects available to community groups. Your Local Authority Heritage and Environmental Awareness officers will have information on these. We were seriously impressed by the fantastic number of swallows' nests at St Cronan's church. On adjudication day the swallows were very busy bringing food back to their nestlings and it was a joy to observe them. The graveyard here is very nicely looked after with lovely wild flowers and grasses left to grow tall on some of the older graves. We spotted dog daisies and birdsfoot trefoil which is a great butterfly food plant. The wildflower area opposite the playground is not ideal for wild flowers as it's very shaded. It could, however, be maintained as a lawn with a maze or path mown through it for the children. It would also be a nice spot for a picnic bench and an array of bulbs as suggested above for the Grotto. These bulbs would also be lovely planted near the benches along the grassy river banks. None of the trees along the river here are native, therefore although beautiful they are not of maximum value to Clashmore's local biodiversity. Perhaps over time they could be augmented with some of our native species that grow well near water such as birch, willow and alder. Another point worth mentioning that an important role for TidyTown groups is to ensure that their wider communities are aware of any local conservation areas. The Greagagh river forms part of the greater Munster Blackwater SAC – meaning it supports species and habitats of international importance. Check out the maps section of www.npws.ie for more details. Also you mention 'cleaning' the river of silt which leads to plants growing in the river – this is a natural process for rivers and therefore what us humans regard as cleaning can in fact be detrimental for the river's biodiversity. With the Greagagh being in SAC 002170 whose boundary is just 500m downstream of the bridge, then it is advisable for you to contact your local NPWS Conservation ranger for some advice and guidance about looking after your beautiful river. You mention the use of wildflower seed in a few projects. The use of commercial wildflower seed is not recommended as a biodiversity action for a number of ecological reasons including the unwitting introduction of species that do not belong to a habitat and sometimes areas of valuable grassland habitat can be cleared in order to introduce the said wildflower seeds. The All Ireland Pollinator Plan has lots of guidance and information about this topic on its website. Often, as you are seeing at St Mochua's Well, just letting nature take its course can be the best option. The biodiversity projects carried out at Clashmore N.S. sound absolutely fantastic and very importantly – lots of fun! The cattle grazing of the gravel bed is a problem – have you thought about using some thorny shrubs that are of biodiversity value? Great examples are holly, hawthorn, blackthorn, juniper, rugose roses and firethorns. Many thanks for the absolutely beautiful wildlife photographs – isn't it just amazing to see the array of species that call Clashmore home? Have you ever run a community bird watching event? A dawn/dusk chorus walk? We had a lovely wander through the grass paths of the graveyard at the Heritage Centre. It was a gorgeous way to finish our visit to Clashmore. Such a peaceful oasis where nature is accessible for all. Well done to all on the management of this area – we couldn't think of any improvements!

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

We're delighted to hear of the success of your plant swap events. Looking at banks of brambles 'with biodiversity glasses on' means that you are looking at an area with cover for birds and mammals, flowers for pollinators and fruit for birds and mammals (including us!) and as you say yourselves, the roots will solve soil erosion problems on the slopes! You demonstrate a good awareness of sustainable issues and how they pertain to your local community. The TidyTown Handbook will also have more ideas and guidance for you. As for many biodiversity issues, a lot of this category is about creating awareness of the issues in your locality and making locals feel enabled and empowered to make a difference.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Apart from the above mentioned littering in St Mochua's Well, Clashmore was looking lovely on adjudication day. We know a huge amount of never-ending work by volunteers goes into keeping our towns and villages clean and tidy so well done all – we are not going to let the misbehaviour of the few out-do the wonderful efforts of so many!

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

Well done to all in Clashmore which looked lovely on adjudication day with lots of houses and gardens clearly cherished and minded. The village has a lovely collection of older houses concentrated on Main St and over at

Chapel Lane. These are areas of great character and it's great to see some of them gaining new life this year with various refurbishments going on.

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

We loved the feature of the open stream running into the Greagagh river at the bridge. Such streetscape features were common enough in the past but nowadays many are culverted away out of sight. You mention that this is due for an overhaul by WCCC but we wonder what does that mean? As mentioned above, with the Greagagh being part of the Blackwater SAC just 500m downstream then any works will require the input and guidance of the NPWS. All the approach roads into Clashmore are beautiful and full of character with some lovely stretches of mature trees and hedgerows. These add so much to the enjoyment of the visitor to your lovely locality.

Concluding Remarks:

This was our first visit to Clashmore and we loved the whole area with such a great variety of river, grassland and woodland habitats in and around some great examples of Irish, rural vernacular architecture. Keep up your great work Clashmore TidyTowns and we look forward to our next visit!