

# Tidy Towns Competition 2005

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Portroe**

Ref: **253**

County: **Tipperary North**

Mark: **237**

Category: **B**

Date: **08/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	35	34
The Built Environment	40	34	33
Landscaping	40	36	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	20	20
Litter Control	40	33	32
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	23	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	31
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>233</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The proposals by Portroe Tidy Towns Group to endeavour promote the Irish language as much as possible is indeed highly commendable. You seem to have a high level of both practical and financial support from North Tipperary County Council, the local farming community and the GAA. It is a village with a most interesting history and your explanation of this was most informative. Your Three Year Plan seems quite practical and achievable. Your work encouraging the involvement of the local children is highly laudable. As mentioned by last year's adjudicator, the group is not afraid to tackle contentious issues, as witnessed by your work in relation to the retention of the stone wall and trees to the site beside the school.

### The Built Environment:

The community centre was quite fresh but, as mentioned in last year's report, the sign was looking a little neglected. The charming sign to the Post Office was admired but this area looked somewhat neglected as it was last year. The charming stone church with its low stone wall and wrought iron lamp standards to the front of the car park area was greatly admired. The national school looked extremely well with nicely maintained grounds although the coping to its boundary wall will need painting before next year's competition. The Health Centre was very fresh as was the Garda Station but by the fascia behind the gutter of the latter should be painted before next year.

## **Landscaping:**

This is an aspect of the competition that you obviously enjoy. The attractive monument of the sundial reflects the village's unique heritage of the slate quarry. The new amenity area opposite the community hall with its gravel, silver - birch trees and picnic table and benches was greatly admired. The rectangular timber trough planters throughout the village were well planted and colourful. The open space to the Ardara Estate was well maintained, although a patch appeared to be somewhat rougher in appearance than the rest - is this intended to become a wildflower meadow?

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

Bird tables were noted at the Ardara Estate and to a house with very colourful floral display in the village centre. It was disappointing to note that you had left this section of the application form blank. There are many possibilities for developing this aspect of the competition. Consult your Tidy Towns Handbook for ideas for projects that can be implemented. Get the local school children involved and set some projects for them in conjunction with the local school teachers. Possibilities that spring to mind are the sowing of a wild flower garden or the building bird table. You mentioned problems that you have with grass cuttings. Have you considered composting it? This compost could then be used in any planting schemes you have within the village.

## **Litter Control:**

The standard of litter control on the day was very good with only a single outbreak of torn papers being evident at the village centre to the roadside gutter / drain. Bins were generally clean and appeared to have been recently emptied.

## **Tidiness:**

Weeds to a boundary wall of a house on the Garrykennedy Road created a bad impression. The edges of grass verges had been sprayed and the dead grass not removed, this looked unfortunate and is a practice that should be discouraged. There are a few empty sites - such as that at the crossroads behind the monument and on the Drom Slinn Estate. The adjudicator was not sure whether this was intended to be an open space for the existing houses or a site intended for more housing! At the moment it looks quite neglected. The Old National School could do with painting before next year's competition. The bottle banks were well maintained. The adjudicator was disappointed to hear your problems regarding these. Would it be possible to screen them at the sides leaving the top and the front areas clear - would this solve the problem as regards collections? Do ensure that you do not neglect side walls and gables when considering overall presentation.

## **Residential Areas:**

There were one or two boundary walls within the village and along approach roads that were in need of some attention. The brightly whitewashed cottage at the Garrykennedy crossroads was greatly admired. There are a number of attractive houses on the Ballina Road. A number of houses on the main street were somewhat inconsistent in their presentation and contrasted with the good presentation of the majority of the houses along the main streets. There is a large amount of new housing being constructed in the village. The adjudicator was glad to see that you are keeping a sharp eye on developments and managed to establish the retention of a stone boundary wall in the case of one of the estates. In terms of existing housing estates, this adjudicator is in agreement with last year's report, in that the Drom Slinne Estate has not matured yet and, therefore, is not at the same standard as that of Ardara. Of note in this estate was the house to the roadside with nasturtiums and the magnificent one without boundary walls but with very colourful garden in the centre of the estate.

## **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Along the Nenagh Road, the well cut grass verges and maturing trees created a good impression.

However, the Garrykennedy Road was not as well maintained. In terms of signage, directional signs at the crossroads to Garrykennedy and also from Ardara housing estate appeared quite grubby. Items of street furniture were well maintained, such as benches and the freshly painted village pump. Along the Ballina Road, the grassy verges, village pump, stone seat and montbretia were greatly admired.

### **General Impression:**

Portroe is an attractive centre whose residents obviously a great pride and care in their villages appearance and ongoing development. Good luck with your future work and keep up the pressure!

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

The 2nd round adjudicator would like to commend your approach to encouraging the use of the Irish language. The main approach roads were very neatly presented on 2nd round adjudication day. However on the Newtown approach some longer grass was noted at the road edge of the verge, and this area should be cut when the main verge is being cut. The Bottle Bank continues to be well maintained and litter free. At the slate feature in the centre of the village a sign for well drilling was noted behind the feature and this should be removed. At the Community Hall a very untidy area was noted to the side of the building inside the low concrete wall. The adjudicator drove the 'Garrykennedy Golden Mile' as it was mentioned on your map, though no reference could be found in the documentation. Some work had been done around the area of the Pump and some work on verges but there was nothing especially 'golden' about this poorly surfaced narrow road.

Litter was noted on the right hand green verge area on the approach from Newtown, and on the verge opposite the garage. Another instance of litter was noted on the Killaloe approach road.

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.

As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof and vandal proof display panels, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland.