

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Coney Island** Ref: **1232**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **234**
Category: **A** Date(s): **10/08/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	26
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	22
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	234

Overall Development Approach:

Coney Island was entered into the National Tidy Towns competition by Comhhdáil 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.

The Built Environment:

The first building you meet coming from the causeway is the ruin of a big house and those of the outbuildings, now part of a working farm. However, the main centre of human habitation on Coney island is the village less than half a kilometre from the causeway. There is no church or shop on the island but there is a pub (Michael Ward's). The first and lasting impression of the village is that it is extremely well cared-for and that the appearance of Coney island is important to those that live and holiday here. There are a number of ruins but there are also several renovated houses as well as some newly-built cottages. There is a working farm in the middle of the village. The school has been in ruins for some years.

Landscaping:

Although the inhabited area of the island is quite small, there is much evidence of recent and older work. This includes tree and shrub planting, verge and hedgerow trimming, painting of walls and maintaining an old hand-pump.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The first sign that greets the visitor to Coney is a Birdwatch Ireland notice so you might expect to see some great birdlife. Unfortunately, dull weather and a tight timetable (so as not to meet the wrong tide) allowed for little birdwatching. There were lots of wild plants in evidence though, the roadsides were lush with nettles, chickweed, scarlet pimpernel and vetch. Overhung by a variety of trees including sycamore and ash, there were plenty of thick hedgerows of bramble and fuschia. Bright blue speedwells and forget-me-nots contrasted with ragwort which was occasional. Some of the not-so-easily-seen burrows near the pier are reminders of how the island got its name.

There are two beaches on Coney. The beach on the landward side is the one favoured by the locals while the other is frequented more by daytrippers for whom the Tra sign is helpful. Both beaches are great assets. The strand is also extremely rich in bird and invertebrate life. More time to study both of these at ease would have been nice. While the farmland here is certainly less dramatic than more rugged islands, it is this kind of low-intensity farmland that is of much benefit to many bird species.

Litter Control:

There was almost no litter to be seen anywhere on the island on day of visit. Some was found close to the 'visitors' beach and indeed looked like daytrippers' leftovers. A litter bin in this area might help.

Waste Minimisation:

There as little evidence of recycling, waste transfer or storage facilities on the island. Therefore a nominal mark has been awarded only, although the potential exists to make real progress under this category.

Tidiness:

There was just about no clutter of any sort to be seen. It is obvious that some effort goes into maintaining this area. Evidence of some burning, although these were mostly well-checked campfires was seen at the southern beach.

Residential Areas:

With the exception of two houses closer to the centre of the island, all of the residences are within the village. This area is bright and clean and well-kept. Some mobile homes have been converted into more permanent accommodation but even these fit in extremely well.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Although the roadsides are lovely with wild plants throughout much of the island, road quality is poor away from the village and these roads rapidly turn into rutted tracks. This should not dissuade the walker or cyclist for whom this island would be a real pleasure, assuming that they read the tide table correctly.

General Impression:

There is a genuine impression of pride on Coney Island. This seems to be existent among the holidaymakers as well as residents. It was a real pleasure to visit Coney which, although small, provides a useful example of many of the aspects that the Tidy Towns competition wishes to encourage.