

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dromiskin** Ref: **492**
County: **Louth** Mark: **224**
Category: **B** Date(s): **04/06/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	41
The Built Environment	50	27
Landscaping	50	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15
Litter Control	50	33
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	224

Overall Development Approach:

It is more than a decade since this adjudicator wrote a report on the earliest entry of Dromiskin in the Tidy Towns Competition: since then there has been an extraordinary improvement in the quality of the village, probably more apparent to the outsider than to the resident. The passing years have also brought their particular problems, but your committee seems to be surmounting these with real flourish. Your Action Plan is first rate, setting real and attainable goals. It is good to read that the village was adopted under the Louth Leader Plan, and that you are represented on the Green School committee. When supplying your map, please mark all sites which should be seen; it is unlikely that we will miss any important locations but one wants to be sure.

The Built Environment:

The ancient remains naturally attract the eye immediately; it is good to see that the area around them is kept tidy and that they are presented with dignity; the information boards are attractive and extremely interesting. The almost unique profile of the RC Church next catches the eye – travellers on the train to Belfast will be aware that a similar architectural style was employed further up the line. Ginnity's and Herity's fine premises compliment each other across the street. It may be heretical to raise the matter – and it is not even a suggestion – but this adjudicator feels that a somewhat similar building in scale on the vacant corner would create a genuine feeling of the traditional village cross-roads; it would not have to be a shop but could be a neat apartment building; probably the general opinion is that the field should be retained, but there should still be plenty of space on either side of a new building for landscaping or recreation; let us hope that what appears will not be yet another suburban 'estate'. The bright and amusing Irish House with its charming adjacent green was admired

Landscaping:

The Irish House green with its surrounding beds referred to above, as well as the green triangle opposite the school, the planting by the cross-roads, the fine garden-type precinct of the Church and other patches of grass and colour all combine to give an air of refinement to the village. The Biblical Garden is the most ambitious landscaping project; in concept it is impressive, though on the date of adjudication it was looking just a little dishevelled, as if awaiting some weeding and clipping and realignment of decorative stones – all of which probably came to it very shortly after. The Viking Ship is a splendid centrepiece in design and execution and its completion will be eagerly awaited next year when, if all goes well, it should garner additional marks.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It was noted from your entry form that the bird feeders are maintained and that in your provision of trees and shrubs you intend to provide those which will nurture wild life. Incidentally, one must remark here on the truly splendid mature coniferous and deciduous trees which make a magnificent backdrop to the village, especially notable around the school: someone must have been very far sighted a century or more ago. If the field opposite Centra is intended as a wild-life meadow, fair enough; but the presence of an ugly container and broken-down post and wire fences suggest otherwise. It is good to read that you will be taking advice from the Heritage Officer and it is hoped that your application to the Heritage Council will be successful.

Litter Control:

Your initiatives in the prevention of littering are obviously taking effect, for there was comparatively little litter on the date of the visit. Congratulations to the community, especially to the school children and to those who take part in the National Spring Clean.

Waste Minimisation:

It is encouraging to read that the school waste minimisation and recycling programme has reduced waste by about 50%. Well done to Centra for providing the Bring Bank.

Tidiness:

Verges were still untidy in some spots, and there a few nasty little 'corners' here and there, but more obvious was the kerbside weed on the long straight road to the north (not names on map). There is housing for most of the distance and it would take each householder no more than fifteen minutes a month to clear weeds from before their frontages. Dromiskin Service Station was quite unsightly with its abandoned pumps and broken wall. There was an unfortunate case of poisoning of the roadside verge at a house on the road to the east – this is not the best way to control weeds and the dead grass can look quite unsightly. The fencing of the field opposite Centra and the container has been referred to above.

Residential Areas:

There are many very pleasantly presented private homes throughout the village, many with fine front gardens. Perhaps pride of place should go to homes on the Castlebellingham road. Some of the suburban housing schemes seem to have been developed without much thought of co-ordination or of their relationship to each other, or of their relationship with the older core of the village – except (in the latter case) homes beside the tower and graveyard where a sense of village scale is respected. The Hamlet is well maintained with a fine grass space and attractive planting – some of the chimneyless houses resemble a head without ears! The suburbanisation of the straight road to the north seems to have taken place without cohesion, but this is not to say that individual homes are not very well looked after.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

New stone boundary walls, and repaired older ones, are becoming more and more the norm - this is a welcome feature of Dromiskin which could well be copied elsewhere. Some excellent paving was noted. Road surfaces were generally good to fair. Welcome signs were impressive. Not all streets and estates have name plaques.

General Impression:

There are three obvious headings under which action is required – to find a suitable purpose for the meadow at the village centre, the obviating of derelict sites and untidy 'corners', and kerbside weed-prevention as a responsibility of adjacent householders. The second two are largely matters of ordinary day-to-day 'village housekeeping', the first requires more consideration. It has been a real eyeopener to revisit Dromiskin after so many years and observe the fine work which has been achieved, and a pleasure to see the many improvements which have been made both in the overall and in the detail. Every good wish for your renewed success.

