

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Donaghmoyne** Ref: **268**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **198**
Category: **A** Date(s): **12/07/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	25
Landscaping	50	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	10
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	198

Overall Development Approach:

Donaghmoyne is celebrated outside the locality as the site of interesting ancient remains and, historically, as the one-time seat of the Diocese of Clogher, so it was with great interest that this adjudicator approached the village. This turned out to be a very pleasant experience, though, as the following will show, it was quite frustrating not to have the full amount of information requested on the entry form, where six categories of the competition were left blank. It was not possible, therefore, to learn the extent of activities and improvements undertaken under those headings during the past year. Participation in the the competition must surely be for social and community reasons, which are as good as any; and less so for the marking, for the awards, and for a place in the current hierarchy of Monaghan towns and villages - which is indeed a refreshing approach.

The Built Environment:

The inspirational circular church, set in its tranquil grounds with colourful shrubs, neat hedging and handsome trees, is the most striking building in the village. It was beautifully presented on the date of the visit. The design of the Community Hall, at the centre of the village, suggests that it is the former church; a dignified traditional building, it was also well presented. The School was clearly a credit to teachers and pupils. The handsome 1857 Post Office was in need of something to liven it up - the forecourt was a bit weedy and perhaps gravel or paving or some shrub planting - or a mixture of all of these - would give it that extra interest. It was good to see the characteristic mix of stone with brick facing in a number of places - such as gate pillars - throughout the village. The mark given is the same as last year's because this adjudicator had no way of knowing if any improvements have been made to the above.

Landscaping:

It seemed from observation that additional work had been accomplished on landscaping. Plenty fo well nurtured flowerbed and tubs were seen. The graveyard was very nicely kept. The two most significant areas of

landscaping were the surroundings of the church and a magnificent sweep of lawns, shrubs and bedding in a garden leading from the Castleblayney road up to a private house named Abhaile.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The area must be rich in habitats but you have not said what steps you - perhaps with the help of teachers and school pupils? - have taken to make them accessible in a sensitive way to the public. An easy first step would be to erect an illustrated sign board, as has been done in many other villages. Schoolchildren might make inventories of birds and animals seen, and draw pictures of them, etc. Some portions of the hedging opposite the Post Office were in need of replacement.

Litter Control:

Very little disposable litter was seen in Donaghmoynne and its surrounding area on the date of the visit. Congratulations to those who took part in the monthly clean-up.

Waste Minimisation:

This is an average mark in the first year of this new category - a category which will assume greater importance as the years pass. A bring bank was not seen: you should approach your local Council in order to have such a facility provided. Study of the appropriate booklet will give guidance, and your mark should increase next year commensurate with the action taken.

Tidiness:

There was a general air of neatness and tidiness, but small things needed attention - for example, it would take only a few minutes each month to remove weed growth (or not let weeds grow at all!) from the attractive pump area. However, two areas contributed to there not being a much higher increase in marks in this category: the derelict buildings near the church, and a remarkably unkempt site (next the excellently landscaped garden referred to above) where poisoning of weed growth has added to the unsightly scene.

Residential Areas:

Some very well kept houses and gardens were seen - among them the Parochial House - congratulations to their owners. It was interesting to see from your map that two plots have been rezoned for housing. Do use your influence so that traditional materials are used in design and construction to blend with the existing building stock, and it is equally important that derelict houses be replaced rather than continue to cause visual squalour and health hazard.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Road surfacing was excellent throughout the village. Paving and parking bays were of high quality. What public signage as existed was clean and clear, but directional signs were badly needed at the main intersection - eg to Carrickmacross, Keady or wherever. The name stones were most attractive.

General Impression:

This is a charming village with a very pleasant air about it. It is understood that your greatest concern is not for marks and awards, yet by attending to three things - the provision of greater information on the entry form, the interpretation of local wildlife, and the reduction of derelict or ugly sites, your marking could be considerably increased, for whatever you think it's worth. Best wishes in your fine work.