

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Collon Village**

Ref: **291**

County: **Louth**

Mark: **207**

Category: **B**

Date: **24/06/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39	38
The Built Environment	40	29	28
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	20
Litter Control	40	27	25
Tidiness	20	11	10
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	25
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	207	204

Overall Developmental Approach:

The Committee is thanked for their entry into this year's Tidy Towns Competition which included a very well completed Entry Form, a three-year Development Programme and a Town Map. These documents are of great help to the Adjudicator in seeing the work being done and it should also be of benefit to the Committee in monitoring their yearly progress. The Committee is to be congratulated on their work with the County Council and FÁS and the local school. It is very important to continue this liaison work with the statutory bodies as they can give invaluable help and advice to the Committee.

The Built Environment:

Collon developed around the junction of the N2 Dublin-Derry road and the N51 Drogheda-Navan road. The focal point of the village is the Square, with its Courthouse, the former Erasmus Smith school and housing enclosing it. A charming and small urban space. The wirescape is visually disruptive in the village, but there could be an opportunity to underground it, if the County Council was doing future work on the main street. Discussions by the Committee with the E.S.B. would be essential before any such under-grounding could be undertaken. The traffic calming signs at the entrances are very important, together with the traffic calming and pedestrian crossing in the centre of the village. One of the main problems with Collon was the excessive amount of heavy through traffic that tended at times to overwhelm this small village. However, since the week of the adjudication, this heavy through traffic has now moved to the motorway by-pass. The relief to the

village is very noticeable already and it gives the Committee heart to develop their village in a more satisfactory manner. The Catholic Church is a fine building, but its grounds need additional tree planting and as noted in last year's adjudication, attention is needed to the main doors, they need repair work and painting. Some houses have hanging baskets and they give colour to the village. Possibly the Committee could encourage a Competition for additional baskets and window boxes throughout the length of the entire main street for both the houses and commercial buildings. Perhaps with this reduction in through traffic more infill housing could be encouraged along the main street as well as on the side roads.

Landscaping:

With this reduction in through traffic, possibly the Committee could organise a tree planting programme along the main street (the Dublin-Derry road) and the creation of planting bays for these trees with alternative parking bays. The street needs both narrowing and tree planting. Additional trees could also be introduced in the school and Church grounds and other strategic locations within the village. It is very important that the pupils are encouraged to give a strong input into this tree planting. Trees should be berried or have other forms of fruit bearing and the species could include oak, ash, rowan, beech, chestnut, lime or thorn, all to encourage bird life.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

As discussed under Landscape, the Adjudicator sees little need, at this present time, for the creation of a separate wildlife area. The extensive and varied nature of existing trees around the village, together with the new tree species proposed, is more than sufficient for the encouragement of birds and some other wildlife forms. Possibly ENFO should be contacted to obtain some of the very fine publications they produce on wildlife conservation.

Litter Control:

There was no litter seen in the village on the day of adjudication and the Committee is to be congratulated on this achievement. Possibly the pupils of the school should be organised to do a weekly trawl of the village, both to pick up all litter and to encourage them to have a pride in their village. Possibly more litter bins are needed and should be obtained from the County Council. Of course the accompanying litter bin collection must be a part of this programme. Though a four bin recycling unit was not seen, there may have been one. If not, the Committee should contact the County Council for one.

Tidiness:

The village was very tidy on the day of adjudication and again the Committee is to be congratulated on this achievement. During the school summer holidays there is a tendency to neglect the school grounds. It is important that some pupils and others of the Committee should keep the grass cut and pick up windblown litter and also keep the adjoining verges, kerbing and bases of walls free of weeds.

Residential Areas:

There were some delightful gardens, both in the village and on the approach roads leading into the village. They should be commended for their fine work as these gardens give a feeling of care and welcome to all coming to Collon. The existing housing groups are well maintained and some exceptionally so. The Committee should consider the creation of a Gardens Competition, not only for the existing gardens, but especially for the gardens of new houses which would need advice and encouragement. The Committee should also consider the creation of a mulch or composting bank for the collection of grass and leaves. The compost could then be used in various locations in the village for tree planting, hanging baskets, etc.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The dip into Collon on the Dublin road is always a pleasure to see as it gives an unexpected vista of the village, enclosed by overhanging trees. Basically the entrance roads into the village were fine, with a mixture in places of cut verges and wild grasses. With the heavy traffic slowly being eliminated from the village this attention to the verges will be easier. In places the verge widths need not be the full width but could be one to one and a half metres and the rest be left as uncut grasses and encourage wild flowers and have them blend naturally into the adjoining hedgerows. Signage should be cleaned as they become dirty and the grasses cut around them.

General Impression:

There should be visible changes to Collon now that the through traffic is slowly being removed. More un-wasted time can now be concentrated on more major works to bring back Collon to a more pleasant and safer place to live.