

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castlefinn** Ref: **538**
County: **Donegal** Mark: **259**
Category: **B** Date(s): **18/06/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	43
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	16
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	259

Overall Development Approach:

An excellent Five Year Development Plan was received. If you manage to put in place all the projects proposed in it you will do exceptionally well over the following years. Some may not work out as rapidly as expected; others will surprise by their ease and some are already in train. Your schematic map was very useful indeed. It is three or four years since this adjudicator visited Castlefinn and the improvements made over that time were immediately visible.

The Built Environment:

The Diamond is the centrepiece of the village and almost all the buildings are now back to their original condition and vacant sites have been decently filled; there is a real sense of the planned urban enclosure of former years. Buildings such as Gallagher's (which has a fine shop front) would look more in keeping with an additional storey, or even two, to complement the symmetry of the original space. The RC Church, as always, looked very happy in its superior garden. The Congregational Church with its splendid copper beech was well kept. Donaghmore church, a distance out of the village and therefore not seeming to be a part of it, is an important landmark building and it is good to read that you have a restoration project for its adjoining hall. The frontage and yards of the Co-Op were well maintained - this is not always the case with large commercial premises and its contribution to the appearance of the village was very welcome. Murals nearby were admired. The small Garda station was well kept.

Landscaping:

Existing landscaping was well kept up. What always impresses is the extensive roadside planting and trim grassed spaces; shrubs were seen to be doing well. Both shrubs and lawns in the centre of the Diamond were neat and well nurtured. The approach to the RC church, and especially the roses nearer to the building, looked superb in mid-June.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It would be good to see greater progress under this heading. You are right, however, to wait until you have undertaken a proper assessment of the Finn valley as part of more universally subscribed scheme. (In the context of tourism, this adjudicator has always wondered why boating is not a more active pastime on this comparatively safe river.) Have you considered using the bed of the old railway-line as a nature walk? - probably you have, as it is such an obvious resource. The wild life reserve on the old entrance to the village from Lifford must surely be fulfilling its secluded purpose very well. Good wooden fencing was seen here.

Litter Control:

There seemed to be an improvement on the report by last year's adjudicator; a higher mark than the one given was anticipated, but then an appreciable amount of disposable litter was seen in the street leading from the Diamond to beside the Garda station, probably an unusual outbreak. Your clean-ups are undoubtedly helpful.

Waste Minimisation:

This is an above average mark in this new category - a category which will assume a greater importance as time goes on. The art competition must have created an understating. You are fortunate to be near the recycling facilities in Stranorlar.

Tidiness:

An unsightly vacant space on the main road and also a vacant building nearby were seen. There was also an untidy corner on the left by the bridge (on the same side as the church), and another on the hill near what looks like a factory at Hill Head. Weed disposal was not entirely effective along the main road. These are mainly minor matters, but they do catch the eye and create what is probably an unfairly poor impression.

Residential Areas:

The older houses, which form the core of the village, are what gives Castletinn its unique charm. Of the newer housing, a neat little estate was visited off the Diamond (and indeed becoming an essential corner of the Diamond) which is especially promising. It is hoped that trees will be planted and that the ugly block wall will be faced in stone; good wooden fencing was seen and a pleasant bank which should eventually be topped by shrubs. Another very sedate development of yellowish houses was seen where there was no variation even in the colours of the doors and there were a few trees that seemed to be only a token: more should be added. Derg View was bright and Hill Head rather dull in colour but individual homes were seen to be well kept. Some gables needed painting at Emmet Park and dead grass clippings were prevalent - only a temporary untidiness, but it is essential to remove any kind of debris in any location immediately after cutting. Grahamsisland was notable for its very pleasant individual gardens.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

It is to be hoped that the elegant lighting standards and other street furnishing will be extended from the Diamond and that further undergrounding will take place as envisaged in your plan. Surfacing of the principal roads is mainly good, and also footpaths in the main streets and estates. The car park at the RC church was very well presented. It would be an advantage to have pedestrian-controlled traffic-lights near the school and Garda station.

General Impression:

You are well on the way to an exceptionally tidy village that will be equally pleasant for residents and visitors, provided you adhere to the proposals in your current planning. Every good wish for the enterprise.