

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Riverstown**

Ref: **669**

County: **Sligo**

Mark: **223**

Category: **B**

Date: **31/07/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	39	37
The Built Environment	40	32	32
Landscaping	40	34	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	22
Litter Control	40	28	29
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	22	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	22
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	223	218

Overall Developmental Approach:

The exceptionally positive outlook shown by your replies to questions on the entry form are reflected in the appearance of the village and in the work which goes annually to maintaining its character and improving its appearance. (Incidentally, you ask to be considered for an Urban Village Award, but Riverstown is a rural village - see the definition in your Tidy Towns booklet). This committee clearly provides first class leadership and should be congratulated on its initiatives; the residents and business community have contributed wonderfully well to the high placing of the village in this competition.

The Built Environment:

The important cluster of fine buildings along Drumfin road - the picturesque Church of Ireland church in its neat grounds, the well kept rectory, and the Garda Station, combine to give a sense of respect for the past with an eye to the future: in the latter regard it is hoped that the renovations under way at the Garda Station will further enhance this locality. The limestone Church of Ireland school with its unusual brick facings is well maintained. The Connacht Gold Co-Op, throughout of keeping with the traditional townscape, is presented to a high standard. The commanding RC church and school are also well looked after. The Health Centre is as bright and clean as one would wish, as is the Community Centre. A number of attractive business premises caught the eye, among them the Post Office and the Corner House.

Landscaping:

This is where Riverstown comes into its own. The mixed shrub and herbaceous planting at the main intersection makes a charming centrepiece to the village. (As a future project you might consider replacing the rather battered post and wire fence here with a hedge, wooden paling or low stone wall). Open grassed spaces in the Folk Park and elsewhere were extremely trim on adjudication day. The raised flowerbeds at the play centre and the walltop beds on Drumfin road were a real success. Small areas of colour, windowboxes and tubs added visual interest throughout the village and on the outskirts such as at the Douglas bridge. Some trimming was needed at the amenity seating area on the Heapstown road on the day of the visit. It is appreciated how much work goes into the planning, planting and continuous nurturing of all the landscaped and floral areas.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Riverstown is fortunate in the number of fine old trees; their preservation is clearly essential to the balance of nature as well as to the visual charm. It was good to see so much new planting of deciduous trees by the Drumfin road and in the Folk Park. This fine enterprise still has the appearance of being on the way to completion; in a very few years when work is more advanced it should be well in the running for a major national award. Swans, ducks and geese were very much at home, as indeed were the bonhams. The location of the wildflower garden on Ballygawley road could not be discerned - perhaps because of its very naturalness it was staring the adjudicator in the eye!; it is certainly an appropriate initiative. At least three illustrated boards were seen - quaintly crafted, they are attractive in themselves, quite apart from the interesting information which they provide.

Litter Control:

Disposable litter was seen in a very few places in the village, and never in any quantity. However, there was considerable litter in the Folk Park, where the windy weather was responsible for plastic bottles and wrappers on lawns and walks. A bin was crammed to overflowing, so at least the visitors had been trying to dispose of their rubbish. It is a curious anomaly that the most littered place was the park where there is resident professional staff on hand.

Tidiness:

The camouflaging of vacant or derelict houses with paint and creepers may not be the ultimate answer, but it is quite effective in the short term and removes a prime component of untidiness from the village scene. The presence of a recycling bank was favourably noted.

Residential Areas:

The traditional village terrace houses are the most characteristic part of Riverstown and are kept up with pride by their owners. Newish stone houses (opposite the Corner House) blend completely with their older neighbours yet have a decidedly modern look: this has probably been mentioned before but is worth repeating, for too many new building schemes (in other towns) look like suburbs of Dublin; this is a first class development. Individual homes with fine gardens were noted on the outskirts. A particularly pleasant stone house, possibly a converted chapel, was admired at the Douglas bridge - it is also distinguished by its delightful waterside garden. Little houses in Ross road are also attractively presented.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Verges of the approach roads to Riverstown were trim on adjudication day. Paving is excellent. Street surfacing was in progress, and by the time this is read will have been successfully completed.

General Impression:

A pretty village where much creative activity obviously goes into its successful upkeep.

Second Round Adjudication:

Good progress is being made with developments in Riverstown. The beautiful old trees and the river give a very pleasant setting. The compact nature of the village helps to create a good sense of community. The infill housing where stone materials have been used is attractive and enhances the village. Some litter was noted along the streets in places and also in the small park opposite McDermott's premises. Materials stored beside Narins Food Store and the Co-Op perhaps could be tidied or screened in some way. The shrubbery above the Catholic church above the wall is invaded with grass weeds and attention to the exposure of the visible black plastic at the steep bank shrubbery opposite the Coop is needed.. Hopefully the overhead cables will be placed underground soon. New road surfacing is excellent and hopefully this will be extended to all areas where surfacing is needed. Preparations for the festival were in hand at the time of the visit and all the attractive plantings through the village were looking very colourful and very well with the bunting overhead.