

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Easkey** Ref: **788**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **205**
Category: **A** Date(s): **01/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	32
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15
Litter Control	50	20
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	13
Residential Areas	40	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	29
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	205

Overall Development Approach:

Many thanks for your completed entry form, which was most useful on the day. As mentioned by last year's adjudicator, more information on the application form regarding your work would have been helpful, especially in the absence of a map or work programme! A work programme need only be a few pages long, outlining your plans for the village and setting a time frame against their achievement. You could use the comments contained in this and previous years' reports as a starting point. The committee seems a little small at four. You would appear to have a good working relationship with Sligo County Council, RSS, FAS and West Sligo Forum. You mention that you communicate with the local schools via newsletter. Some committees find that forming a strong relationship with schools can be helpful to them in their work, especially in two of the categories that you have left blank on your entry form - wildlife and waste management.

The Built Environment:

The buildings of the town generally looked good in terms of their presentation on the day. Some of the commercial shopfronts looked very well, of note being MacGabhainn's, the Pottery Studio, the Fisherman's Weir and Easkey House. The use of the Irish language in shopfronts is highly commendable. The newly completed Community Centre was tucked away off Main Street and we look forward to the landscaping proposed in this location. Colaiste Iascaigh will need painting before next year's competition and its gates were rather rusty. Its unusual mosaic was admired. The Catholic Church was fine but additional landscaping to its forecourt would be appreciated, as would the National School. St Anne's Church of Ireland was also admired. The Post Office was good, as was the family resource centre and Garda Station. Do ensure that you don't lose all your traditional vernacular street houses - it was noted that one had been sold why "development potential" – there is a sad state of affairs apparent throughout the country at the moment where good traditional buildings are being lost to development!

Landscaping:

It was felt that there was scope for more development of this category of the competition in areas such as mentioned previously at the schools and Catholic Church. The car park area on the Main Street looked very well with its stone walling, planting and grotto. A similar standard in other areas of the village would look very impressive. We note your comments in relation to the season in your area being late but this is an issue in many areas of the country and the village should look good year round and not just in the flowering summer season. The construction of a disabled access point and amenity footpath to the river is an excellent idea - enhancement in this area is looked forward to. Roslea graveyard was admired. The sculpture at the centre of the village was quite charming. The riverside park area looked well apart from the litter problem at the entrance by the Post Office. The old graveyard behind the whitewashed walls in the village centre was admired.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This is a category that you left blank on your application which is unfortunate. The village obviously is in a strong position in regards to this category of the competition due to its unique location beside the Easkey River and the Atlantic Ocean! Many centres find that conducting a wildlife survey, in conjunction with local schools and experts can be useful in relation to furthering their work in this category. This can be followed up by a wildlife management plan. Other ideas that have been successful are: creating a wildlife garden; a wildflower meadow or erecting wildlife information boards. It was suggested by last year's judge that the riverside park area become a wildlife observation area - have you looked at this option?

Litter Control:

On first impressions, litter control on the day was quite good, with a minor outbreak evident along the Innishcrone Road. A lot of litter, however, was evident at the entrance to the Riverside Park beside the Post Office. Some dumping of plastic bags appeared to have taken place at the bridge. A light scattering of litter was also evident along the main street.

Waste Minimisation:

This is another section of the application form that was left blank. As well as the appearance and use of the bottle bank area, it relates to how you manage waste in your work. Do you segregate waste collected on clean ups? Do you compost green waste from your landscaping projects? It also concerns how you communicate the available options in relation to waste management issues to the local community - schools, households and businesses. Do the schools participate in the Green Schools initiative? If so, they may be of some help to you in this regard. Do contact the Environmental Officer in Sligo County Council in relation to promoting this category of the competition. The enhancement of the Bottle Banks with picket fencing is looked forward to - some dumping, unfortunately, was evident in this location.

Tidiness:

The village generally had a neat appearance. There were a few problem areas regarding neglected outbuildings and tin roofs along approach roads - one on the Innishcrone Road looked unfortunate. The old abandoned (hotel?) building on the Sligo approach looked sad and neglected. Weed control was a problem on this road also, and at Riverbank development. A few derelict cottages were noted on the Innishcrone Road, which some whitewash would greatly improve.

Residential Areas:

This section was also left blank on your application. The standard in this category was somewhat inconsistent on the day. It would be helpful if we knew how many houses in the village are holiday homes and whether this is an issue. Archer Cottages looked in need of some maintenance to their open space area. New houses were under construction opposite and hopefully the stone wall will be reinstated in this location. Cottages further along this road would have benefited from further landscaping. Some boundary walls on the Sligo Road were stained with red algae. The house with the fanlight on the Sligo Road was greatly admired. An attractive cottage was noted on the Innishcrone Road where their planting extended to the roadside.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The standard of approach roads was a little inconsistent in appearance on the day. New lamp standards were noted at the car park area on the Main Street and leading to the Catholic Church. We note your plans for increased stone walling and this is commendable. Montbretia on the Sligo approach must look marvellous when in full bloom but weeds were apparent at kerbsides. In terms of signage the "slow through the village" sign was a little patchy. The Innishcrone Road affords the visitor a marvellous sea view. In terms of street furniture, the rusty benches in the car park should be attended to before next year.

General Impression:

Easkey is a village which has immense potential to do well in the competition. It is a matter of putting together a straightforward strategy for improvement, and carrying through.