

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Riverstown**

Ref: **250**

County: **Sligo**

Mark: **234**

Category: **B**

Date: **08/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	41	40
The Built Environment	40	34	33
Landscaping	40	35	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	22
Litter Control	40	29	30
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	24	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	26	25
General Impression	10	8	7
TOTAL MARK	300	234	229

Overall Developmental Approach:

It was a good experience for your adjudicator to walk your beautiful village on a fine June morning. Thank you for your detailed report on your 2005 Tidy Towns activities - that was most useful. The time has now come to move your Action Plan on to cover the period 2006-2010. I am sure that you find that a planned approach to your work is most useful. The fact that you have excellent support from your community is self evident. Riverstown has a great feeling of mutual self support and a wish to co-operate together for the common good.

The Built Environment:

The Sligo Folk Park is perhaps the key development or set of buildings in your village. It has a beautiful location on the banks of the stream, and the project is beautifully presented. The historic sites map and the other information panels throughout the village brings local history alive. Newly repaired walls were noted and you seem to have some new shop signs that look well. The two stone bridges are fine features and you have made good progress in landscaping these areas.

The Catholic Church building is a little drab and would be improved by the addition of some colour. Perhaps a window box on the window cill at each side of the door and at each side of the steps would add that needed colour. The Diamond Viewing entry area creates expectations that are not delivered when you get to the viewing area. A plaque is required here to tell visitors what they are looking at.

You have done some work on your few derelict buildings but further work is necessary. Repainting of the temporary 'doors' and 'windows' is required.

Have you considered providing an integrated set of signs that direct visitors to the various points of interest in the village. These should be small, perhaps in cast iron, painted matt black with gold or white lettering.

Landscaping:

A very high standard of landscaping has been achieved in Riverstown. The landscaping at the Folk Park is very colourful. On your approach roads the smaller landscaped areas are equally colourful. The small area at the road bridge by the Ross Road needs attention. The cut grass here has not been removed and it gives quite an untidy appearance. Opposite the Folk Park the landscaping here is of a high order. The Chapel Gardens was quite disappointing. The entrance gates need to be repaired and painted and quite a large quantity of litter was noted here. In summary this garden gave the impression of having been forgotten in some way. It needs your priority attention.

Do not over do the provision of hanging baskets and window boxes. Any additional provision of these displays may well be counter productive.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You have provided bird boxes and bird hides and this is important. In many towns and villages this is an aspect of the Tidy Towns Competition where there can be significant potential for development. All towns and villages have the presence of wildlife to some degree. It is important that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine further the wildlife potential, and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly.

If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat Survey carried out of the wildlife in your area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following –

- Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
- Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds, lakes, canals, reed marsh, bogs
- Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
- Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The Survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to your area

This need not be an expensive Survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable person in one of your Schools who might undertake this task for you. Basically the Survey would identify the animals, plants, birds, fish that inhabit your area and their associated habitats. It should be remembered that to carry out the Survey properly that it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different time of the year.

Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be do draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats in your area, and investigate the possibility of new ones. For example perhaps there is an old Pond in your area that is disused, but with a little work could be an important area for wildfowl.

It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many Schools there is probably a teacher who may have an interest in this area who would be willing to get involved.

Litter Control:

Litter control in the centre of Riverstown was really excellent. However what a disappointment to see so much litter in different areas outside the core village area. Litter was noted at the playground, the Chapel Garden (very bad), at the Recycling Centre, on Ross road, and on the main road just before the Ross road junction. Control of litter outside the core of the village must be a future priority.

Tidiness:

Do remove all cut grass on the day that it is cut. A number of road boundary walls were noted that need to be repainted. Remember that road boundary walls will need to be repainted much more frequently than the main property. The area with the commercial vehicles on the approach to the village looked to be quite untidy and if possible this area should be screened from public view. A vacant site was noted beside McDermotts.

Residential Areas:

Practically all individual houses were freshly painted and well presented with a high degree of commitment to landscaping. This adds a great sense of colour to the village, apart from demonstrating individual pride. The housing estates were also well presented and again landscaping was in evidence.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Great work has been done on approach roads and many walls have been repaired. All approach roads were impressive, especially the roads in from Ballygawley, Heapstown and Collooney. On the approach road from Castlebaldwin some verge damage probably due to heavy vehicles was noted. In summary your approach roads reflect the excellent work carried out by all involved.

General Impression:

Congratulations on your progress to date and your marks awarded for 2005 reflect continuing progress.
Well done and congratulations to all individuals and agencies involved.

Second Round Adjudication:

Riverstown is an attractive village with much to offer residents and visitors; the Folk Park is a wonderful heritage amenity feature with educational status also; it has been considered for the National Heritage Award in the competition. The village enjoyed an excellent presentation at the time of our second visit however there were some (ephemeral) lapses; litter control was a little weak with Take Away litter, newspaper, and what appeared to be 'napkin' litter noted at a number of locations: there has not been a loss of marks on this occasion but this situation must not be allowed to carry over into next year, especially with the expected population increase for the village. The stone enclosure to the recycling point was admired as was the wild flower meadow in full bloom noted on an approach road. Landscaping throughout the village is maturing well however the new stone flower beds within the playground were over-run with weed growth, what a pity! Consideration should be given to the landscaping of the grassed area at the church to add some much needed colour here. A few gable walls of properties together with the boundary wall of the national school are in need of improvement.