

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardara** Ref: **161**
County: **Donegal** Mark: **210**
Category: **C** Date(s): **13/06/2006**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2006 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 35 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 22 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 22 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 15 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 32 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 8 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 18 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 25 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 25 |
| General Impression | 10 | 8 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 210 |

Overall Development Approach:

The words most appropriate to the Ardara Tidy Towns Committee are 'resilience', 'fortitude' and 'determination'. A number of issues outside the control of the committee have prevented progress in some categories for some time, but this committee is doing the correct thing in making representations to the proper authorities and in encouraging developers along the right lines. It is good to read that there is a new Environment Committee, which which you are working. In spite of the difficulties the town is improving slowly every year, which may not be noticeable to those living in it but to the visitor from outside is very noticeable. Nonetheless, delays must be very frustrating, and your continuation is applauded. Your planning for the future is also commendable.

The Built Environment:

The main problem is the appearance of the handsome older core of the town while negotiations regarding planning permissions and building work are taking their time. The boarded up site in the town centre is especially hard on the eye. Take heart from the excellent presentation, as always, of the three churches; the handsome Roman Catholic in its pleasant grounds; the fine gates, boundary wall, graveyard and the Church of Ireland building itself; and the neat Methodist church with its well-kept hall. Among the business premises with distinguished shopfronts which were specially noted were Wee Joe's, O Breislean, the Corner House, Kelly's Pharmacy and the Ulster Bank. Several others might also be listed were it not for SOME mass-produced and fascias and an over-abundance of advertising signs. The Ardara Creameries building was in need of attention. The long building above Charlie Bennett Drive was seen to be in process of improvement.

Landscaping:

The layout of the Diamond is - as usual - impressive and most attractively planted, with shrubs now at a

mature stage. Landscaping at Ard Conail estate was admired, and especially the fine stone walls. The GAA grounds were particularly trim and well kept on the date of the visit. Flowerbeds on the main approaches add a sense of welcome.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is most encouraging that a tree survey is to be undertaken and it is to be hoped that it will result in recommendations for additional planting. As it is, some very farsighted person must have planted the line of conifers opposite the GAA which are now doing so well - originally a wind-break, perhaps? When building development at that end of the town has been completed, the Long Point nature walk will come into its own again. The 'living willow' at the school is most imaginative. Information boards illustrating the flora and fauna of the neighbourhood would be a welcome addition at the walks.

Litter Control:

Those who took part in your litter clean-ups are to be congratulated because there was considerably less disposable litter this year, and the litter wardens are obviously contributing. The message on your stickers is probably getting across too. The only place where litter was particularly noticeable was at Drimborn Walk.

Waste Minimisation:

This is a nominal mark in the first year of this new category - a category that will become increasingly important as time goes - and awarded because of your ongoing efforts to secure better bring banks and improved recycling as the facilities at the Glenties road are clearly inadequate. Do consult the Race Against Waste booklet which accompanied this year's TidyTowns entry form as it provides a lot of good suggestions for developing your ideas under this heading over the coming years.

Tidiness:

Advertising hoardings, unsightly poles and wires are responsible for a considerable measure of untidiness in Ardara. You have probably made commercial enterprises aware of this, and also the local Authority, which has already placed excellent lamp standards in the Diamond. The road down to the GAA and some of the premises on either side are in need of serious tidying-up - it is understood of course that where genuine building activity is in progress that parts of this area will have to wait.

Residential Areas:

While it is the case that the older houses give Ardara its particular charm, some of the new developments are very interesting. Charlie Bennett Drive is very neat indeed - when the extensive car park has been completed there should be ample space for tree planting between the houses and the car park. Drumbarron Park is promising. An unusually attractive terrace between Ard Conail and the river was seen, with variations in roofline and colours. No provision had been made, however, for pavement planting (trees and/or shrubs) and the solid boundary wall unbelievably screens the wonderful view from the ground floor windows! The boundary wall was already showing stain marks. Encourage housebuilders to include stone boundaries or wooden palings or hedges: discourage concrete. (There is an excellent example of wall building at an older house a short distance away.) Also use your influence to ensure that trees are planted in new estates before residents move in.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The surfacing of the Narin road was particularly good; others, with the exception of the road to the GAA, were reasonable, but road markings were seen to be inadequate. There is a very dangerous narrow corner at Pearse Road/Front Street which needs serious study by the local Authority's roads and traffic department. You should use your influence also to ensure that exits/entrances from the large new car park do not cause traffic problems.

General Impression:

Reasonably good progress has been achieved, slowly but surely. The added weight of the new Environment Committee should help. It may be an outworn phrase, but it is sincerely intended: Keep up the good work!