

# Tidy Towns Competition 2003

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Collooney**

Ref: **263**

County: **Sligo**

Mark: **170**

Category: **B**

Date: **10/06/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	32
The Built Environment	40	24	24
Landscaping	40	24	22
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	12	12
Litter Control	40	22	20
Tidiness	20	8	8
Residential Areas	30	19	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	21	21
General Impression	10	6	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>163</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

Your 3-Year Development Plan shows fine attention to detail. When completed, this plan will ensure a greatly enhanced town to live in and to visit, and, incidentally, one which should rise considerably in the results of this competition. The Collooney Village Design Statement also makes fascinating reading, and is replete with imaginative comments and proposals. Between these two documents you have a very wide choice of options and procedures. In the midst of all these exciting departures, can you please, next year, enclose a map on which (1) the streets are named, (2) new housing is shown, and (3) all relevant sites are marked: it is unlikely that we will miss any of the latter, but one needs to be sure.

### The Built Environment:

The most interesting initiative is the conversion of the Venetian style Reading Room to use as a Funeral Home: work was proceeding busily on the date of adjudication and the result will be eagerly looked forward to. The churches and schools were well kept as usual, though the paintwork of St Joseph's NS could do with some freshening up. Of the business premises, among those which impressed were the Owenmore Inn, Mace-McKim's and Cecil's, though none were up to the standard needed for entry for shopfront awards. The Credit Union, mentioned last year, still needs attention. It was a pity to see Conway's boarded up. Other vacated buildings are more properly considered under 'Tidiness' below. The old Mill buildings are quite unsightly: with sensitive adaptation this area could be superb: your solution for

this will be specially looked forward to in the light of your 3-Year Plan. The large industrial buildings on the north side of the by-pass did not seem to this visitor to detract from the townscape as much as is suggested in the Design Statement, largely because they are cut off from the residential areas.

### **Landscaping:**

The grotto opposite the RC church is again beautifully nurtured. The new landscaping at the square is an important initiative and was coming along well: however, black plastic sheeting should either be removed or concealed as it gives an inappropriately untidy look. The planting of the embankment opposite the main railway platform really raises the spirits upon arrival at Collooney station: those concerned are to be congratulated. The handsome Teeling monument is again the subject of adverse comment, largely because of the overgrown path to the summit; there is no reason why this small area should be made park-like - a 'wild garden' or dense surrounding shrubbery would be perfectly appropriate - and one wonders why parking in the convenient lay-by is discouraged.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

It is not clear from your entry form what precisely you have done towards 'protection of flora and fauna' at Union Wood and the Owenmore River, but it is good to know that these significant areas of natural habitat - and indeed natural beauty - are under surveillance. They are a splendid amenity. On this topic, it is good to see so many fine old trees preserved throughout the urban area.

### **Litter Control:**

There was a distinct improvement on last year. Congratulations.

### **Tidiness:**

Kerbside weed continues to be an unsolved problem, especially on approach roads (including the lay-by at the Teeling monument) and at the bridge. The car park near St Joseph's NS was also weedy. An unsightly building with a rusty iron roof near here needs attention. A signpost indicates the Recycle Centre as being near the Tennis Court, but it appears to have been moved to what must be a more convenient location near the Methodist Church; perhaps it could be discreetly screened. Some derelict or vacant houses near the town centre present a problem, which one expects will be addressed in the coming years in the light of the implementations of the Village Statement; a particularly eye-catching example is located next to Innisfree Crystal. It would be good if the vacant space near Coolaney Autos (a well maintained premises) could be improved with high quality infill housing.

### **Residential Areas:**

Many of the older street houses are well maintained - congratulations to their owners: this traditional housing stock contributes a great deal to the attractive character of Coolooney. Much of the new housing development is impressive, particularly the design of a new terrace not far from Union Wood (the absence of names on some streets makes identification difficult) and its completion will be awaited with real interest. Housing in the Barrack Road area is also promising - the use of stone dressings and boundary walls is admirable. The pleasant residential road between St Paul's NS and the Sligo road has several fine individual homes, but kerbside weed is obtrusive here too. It should be the responsibility of each householder to keep their frontages free of weed - a few minutes easy work three or four times a year would see to this. Trees could be planted in Steeple View to advantage, and all developers should be encouraged to provide roadside trees as a matter of course.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Surfaces are generally good except on the unnamed road beyond St Joseph's school. Verges were

very poorly looked after on the section of Barrack Road that is parallel to the dual carriageway. Very good new stone walls were noted in the short road that links the Union Wood road to the main bridge, and promising paving was in the process of being laid near the square - all of which goes to show that we should expect a much improved roadscape by next year.

### **General Impression:**

It seems from reading the enclosed reports that Collooney is on the verge of sensitive rehabilitation; the next three years (or more) should show a real transformation. This is easily said, of course, but with the right advice, with local determination, and with appropriate funding, this town could become a landmark. Its original street plan and its superb location are highly important stepping-stones to what should be a fine future.