

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Coolaney**

Ref: **273**

County: **Sligo**

Mark: **243**

Category: **A**

Date: **10/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40	39
The Built Environment	40	32	31
Landscaping	40	34	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	23	23
Litter Control	40	35	34
Tidiness	20	15	16
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32	32
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	243	240

Overall Developmental Approach:

It was a most pleasant experience to visit Coolaney on a fine June day for adjudication purposes. The adjudicator would like to thank you for the most comprehensive documentation received with your Entry Form. All of this was most useful on adjudication day.

The potential investment of €250,000 by the County Council is great news. However it is important that you plan for the future by preparing your Tidy Towns Action Plan and the time frame of 2006 to 2008 is recommended. Do make sure that your community has a very strong input into the projects that are to be funded by the above finance.

Like many villages in Ireland Coolaney is under strong pressure from the development of the many houses now under way. They should add to the character of the community and not detract from it.

The Built Environment:

The Main Street is very impressive and the trees down the centre are maturing nicely. Have you considered providing additional trees on each side? Many properties have been freshly painted and look really well. The terrace of houses is a fine traditional feature of the village. A few properties require urgent painting and the property at the Telephone Box is one of these. However hopefully site will be redeveloped or the property painted in time for the 2006 Tidy Towns competition. At the entrance to the recycling centre there is a low narrow wall that needs to be painted.

Projecting advertising signs were noted in a number of back lanes in the town centre and this needs attention. The issue is how many of these signs are really essential from a commercial point of view?

A few derelict buildings were noted that detract from the overall appearance of the built environment of your village. 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 in white. This approach as a temporary measure can look quite effective.

Landscaping:

The landscaping in the village is of a very high standard and the circular fountain is an unusual but welcome feature. The majority of the properties in the village have used flower or window boxes to great effect, but do not over do this aspect of landscaping. The landscaped village signs on the approach roads are in need of a little attention.

The Millennium Park is a great feature for your community however some improvements are necessary to the presentation of this area. For example the paths in the Park are becoming overgrown with grass and weeds. On the access road to the Park from the centre of the village the bank on the left has been roughly cut. You should remove the nettles and long grass on the right hand side but do leave the beautiful thistles and other wild flowers. The river walk is beautiful area.

The sports field area was rather overgrown and looked a little abandoned.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The river is great starting point for your work on wildlife. 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 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.

Litter Control:

Litter control in the village was really excellent but some litter was noted in the Millennium Park. Well done to such a vigilant community and well trained younger people.

Tidiness:

Projecting advertising signs were noted in a number of back lanes in the town centre and this needs attention. The issue is how many of these signs are really essential from a commercial point of view? The abandoned car at the recycling centre should be removed by the owner and the other apparently abandoned materials here should be removed.

Residential Areas:

Private houses were really well presented and the degree of landscaping involved in most of them was quite impressive. In general housing estates are also well presented and Cluaine Aine has excellent examples of both private and public landscaping. At Sliabh Gamph weeds need to be removed from kerbing and the grass at the open space needs to be cut back from the top of kerb stones.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach from Sligo was quite disappointing. Here the verges have been very badly damaged by heavy vehicles. Have you discussed whether road kerbing should be provided here. The adjudicator's view is that such kerbing is a little out of place in such a rural area, but some measures are essential to protect the grass verges. The long grass at the low wall on the right needs to be removed. Verges on this approach do not appear to have been cut for some time. The Galway approach road was excellently presented with very eye catching lush green verges. A low stone wall here needs to be repaired. On the Rockfield approach road the area by the bridge was quite untidy - perhaps there are plans to widen the bridge?

General Impression:

It appears that the Coolaney community are facing two major challenges. These are (a) the major new housing developments under way and those that may follow in the future and (b) the expenditure by the Local Authority of the large funds propose din the most truly productive way for the community.

Well done to all involved in Tidy Towns!

Second Round Adjudication:

With a projected population increase of in excess of 350% for Coolaney the Tidy Towns Committee have many new challenges in the years ahead; it is good to note that the committee is already planning for the future amenity development of their lovely village to meet the needs of the expanded community in the form of a playground for small children; this could be taken a stage further by developing an adventure sports playground for older children.

Coolaney looked wonderful on the occasion of second adjudication; trees in the centre of the main street are maturing well as is landscaping throughout; water features were especially admired;

mature trees on the river walk must be at least 100 years old! the adjudicator was intrigued by the horse feature here! The Millennium Park should be sign-posted from the main street.

The receptacle for drinks cans at the recycling point was full hence the accumulation of bags of cans; perhaps an additional container is necessary as this appears to be the most common type of household waste; cardboard boxes were dumped here also. A blue litter bin is in need of