

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Coolaney**

Ref: **442**

County: **Sligo**

Mark: **235**

Category: **A**

Date: **01/08/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	38	37
The Built Environment	40	30	30
Landscaping	40	32	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	23	23
Litter Control	40	33	31
Tidiness	20	16	15
Residential Areas	30	23	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32	32
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	235	231

Overall Developmental Approach:

There is no doubt that Coolaney has earned its continuing position at the top of the county in this competition. The committee obviously provides keen and sensitive leadership. The residents and business people of the village all deserve praise, as indeed do the supportive official organisations. The village is in fact so resolutely tidy that this adjudicator would like to see some softening of the rather severe central area - the use of more climbing plants on buildings, for example (clematis, wistaria, honeysuckle, rambler roses, Virginia, etc) or the planting of street trees - elements which would not remove the essential tidiness but would complement it. Your leaflets are always welcome, particularly those dealing with nature trails and heritage sites. The progressive spirit, which is clearly based in local history and traditions, as exemplified by the remarks on your entry form, is something which is always appreciated by the judges.

The Built Environment:

There is little to add to the complimentary comments of last year's adjudicator under this heading, except to say that the painting and presentation of individual premises is, if anything, better than before. The few unoccupied buildings do not detract appreciably, and it is encouraging to read that at least two will shortly be renovated. Colour schemes are discreet and attractive. In the long term a new use might be found for the interesting old mill.

Landscaping:

Verges and grassed spaces were all looking trim on adjudication day. It was very good to see how so many householders enhanced their properties with tubs, pots and window boxes. The Millennium Park and the picnic area at the northern end of the Riverside Walk were well tended. The cemetery is well looked after; in the long term you might consider a background of trees along the back wall.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The River Walk is a marvellous amenity. There is a nice balance between urban neatness at the picnic and Millennium areas and a sensation of woodland wildness along the intervening paths. The river itself, and the mill race, were free flowing and unobstructed by debris of any kind, and the boardwalk is strong, aesthetically pleasing, and altogether a most imaginative concept. Do discourage owners of heavy vehicles from creating muddy pools where they turn into gateways. It was good to see some attractive private gardens along the River Walk. Planting of deciduous was evident of the Galway road. In relation to the comment about the softening effect of trees on a streetscape, this adjudicator visualised a row of trees on each side of the main street - perhaps a prohibitively expensive undertaking as it would necessitate repaving and the creation of parking bays between each tree! but perhaps even a matching group of two or three trees on either side of a central point in the street would make an interesting visual statement in the long term.

Litter Control:

Once again, litter control was of a high standard., with only a little disposable litter at the top end of the main street on adjudication day. Congratulations.

Tidiness:

As mentioned above, Coolaney is exceptionally tidy. Only the minor incidences of uncared for houses made any adverse impact, and this was small. There was, however, a surprising amount of weed growth on the inner path of the Millennium Garden. Picnic tables and seating were clean and smooth.

Residential Areas:

The most characteristic houses are those in the main street, and these are almost without exception maintained with pride by their owners. A short terrace of stone houses with blue paintwork was especially admired. A small neat enclave of bungalows off the west of the main street was lacking in foliage. Cúl Aine is distinguished by the use of stone, and tree planting. There were some weedy frontages at Slieve Gamph on adjudication day - it should be the responsibility of each householder to keep their kerbside weed free - a small task that would taken only a few minutes two or three times a year. The estate off the Sligo road is most promising because of the more imaginative placing of the houses, and the use of gables and dormers in the design. The committee should always keep in contact with developers and with the planning office to ensure that the best possible design and the least disruptive locations are selected. It would be an irreparable pity if a village like Coolaney were to become like a suburb of Dublin.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Surfaces are reasonably good, and paving very good. A pity that the excellent lamp standards do not extend all the way down to the bridge on the Sligo road. The suggestion about street treeplanting is given above.

General Impression:

A very fine entry. Best wishes for your future progress.

Second Round Adjudication:

Coolaney is indeed a very tidy village. The main street looks very clean and well tended with housing and business premises looking very well with the exception of only a few. As stated at first adjudication the main street is very stark and needs a tree planting programme – the street is wide enough to take such. The many containerised plantings and small gardens have helped greatly – even small touches such as the roses by the side of Keanes premises make all the difference. The lamps and road surfaces are very good in the Main street – some work on road surfacing needs to be attended to at the new housing estate at the top of the village. The green to the front of the estate is a fine feature. A path to the cemetery would also be helpful. The bridge approaching the new estate could be enhanced considerably and a very good feature could be made of this. The Riparian walk is a lovely feature; some attention is needed to the weeds in the shrubbery of the Millennium Park and on the pathway there also. Small bits of litter were noted on the walk by the seating and constant vigilance is needed. Overall, the progress to date is a credit to all concerned.