

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Drum** Ref: **608**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **202**
Category: **A** Date(s): **30/06/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	30
The Built Environment	50	23
Landscaping	50	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	31
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	12
Residential Areas	40	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	26
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	202

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your helpful documentation and pictures. Drum is doing particularly well on wild life and natural amenities, landscaping and also litter control; but not well on buildings. Your approach to the work is very positive. It was interesting to see how much of the presentation harks back to former times - the farm implements, the plaques and the sites of former buildings. In the new marking system introduced this year you should emerge further up the ladder in the county than heretofore. Congratulations.

The Built Environment:

The small rise in marks is in respect of some improvements that were favourably noted, including the painting of the boundary wall at the Church of Ireland church and the re-roofing of the Protestant Hall. Otherwise, there is a huge way to go. Thirteen derelict or vacant houses were seen in and around the village, which must be a record of some kind and which it is fully understood is a serious concern to the Development Association; this will be considered under Residential areas (below). The Anderson building is of a very fine vernacular design and should be a priority for preservation if at all possible. The churches all looked well, especially the picturesque Church of Ireland church with its landmark tower. Curiously, it is now the turn of the Presbyterian church to need its boundary wall freshened up with paint, and the same applies to the Gospel Hall. This adjudicator was greatly interested in the John Derrell plaque on the 1884 Protestant Hall.

Landscaping:

The generous landscaping in the centre of the village, especially near the Post Office, displays much thought and effort. A small piece of landscaping at the old school on the Clones road would have looked better if weed growth had been removed from the kerbs. Small areas of planting such as on the corner of the Stradone road added visual interest. The display of farm implements was most engaging. The numerous floral tubs, troughs and baskets seen at the end of June added welcome points of colour. The selection of plants placed in front of

the former Manse was seen to be judicious.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your tree-planting programme is applauded. (Trees are considered under this heading, but also affect other categories such as landscaping; you are fortunate in having such a fine stock of old trees as well.) The nature watching area by the lake is the physical manifestation of all the other work which you do throughout the year in this category, also borne out by the photographs of bird species enclosed, and by the interpretative sign near the water treatment plant. The ducks' raft residence is a wonderful initiative. It is good to read of your initiatives regarding bird - and bat - life, and to see the pictures of how much hedgerow flowers are appreciated. The visiting cormorant was most unusual and it is very heartening to read that you were hosts to Canada Geese during the winter - indeed, this may be seen as another link between Monaghan and the Canadian hinterland! The project for a Bog Garden is imaginative and appropriate to the neighbourhood - there was a splendid Bog Garden at Annaghmakerrig up to the middle of the 20th century but it has totally vanished. (This is a notoriously difficult category to judge because not everything can be seen, so please continue to supply the excellent written information.)

Litter Control:

Litter control was very good on the date of the visit. It is good to read that schoolchildren are involved in the community effort and that you have regular clean-ups.

Waste Minimisation:

The information supplied in your documentation has resulted in an above average mark in the first year of this new category - a category that will assume greater importance as time goes on.

Tidiness:

This unfortunately ties in with the dereliction problem. Apart from this, grass clippings, hay and weeds should be removed immediately after mowing of verges and roadsides. Weeds were seen at the water treatment plant and at the delightful lakeside amenity, and especially under the container truck which surely should not be parked in that of all places. Kerbside weed has already been mentioned on the Clones road. Natural hedges are welcome outside the village but one expects a better standard of hedge-cutting after the nesting season throughout the village itself. Discourage corrugated iron as a roofing material - when rusted it looks very untidy indeed.

Residential Areas:

Individual homes looked very well indeed, among them Rose Cottage. A very fine two-storey five-bay traditional farmhouse was seen on the Clones road - just a pity that PVC has been preferred to wood in the glazing bars. It is the traditional terrace houses and cottages of the village that provide Drum's real residential flavour and seen at a distance most of the profiles and roof-lines remain; but closer to the extent of the vacant and ruined houses becomes apparent. It is very difficult to know what to do about this. In areas where there is a demand for housing some local authorities and developers have taken over old terraces and rebuilt them, where necessary adding infill-housing of matching design in the gaps. What has also been done successfully elsewhere is the disguising of vacant houses: you might look at how this has been achieved to good effect in Rockcorry; but of course it is only a temporary solution. The display of flowers and creepers at The Manse is also only a temporary solution. The fact is that as long as this problem remains, Drum can not expect to achieve a mark in this category comparable to its marks under the other headings, and dereliction also adversely affects some of the other categories. An imaginative sustainable scheme, presumably with funding from elsewhere, needs to be found; and this adjudicator is certain that the Development Association is doing everything possible to find a solution.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Road surfaces were very good at the time of the visit in the village area, with good paving and kerbs, excellent seating and first class lamp standards. Fine wooden fences were favourably noted. It would be good if the Drum village sign were to be given lettering in Ulster Scots and Irish as well as English.

General Impression:

Your comparatively high mark for general impression is due in the main to the landscaping, the wild-life effort and the good roads and roadside furnishings. A very positive note is sounded in your documents in spite of the difficulties mentioned, and it has been a real pleasure to see the good work.

