

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Inis Meain** Ref: **967**
County: **Galway** Mark: **256**
Category: **A** Date(s): **20/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	35
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	22
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	256

Overall Development Approach:

Inis Meain was entered into the National Tidy Towns competition by Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann as part of an overall initiative to assess the current environmental standard of the islands for residents and visitors alike. And as a Tidy Towns entrant each island is entitled to compete for the Islands Award funded by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht affairs. It is intended to follow up this assessment with more special initiatives designed to benefit the beautiful islands of Ireland. A number of islands already directly enter the competition and supply adjudicators with information on community involvement and plans for the future. As this is a key feature of Tidy Towns, the adjudicator has awarded the marks for such involvement evident on the day of adjudication only. However your island would gain even more marks under this category by directly entering the competition next year. It is especially hoped that Inis Meain consider re-engagement with Tidy Towns. It was a very successful entrant for many years and under this initiative participation could bring greater rewards over the longer term.

The Built Environment:

There is a huge diversity to be found within the buildings of Inis Meain, old and new. The public buildings such as the Post Office, halla, colaiste and the premises of Comharchumann Inis Meain Teo were all pleasant and in good condition. The church is very neat but similarly to the national school, the grounds are quite bare. The telephone exchange was being rethatched at time of visit and is a splendid little building

The commercial premises are largely very pleasant. An Dun Siopa agus Bialann is of modern style but very inviting. The wool factory/museum did not have any signs or information for visitors. Restaurant Tigh Conghaile is modern but looks very pleasant with flowers outside and outdoor seating area. Teach Osta Inis Meain is a really lovely building with a great shop front. Ostan Inis Meain Teo would benefit from some work

on its exterior as well as attending to some of the clutter nearby. The recycling centre adjacent to the hotel was also a little untidy. Synge's cottage looks lovely but was closed at time of visit.

The forts of Dun Fearbhai and Dun Chonchuir are truly spectacular and very much worth the visit. Other older buildings visited were equally pleasing such as Cill Cheannannach and the Clochan. Probably the oldest part of the built environment visited was an Leaba Dhiarmada is Ghrainne. This last however, was slightly spoiled by dumping nearby.

Landscaping:

There is little evidence of landscaping in the public and common areas of the island. However, the natural landscape is very much apparent in almost every aspect of the island. The limestone pavement is remarkable on Inis Meain and this has been well-preserved overall and the natural flora allowed to thrive.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

A visit to Inis Meain is a an absolute delight for those interested in wild plants. Almost everywhere there is soil, there is a display of pyramidal orchids. In fact, the smallest of field will yield a specimen that might be rare if not simply eye-catching. There are too many splendid areas of wildflowers to list but of these the most memorable are the masses of yellow-rattle, eyebright and harebells at Dun Chonchuir and at the new graveyard. Thyme broomrape and sea campion were also spotted, just growing by the roadside!

The beach at Tra Leitreach is rocky but was very much being enjoyed by students on the day! The walk along the cliffs on the north-western side of th island was highly enjoyable.

Litter Control:

No litter was seen throughout the island with the exception of an area very close to An Leaba Dhiarmada is Ghrainne. Unfortunately, this was fly-tipping of household waste and appeared to have been taking place for some time.

Waste Minimisation:

There are two recycling centres on Inis Meain. The centre at Baile an Teampaill was in very good condition and was well used. The other at the Ostan looks somewhat neglected. No information on waste reduction or minimisation was noted. Perhaps these could be produced or better displayed.

Tidiness:

Almost no clutter was seen on the island on day of visit. In some places around the island, materials such as tar barrels were used to fill gaps in walls. The Ce Overall, the adjudicator was struck by the neatness of the island. Several signs such as that at Dun Chonchuir are broken and should be replaced.

Residential Areas:

Baile an Lisin and Baile an Teampaill are very neat and well-kept. Moinin na Roige is a town of both old and new but is very neat. Baile an Duna is quite charming. Baile na Seogheach is also very neat. A number of well-kept gardens were noted at Cinn an Bhaile. The standard of presentation of both houses and gardens throughout the island was generally very high.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Given that the centres of population are close together and the density thus quite high, the various roads and streets are remarkably close and orderly. The place name signage was very nice but directional signage could be better. The old green and white OPW signs are lovely and this style should be maintained. The waymarked Inis Meain Way is well indicated. Any visitor will be struck by the symmetry and neatness of the countless walls of the island which were much admired by the adjudicator returning cross-country from Cathaoir Synge.

General Impression:

Inis Meain is an island with much to recommend it in terms of built and natural environments. There is an amazing amount of history to discover and botany to enjoy. However, much of this will only be discovered by the visitor by chance or if she has a handy copy of the Inis Meain Way (which this adjudicator only found by chance in the Post Office). This last publication and the Cuairt ar Oileain Arann are very cheap and should be more publicised and readily available. An information board (or two) with a clear map of the area should be in place. Several of the broken signs should be replaced.

With the exception of the unfortunate but serious dumping at An Leaba Dhiarmada is Ghrainne, the island is remarkably neat and tidy. Inis Meain will be a serious contender in this competition in years to come. Well done to all.