

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Donard**

Ref: **372**

County: **Wicklow**

Mark: **225**

Category: **A**

Date: **09/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	43	43
The Built Environment	40	26	26
Landscaping	40	36	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	21	21
Litter Control	40	32	32
Tidiness	20	17	17
Residential Areas	30	16	15
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	28
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	225	224

Overall Developmental Approach:

The plan, photographs and information supplied with the entry form were very helpful at adjudication time. This gave a very good understanding of the village life and the aims of retaining the natural features of the area and at the same time making progress and developing the village. The stonewalls and mature trees form important characteristics of the village and need to be nurtured in whatever development plan is made. The work with local authorities and organisations is welcome and the 12-person membership is a strong force within the village.

The Built Environment:

The small numbers of business premises are well presented and are well painted and cheerful. The school is particularly well presented with fine paintwork and general appearance. The two landmark churches – the Church of Ireland with the lovely stone structure is a gem. The Catholic Church will require painting at some stage. The credit union building looks well. The number of derelict buildings through the village is unfortunate and hopefully in future times there may be regeneration of these as so much building is taking place around towns and villages perhaps if these were rebuilt they could have a renewed life. The treatment of the derelict buildings is clever and the best that can be done is done with them. Stonewalls form an important fabric of the village and all work to restore or keep these in good order is welcome. The Health centre walls need attention to painting

Landscaping:

There are several small landscape features through the village centre, which help to give a very cheerful appearance. The school grounds are particularly attractive with a lot of perennial plants used. The area by the old graveyard looks very well and the roses along the wall at that area are appealing. Individual gardens contribute greatly to the appearance of the village and good credit is due for this. New tree planting is always important in order to have continuity from one generation to the next. Containerised plants provide a nice touch of summer colour to the village. The spring bulb planting is a very good idea and the village must look well in springtime when these are in flower.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The school projects are admirable – it is very important to involve school children so that they develop an interest and appreciation of the natural environment. The work at the back of the school with the children is a great idea. Nesting boxes placed in positions is a welcome gesture towards bird life observation. The stone crop, tiny ferns and ivy leafed toadflax growing on walls in several places adds a nice natural touch.

Litter Control:

There is good litter control in the village the Saturday action is working. Continual vigilance is needed for litter control – campaigns, reminders and hopefully each person will take responsibility for their own home, garden and road frontage and so keep the village very clean. Some litter was noted in the village centre, at the cemetery and the new housing estate. The bins being open on top seem to cause litter to blow about.

Tidiness:

The efforts made with the derelict buildings alleviate the untidy appearance somewhat that these display. Continued pressurising to have these buildings removed or regenerated is important. A timber fence near the housing estate requires some attention to its structure. Graffiti on the Ball alley is a pity. The current building in progress in the village centre is causing a little disruption at the moment. Having the overhead cables removed would be helpful

Residential Areas:

The small numbers of residences along the main village area are well cared for and have a unique character. Attention to boundary walls is very important. The housing estate is fine but there is some room for improvement in the presentation of some houses and gardens. Individual gardens along the approach roads contribute well to the roadside appearance of those roads. A watchful eye should be kept on planning applications to ensure they comply with the nature of the village

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Road surfaces on approach roads are reasonably good with very natural verges and hedgerows. Within the village there are a number of damaged areas of road surface particularly near the roadside edges. Village nameplates are attractive. Gaps in the continuity of footpaths through the village present a difficulty –when approaching from the housing estate.

General Impression:

Donard is a very quiet village with a unique character and fascinating history. Making the best of conditions – derelict houses for instance, is part of the challenge of the village and progress to date is very pleasing

Second Round Adjudication:

The 1st round adjudicator quite correctly identified derelict buildings as one of the challenges that the Donard Tidy Towns Committee faces in the future. On the day of 2nd round adjudication there appeared to be an uneven approach to how these derelict buildings are handled. However there is a way in which perhaps you can make a feature of these buildings pending their removal or restoration. Try and get the owners to agree that they will blank out the window and door openings with heavy waterproof Marine plywood. This should then be painted matt black, and window bars and door panels painted in white. This approach as a temporary measure can look quite effective. This has been done in a few instances but a coordinated approach will be more effective. The School was superbly presented and new footpaths were being laid directly opposite on the day of the second visit. Watch out for weed growth where kerb-stones meet the road as noted on the Hollywood road approach. A little litter was noted in the village and graffiti and the entrance to the handball alley.