

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Letterfrack**

Ref: **574**

County: **Galway**

Mark: **200**

Category: **A**

Date: **10/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	32	32
The Built Environment	40	29	28
Landscaping	40	30	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	27	25
Litter Control	40	23	25
Tidiness	20	8	9
Residential Areas	30	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	19	20
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	200	199

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your detailed responses to the questions on your entry form, for your map of Letterfrack and for the drawing for a proposed housing and sport complex. Your co-operative work with other organisations is impressive. Your increase in marking under Buildings, Landscaping, and Wild Life and Natural Amenities, is principally due to the presence of the National Park, which is wonderfully impressive.

The Built Environment:

The pretty church was closed at the time of the visit; its belfry was somewhat weathered and will need attention. A broken drainpipe had caused severe staining on one of the fine buildings of the former reformatory. Most of the collegiate buildings were very well presented though the charming terrace of old houses needed freshening up with paint - the same should be said of the Antiques and Handcrafts shop at the cross roads. The Ellis Centre for the Arts appeared to be unfinished and had a look of abandonment. The Bard's Den was nicely presented though its side wall was suffering from green mould, probably due to the proximity to foliage. The beautifully situated school caught the attention. The almost equally well situated, and very fine, building with dormers described on the map as 'Old Hotel' was in a sad state of disrepair and its prominence gave a poor impression when approaching the village from Renvyle. The pay kiosk and the exhibition buildings and cafe at the National Park were superbly presented.

Landscaping:

The entrance and curtilages of the buildings at National Park were maintained to an exceptionally high standard. Waterside planting, with reeds, water-lilies, irises, etc, was of the same high quality. The pleasant lawns at Connemara West were trim, but there was considerable weed growth on some of the pathways and at the stone structure next the cross roads. The cross roads was considerably enhanced by Veldon's pleasant corner garden.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Again, the National Park was the chief exemplar for the conservation and enhancement of the natural surroundings. The board walks, not seen previously, easing the visitors' walk across the bog and at the same time preventing soil impaction and destruction of plant life, were a most remarkable feature. The ponds and waterways have been alluded to above. The graphic displays of local topography, geology, flora and fauna were as enthralling as their research and design were comprehensive and thorough. In the village area, it was good to see that hedges and verges on side roads were not over-urbanised, with wild fuschia, meadowsweet, vetches and other plants allowed to proliferate. It would be interesting to know, in your next submission, how actively involved at the school children under this heading. Your mark under this heading is exceptionally high.

Litter Control:

The recycling centre was clean. There was considerable disposable litter on adjudication day on the lawns of Connemara West and at the picnic tables and the seating area. Litter on the border of the road to the church and also on the Tully Cross road had clearly been present for some time. It is most disappointing that marks gained under other headings should be lost on account of poor litter control and also under Tidiness (below). It must be emphasised that no litter was seen in the National Park in spite of there being several hundred visitors passing through that day.

Tidiness:

Weed growth has been mentioned above in relation to paths at Connemara West - it is a relatively minor matter and would only take an hour or two to deal with every month. A neglected site was seen next to the school entrance, and weedy entrances were seen on the Tully Cross road. A small example of the kind of untidiness which catches the eye in an unfavourable way in a small village was a Pizzeria sign propped against a wall - this suggests the kind of honky-tonk tourism which one thought had been eradicated some years ago. Be sure that advertising on approach roads for B & B and other services has planning permission. The most unpleasant area seen anywhere this year was at the steps leading from Youthreach to the Church.

Residential Areas:

There were several very pleasantly presented homes in the village and on approach roads. Suburban-style houses on the road to the church were well looked after, with good garden frontages. The thatched cottages on the Leenane road looked charming. The terrace of attractively painted houses with dormers - possibly taking their inspiration from the old hotel as it used to be - fitted into the streetscape very well; nearby, a development of cottages at Heather Hill was discreet, with good planting - though weedy patches were also seen here. Neither of these attractive developments were indicated on your map.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

New stone walls were favourably noted, adding to Letterfrack's stock of traditional stonework. Road surfaces were reasonably good, except for the road leading to the church. The open car park at the Education Centre would be much improved if enclosed by a low boundary wall such as the one

opposite. Some signposts were seen pointing in the wrong direction.

General Impression:

The neighbourhood is breathtaking beautiful and therefore the passing impression must be that the village is beautiful too. Unfortunately, at a closer look, there are many discrepancies, but none are of the kind that can not be treated and dispensed with, with a little additional care. Your principal aim in the coming year should be to deal with areas of untidiness, for it is the attention to such details that will add up to excellence. There was no shortage of excellence in the larger and grander projects.