

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Inis Mor** Ref: **1173**
County: **Galway** Mark: **211**
Category: **B** Date(s): **27/06/2007**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2007 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 25 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 25 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 26 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 26 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 25 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 6 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 20 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 25 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 27 |
| General Impression | 10 | 6 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 211 |

Overall Development Approach:

Inis Mor was entered into the National TidyTowns 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 TidyTowns 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 noted that Inis Mor used to enter and did so most recently between 2001 and 2003. It is sincerely hoped that this new initiative will encourage re-engagement with TidyTowns over a more sustained period.

The Built Environment:

The Oifig Failte at Kilonan is excellent for information and the staff were very helpful. The building very nice and not too imposing. Supermacs does not fit in well with the rest of the island streetscape. Siopa Carraig Dom is a garish purple. Aran sweater market is very modern but does fit in well. An tSeán Ceibh Restaurant has a very nice seated area, although the plastic chairs could be 'upgraded'. It does have a nice shop front. The 'new' celtic cross looks great at the crossroads. The Bayview Hotel is functional but not pretty. The dropped black iron lampposts are nice.

Ti Joe Mac's is very traditional and sure enough looks genuine on the inside too. The seated area out front is excellent in the sunshine. There is lots of space and you can see all the way to Galway from here. The RNLI buildings are immaculate. It's arguable that some weeding needs to be done.

The interpretation centre at Dun Aonghasa is very well done. It's great (for once) to see so much bike-parking space and hardly any for cars. Here, the courtyard, café and shops are all well laid out and very pleasant.

The Teach na Ceibhe Pub / Café / B&B has a lovely shopfront. The Comhlacht Leicteonach building is rather unattractive. The Dun Aengus Hostel could be lovely if it was to be renovated. It's a little of an eyesore at the moment.

Many of the derelict houses nearest the road could be worked upon to improve their impact.

The National School looks fairly recently built and nicely finished with stone. It generally looks nice.

The bank (Banc na hEireann) looks very good. Is this the smallest in Ireland? The post office looks very nice and bright as part of a very attractive row of buildings.

The airfield, like all the Aran airfields, has little impact on the landscape and hardly draws the eye at all.

Landscaping:

There is little decorative planting on the island but it could well be argued that in the midst of such natural displays that this is unnecessary.

However, there are several features which have been added which are worthy of note. The monument at Kileany is very nice and well looked after. The town/townland signs are very nicely made and placed.

The Leachtai Cuimhne, stone monuments to the dead, are fantastic. These are quite eerie in a way but are a real feature.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The limestone pavement is really amazing and the visitor could wander for hours on this and look for plants. The amount of flowering plants is really staggering and there are abundant ferns such as wall-rue and sea spleenwort in the grykes. There is bloody cranesbill everywhere and makes the whole island very vibrant. Honeysuckle and hart's-tongue fern were also abundant. Away from the roads and towards the sea there are masses of thrift. My visit didn't allow enough time for a proper exploration of the coast and cliffs of the island but this will be looked forward to.

Litter Control:

Unfortunately, quite a bit of litter was noted on day of visit. Most of this was roadside litter and some was not so recent. Some larger items, such a fridge were found dumped by the roadside near Kilmurvey.

Waste Minimisation:

There is a recycling centre near Halla Ronain which looked well used but was a little littered on day of visit. Several of the islanders I spoke with were aware of the waste problems facing the island and Ireland generally and discussed the pay per bag and commercial waste collection systems. Also, tea and coffee at several of the outlets observed were served in real cups and no polystyrene containers were seen. However, there were no notices on waste management (in either language) or any encouraging visitors to take waste home with them away from the island.

Tidiness:

Although the overall impression of the island was a high level of tidiness, there were several areas where this was not so. This includes roadside litter at Kilmurvey and Creggacareen as well as abandoned cars.

Residential Areas:

Bun Gabhla is a collection of a dozen or so houses. These are well kept but not much gardening was noted. There is a great view (on a sunny day) over the Brannock Islands and the lighthouse on Rock Island looks great.

Creggacareen was found to be a little untidy. This was due to roadside littering and derelict houses.

Eoghanacht looked very nice. The wild plants by the roadsides are amazing. There are stunning views to mainland. Na Seacht dTeampaill is lovely, if you don't mind the lack of interpretation.

The beach at Kilmurvey is lovely in every way. However, the road to Oatquarter starts to get messy with derelict houses and items dumped. Oatquarter is neater but there is very little gardening done here. On the road to Ballynacragga there are many historical sites that are unsigned. It may be debated whether this is a good thing or not. There is quite a bit of litter on the roadsides here which, judging from the brands on the discarded packaging, seem to be Irish in origin... Roadside plants are stunning. You don't have to know them to be impressed.

The church at Ballynacragga is immaculate and the view is just amazing. The village itself is off the main road and although there is a mix of styles (and roofing materials) it looks quite nice. The ruined church is also nice to look at.

Killeany has a very neat and tidy appearance. There are no buildings over one storey. Hardly any litter but almost no commercial activity going on here. Ti Fitz has a very bright gable mural but looks well. This appears to be a village that is built around another. The windy little roads make this very pleasant. The pier and area around looks well-kept though very much in use.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Overall, the roads of Inis Mor are a pleasure to travel. The main road that runs the length of the island takes you through the many villages and brings you into contact with many aspects of the island's landscape and history. Roadside litter and derelict houses do detract from this experience. The standard of maintenance of gardens and other back areas was generally good but again, there are areas for improvement.

General Impression:

There is a real bustle around Inis Mor, fuelled by hundreds of visitors and the services provided for them. It is great that the vast majority of traveling on this island is done by bicycle and foot.

It seems that the island copes well with the volume of visitors but some attention should be paid to the impacts of litter and fly-tipping on the island.

There is far too much to see on Inis Mor in one day. It is a truly fantastic destination but would benefit from a heritage or archeological trail such as the Clew Bay Archeological Trail. Better way markers are also needed. The distance markers are nice but are not so useful. There is a real sense of history but on this very vibrant island.