

Ballynacally Retains 'Clare In Bloom' Title For Second Consecutive Year At Community Environmental Awards

County Clare, Tuesday 15th Jan 08

High praise was bestowed on communities and schools across Clare at the 2007 Community Environmental Awards ceremony, held last evening in the Templegate Hotel, Ennis.

Several awards were presented in competitions including **Clare In Bloom, Best Public Seat, "Power of One – Energy Efficiency for Clare", "Keep Clare Clean"** and **Pride of Place**.

Ballynacally Development Association was named overall winner of the 2007 **'Clare In Bloom'** competition achieving the highest marks for a second year in a row. The Association scored highly for landscaping, range of planting, colour and overall impression.

Mayor of Clare Cllr. Patricia McCarthy presented *Ballynacally Development Association* with a cheque for E1500. Meanwhile, Category 1 was won by *Kilrush Tidy Towns Committee*, who finished ahead of *Bridgetown* (2nd) and *Shannon* (3rd). *Tuamgraney Development Association* was named the winner of Category 2, with *Kilmihil Tidy Towns* and *Quin Development Association* achieving second and third places, respectively.

As well as scooping overall winner, *Ballynacally Development Association* was named winner in Category 3, beating off competition from *Labasheeda* (2nd) and *Mountshannon* (3rd). Categories are based on population size with a first, second and third prize in each category of €1100, €550 and €300 respectively. A Special Endeavour Award went to *Bridgetown* for the overall appearance of the village, which was a blaze of colour during the adjudicating period with the displays on the approach roads excelling.

The Mayor's Environmental Award, as well as a cheque for €1000, was presented to *Mountshannon*. Mayor McCarthy acknowledged that *Mountshannon*, with its unique location on the Shannon showed great use of landscaping, which was very much evident in their Amenity Park and harbour. Special Merit Awards were presented to community groups in *Bodyke Development Association, Feakle Tidy Village Committee, Scariff Community Council, Obair Newmarket on Fergus, Kildysart Tidy Towns, Carrigaholt Tidy Towns, Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns, Lisdoonvarna Community Council, Ruan Tidy Village, St Mary's Community Development Lissycasey* and *Kilmurry McMahon Community Group*.

For the second consecutive year *Ballyea* claimed the Best Public Seat Award, which acknowledges communities for tasteful public seats that encourage people to take a few moments repose in pleasant surrounding. *Ballyea* finished ahead of *Ballynacally* (2nd) and *Decomade Lissycasey* (3rd).

A newly introduced art competition themed '**Power of One** Energy Efficiency for Clare' attracted an enormous number of entries from both primary and secondary schools. First prize was awarded to Jennifer Lyons, St. Joseph's Secondary School, Spanish Point, with Edel Curtin, St. Joseph's Secondary School, Spanish Point second and Abby Koomans O'Reilly, Scariff Community College third. The primary school categories were won by Cillian Fennell, Ennis National School, Paraic O'Gorman, Kilmihil National School, Caolann O'Dwyer, Scoil Iosaf Naofa, Moy, Lahinch, 2nd Class, Clarecastle N.S, Laura Brassil, Dangan National School and Caitriona O'Gorman, Kilmihil National School

Winners in the '**Keep Clare Clean**' competition included Louise Hill Ballynacally/Lissycasey; Eoin McNamara, Ruan Toonagh; Liam Kelly, Cratloe; and Grace Kearney, Cratloe. The competition is organised with support from Clare County Council and runs in conjunction with Clare Community Games.

Meanwhile, last evening's ceremony included an inaugural presentation to local participants in the All-Ireland **Pride of Place** competition. The Pride of Place competition is an annual competition, which is run with Co-Operation Ireland in conjunction with Local Authorities north and south of the border. Clare County Council and Co-Operation Ireland honoured the local contribution that the Michael Cusack Centre in Carron, Kilmihil Community Development Ltd. and the 'RAPID Community Pitch-In' at Cloughleigh made in 2007.

Addressing the gathered guests and award winners at the ceremony, Tom Dowling, Meath County Manager and Pride of Place Chairperson said, 'It is important to recognise the communities who participated in the Pride of Place scheme and I think it is fitting that we are acknowledging their valuable contribution at this awards ceremony tonight'.

Speaking last evening, Mayor of Clare Cllr. Patricia McCarthy stated, 'It is heart warming to see the excitement and pride in this venue tonight. I would like to congratulate all those honoured at this ceremony. You have put in a huge effort throughout the year to enhance your towns and villages. Please keep on doing what you are doing, as you are a tremendous asset to County Clare.'

Chairperson of the Strategic Policy Committee for the Environment, Cllr. Tommy Brennan commented, "I am delighted to see that the Community Environmental Awards 2007 have been extended to include two further competitions, one on the very important theme of energy, and the other relating to keeping Clare Clean. Energy efficiency is something we need to work hard at to encourage people to make that one change and show the '**Power of One**'."

'I would acknowledge the work of Clare Community Games and, in particular, the very worthwhile competition they have run encouraging young people to keep Clare clean. The benefits of this competition are far-reaching and laudable', concluded Cllr. Brennan.

Betty Devanny, Administrative Officer with Clare County Council acknowledged the generous contributions received from the sponsors of the awards. She continued, *"I would like to thank ESB Moneypoint, Roche Ireland and Shannon Development whose continuing support enables Clare County Council to award prizes worthy of the effort shown by applicants."*

The *'Clare in Bloom'* competition is a motivational mechanism for the many small local based groups throughout the county to enhance the visual impact of their towns and villages by means of flower, tree and shrub planting. Communities get their sleeves rolled up and work all year round to ensure their town or village is putting its best foot forward. Judging takes place from mid-July to mid August, considers such factors as colour, size, variety, location and appropriateness of the various planting schemes along with the management of litter.