

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Donegal Town**

Ref: **156**

County: **Donegal**

Mark: **200**

Category: **D**

Date: **29/06/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	25	24
The Built Environment	40	36	36
Landscaping	40	28	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	11	12
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	12	13
Residential Areas	30	26	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	25
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	200	202

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your detailed entry and progress report. It is good to see you working against the O'Leary Plan and benchmarking it for progress. Please let us have a more detailed town map for future years. It is very helpful to have local street names, estates etc. for accurate reference in the report.

As a very busy commercial, tourist and residential place you have particular challenges to meet. Overall you are doing very well at the Town centre challenges but lacking progress in the more suburban locations.

The Built Environment:

The commercial heart from the pier to the Diamond and beyond is constantly improving in a very good way. Public buildings are well maintained : Schools, Post Office, Driving Centre, Churches and so on. The Garda Barracks still requires attention as do many of the commercial warehousing complexes in the outer areas. There is considerable rusty roofing in the area to the rear of the Castle which is very unsightly. In addition it can be seen from the higher estates and is very unpleasant looking for residents and visitors alike.

The iconic Donegal County Council building is lost in a meadow of bad grass and with no improvement within its own curtilage. This should really be addressed since the building is so

important.

There are derelict sites behind/beside commercial areas on the Ballybofey Rd and within some of the housing estates that need to be taken in hand. This was also true for the Killymard area.

Landscaping:

The Diamond was looking very good on the day...new plants going in even as we adjudicated. Hanging baskets were evident notably on Schooners Bar, The Craft Shop and McGettigans. The trees are becoming very established and will soon fulfill their potential.

There were excellent hanging boxes on the wall of the Four Masters Church...the purple an excellent foil to the yellow sandstone.

The ring road roundabouts are problematic...the Killybegs planting not flourishing and no work undertaken on the Ballybofey one. The Mill Park grounds however were very good and distracted the eye a little!

Many of the estates had excellent colour...roses and arums doing especially well at Drumrooske.

The grounds of the Railway Museum were excellent.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There is far greater potential for Donegal town within this sector. I was struck by the lovely little fishing amenity at Clarden Drive but I found it almost by accident. The continuation of this road would make for an excellent nature based spur walk for visitors and locals alike. There are certainly similar 'country routes' within the town area that could be exploited...suggest the development of same with simple signage to the second level Transition Year students as a project perhaps?

The Old Abbey Graveyard was impeccably kept and made for wonderful heritage based exploration.

The bank of the Eske at Cassidys Electrical was very untidy

Litter Control:

There was no litter in the central areas at all; The Diamond, The Car Parks, The Quay , Super Valu. This is a great achievement.

On the other hand residential areas all showed some litter. It was noted at the Killybegs Roundabout, the road outside the Abbey Vocational School, Railway Rd., Drumrooske Estate, Killymard etc.

It would seem that the effort being made in the centre needs to be spread out and embraced by the residents in the suburbs.

Tidiness:

The centre again is very smart with features such as the entrance to the Mill Park centre from the car park being noted. Overall the feel is very positive. Then when you look closely at the overall the cracks appear. The new Childrens Playground was smothered in a grass surround. In-fill sites abound (ie Killymard, derelict mill on Ballybofey Rd., in estate to rear of Vocational School etc) which combined with rusty roofing in many places mars the overall effect.

Noted was the Eircom Complex, the Driving Centre and the Hospital...all very tidy and smart.

The ESB Sub Station on the Ballybofey Rd was unsightly

The Drumbar Sports area was excellent!

Residential Areas:

St Josephs Avenue was very smart with a litter free childrens play area and lovely planting. Nearby Ard Eskin Heights was very tidy but badly needed planting and house colour to bring it life. Clarden Drive was well presented with some lovely public and private planting..but not well served by nearby derelict infill sites. Again private houses to the rear of the Abbey Vocational School were making great effort. Drumrooske Estate had really lovely gardens and was very neat. it was surprising to find the public grassed areas badly scarred with litter though.

Private housing on approach roads, notably from the Sligo side , were all well presented.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Donegal town has a nice 'rambly' feel to it, with a sense of discovery around each corner. It is important then that infill sites and neglected buildings be seen as a challenge and dealt with and as noted above much has to be done. In addition pavements and road surfaces both in the town area and , even more so, in many of the estates are in urgent need of upgrading and renewal.

General Impression:

With a large committee, the support of the local authority, and the commercial success of Donegal Town you have a great foundation to do better. It appears that the challenge is in the bigger picture and you need to enthuse the smaller business's and the residents associations if yo are to do better.

That said you have a very vibrant successful committee and it is apparent that you are working well and hard together.