

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Letterfrack** Ref: **201**
County: **Galway** Mark: **222**
Category: **A** Date(s): **16/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	33
The Built Environment	50	29
Landscaping	50	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	29
Litter Control	50	26
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	10
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	22
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	222

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for filling out the application form and giving details of work done and future work planned. It was this adjudicator's first visit to Letterfrack and we would have welcomed a sketch map labelling buildings and locations of work carried out. You communicate with your community via word of mouth. How about considering preparing a quarterly flyer (similar to the one you enclosed with your application in relation to the village plan) outlining the activities of the committee and how local residents can get involved? A notes section to your local newspaper or placing a poster in the Shop may also help target more residents. Your application states that you have commissioned the services of a planning consultant in relation to formulating a development plan for the village, well done. Hopefully next year the plan will be included with your application and we will see the envisaged way forward for the village into the future.

The Built Environment:

The furniture college has a prominent location within the village; ongoing development works are underway in the grounds. Buildings that were noted to look well include; Pangur Ban restaurant, Veldons and the Letterfrack Educational Centre. This adjudicator thought the contrast between the crisp white painted walls of the Educational Centre and purple pansies in colour-coordinated blue flower boxes on the windowsills was striking, highlighting how appropriate planting can enhance the appearance of a building. The new supermarket looks well and is exceptionally well stocked. The Arus Ghuaire apartment block is nearing completion; this adjudicator thought it looked a bit overpowering and oversized on entering the village from the Leenane direction. The Church and surrounds are well kept and new steps and handrail are in place. We note the planned building of the sheltered housing scheme and the new crèche facility. We urge you to ensure that these buildings blend in well with the surrounding environs. We noted that the construction of the sports field was underway during our visit.

Landscaping:

The main thoroughfare is looking very attractive with chestnut trees lining one side. Care to detail has been undertaken with a well kept garden and interesting sculpture beside Veldons. Furthermore we have to note Veldons' innovation by screening their beer kegs with attractive wooden hoarding; this is a simple yet effective step that other public houses in the village may like to follow. The verges containing dead grass and weed to the front and the left of the Supermarket detracts from its overall appearance and should be landscaped.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

As you rightly recognise you are blessed to have the Connemara National Park on your doorstep, therefore, more than most centres you have the potential to increase your marks in this section. It is encouraging to see how you are integrating village life with the local environment by holding the Easter Sunday Dawn Mass on the Sruthán Bui Trail in the National Park. There was a good display of wildlife and bird song to be heard during my stroll around the Industrial School Graveyard, however we thought the back gates could benefit from freshening up with a covering of paint to set them off against the nice sign. A large notice along the main thoroughfare informed us that we were too late for Bog Week that finished on the 4th June! Your Bog Week flyer indicates the involvement of the local school children. May be for next year you could encourage the children to get involved with the Tidy Towns competition by preparing a brief write up to inform us more about the event?

Litter Control:

A litter problem was not apparent during our adjudication and it was good to see that cigarette butts were being swept up outside a number of pubs. Since the smoking ban came into force cigarette butts have become a litter problem in many towns and villages. It is encouraging to see that publicans in Letterfrack are not resting on their laurels.

Waste Minimisation:

Waste Minimisation is a new section of the competition that was introduced in 2006. You mention the proposed sewage treatment plan under this section in your application; unfortunately waste treatment this does not fall under the concepts of preventing and minimising waste. It may be helpful for you to consult the guidance document produced by the Department entitled "How to win the Race against Waste in your Community" to allow you to gain more marks in this section next year. The Waste Awareness Officer of Galway County Council may also be a good starting point. Consider engaging with the local schools and businesses, how about holding a waste awareness day or adopting the local Bring Bank? The Bring Banks are located within the ground of the college. It was thought that they had recently been relocated. No fly tipping or abuse was noted however it is thought that they could be better presented. No green flag was present at the school and was not mentioned in your application.

Tidiness:

Your application form states that once the crèche is complete the majority of electricity cables will be underground leaving only one that you are planning to get under-grounded also, this will be welcomed. We feel that the Bards Den sign could do with a touch up of paint and the car park improved. Furthermore the Garda station looked rather dilapidated and could do with weeding. There was a derelict building across the road from the Letterfrack Lodge. Beer kegs are visible from the main thoroughfare therefore we suggest you urge publicans to attractively screen these if they cannot be relocated.

Residential Areas:

Houses behind the college are looking very well and appear to be recently painted. Other attractive properties deserving praise are Keelkyle Cottate and Letterfrack Lodge. As mentioned last year you have the potential to recruit more volunteers from the residents of one-off housing on the approach roads.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Roads are generally poor and as you note are narrow and not suitable for large volumes of tour buses/coaches etc, your development plan may address this. There is a substantial difference in the condition of the roads in the village and that of the National Park.

General Impression:

Substantial development is underway in the village and proposals for more developments such as the Sports Centre, Community Centre, sheltered housing, and new playground are in the pipeline. We urge you to continue progressing with the Village Development Plan and encourage consultation from as many residents, businesses and organisations as possible. For next year we would be grateful if you could please bear in mind that the more information supplied with your application the easier it is for the adjudicators to award marks.

You have raised your marks this year due to your efforts in particular relating to wildlife and natural amenities, litter and your work done relating to your proposed new development plan – well done to all involved! We look forward with anticipation to reading your development plan next year.