

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Union Hall** Ref: **645**
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **266**
Category: **A** Date(s): **24/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	38
Landscaping	50	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	19
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	266

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to the Union Hall Tidy Towns Committee for participating in the Tidy Towns Competition 2009. Thank you for your submission and for your map. Highlighting the places that are of immediate importance to your committee in 2009 is a great help to the adjudicator and leads one in the right directions. Regular meeting must help to keep your enthusiasm for the various projects on hand. It would be interesting to hear what format your engagement with the Cork County Council takes. You are fortunate that Centra house the County Council bin for you. It is good that you are involved with the school and that you are assisting with the landscaping there. Getting the pupils involved in your anti litter projects and with waste minimisation is very important in forming attitudes. Now that the face of Union Hall is changing for the foreseeable future this could be a good time to reappraise you aims, your activities. It could be a good time to compile a 3-5 Year Plan. The exercise of compiling such a plan would enable you to set immediate and medium term targets for yourselves, would help you decide which local bodies and agencies would assist you with your various projects. As all projects need funding you would set down in your plan how you propose to fund these various projects. It may sound daunting but the Plan would provide a blue print for your activities over the next few years.

The Built Environment:

Your programme of work for the year and for the immediate future illustrates the pride that your committee has in Union Hall. The Church, its grounds and environs, the grotto are beautifully presented. Bedding plants in the car park are eye catching. The school and its grounds proclaim 'an samhradh'. The island of water at Carrigeen is a major element in the charm of this village. Not only does it take some of the traffic-pressure off the overwhelmed main street but the crescent shape of the buildings around the Carrigeen creates the individual charm of Union Hall. As in so many other villages Union Hall experiences change in the status of many of its village centre buildings. Some are unoccupied. But in general a great effort is made to present all

buildings well, as with the green doors on the stone building on main street. Another building to enhance the built environment of Union Hall is the Myross Rowing Club stone building. The stately pillars, walls and gate across the way bestow a manor appearance on this side of the village. The junction area is vibrant with colour, painted and floral, as at Dinty's, Nolan's and Casey's. The building that houses the coffee shop contributes to the character of Union Hall. Mount St Mary's is a mystery to the adjudicator and the front is in need of attention. The old cinema/dancehall must have pleasant memories for many. Its appearance would also improve if the door were painted. The younger people are being well catered for with the fine playground, the recreation area, tennis courts, basketball. Where a pump has been preserved it needs to be looked after. The entrance to the Church of Ireland is poor and uninviting.

Landscaping:

The landscaping of Union Hall has been an ongoing process for many years. This year's contribution lends lots of vibrant colour to surroundings. Opportunities to enhance an area are taken up as on the way from the pier. It is a pity that the view is impeded. Be careful that maintenance is not neglected on older shrubberies. The landscaping at the bend from Pollgorm is full of summer joy. The more mature shrubbery merges gently into the surrounding wilderness but the front of this area needs to be maintained. Where mowing is being done it needs to be carried out on a regular basis. The stepped landscaping at the white house deserves special mention. All over town hanging baskets and window boxes bring vibrancy to their surroundings and are well worth the effort. There is potentially a lovely bed at the back of the rowing club but it needs some attention.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Delighted to read that the school will join Bird Watch Ireland. Last year's report suggested that a survey of the wildlife of Union Hall being carried out. This would be a worthwhile project. This would identify important features of the local wildlife and would suggest actions that could be taken to enhance habitats and raise awareness of biodiversity in the community.

Litter Control:

The measures you are taking are proving to be successful for you. There is very little litter to be seen. Your engagement with the school is most important. Well done on participating in the Cork County Council anti-litter campaign. It is great to find a litter bin in the vicinity of a recreational seat. The emphasis in the litter section is not just on collecting and organising clean-ups. These are important but creating awareness of litter reduction is equally important.

Waste Minimisation:

The list of projects undertaken is most impressive. The adjudicator could not but smile at the use made of the plastic bottles. Segregation of waste and the collection of batteries are most important projects. Remember that the emphasis in this section is not on what how a community deals with its waste but on minimising that waste in your community.

Tidiness:

'Keep Union Hall tidy' sets the tone for all passing through. Hopefully the street sweep does not become a 'cut-back' as the street has a tidy appearance at present. There is a need for vigilance regarding weeds at the bottom of walls and at kerbs. Grassy islands that are mowed need to be mowed regularly or they look unkempt. Also keep an eye out for dirty signs. Traffic is a problem on the mainstreet. So often cars must park on the footpath to facilitate a free flow.

Residential Areas:

Union Hall is marked by having many splendid houses, from various eras, all creating a fabulous picture with colour, design, maintenance and many of them with ornate colourful gardens. Examples are Ardagh and Seascope Bed and Breakfast and houses on Skibbereen Road. Where there are no name stones or identification of estates, make it a project to provide them. Their name signs help create an identity in an estate and may assist with creating competition between estates in landscaping and maintenance. It is important for the adjudicator to be able to name the estate. Páirc na Fána is a case in point, great landscaping at the entrance, an interesting varied approach to the landscaping, attractive lighting and traffic calming and parking is catered for. In another case the open space must be mowed.

Some of the pictures of the older housing are so colourful and bright. There is a beautiful blend of colour between the older housing and the newer modern terrace at the pier.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Welcome signs and the landscaping that goes with them connect with the visitor and ease one into town. From Pollgorm the road margins are allowed grow wild and this is in keeping with the wilderness all about. But once the verges are being mowed this needs to be done on a regular basis. The views of the village from Pollgorm and from the pier approach are wonderful. Fine walls give a definition to the area.

General Impression:

Life in Union Hall is about to change with the arrival of the residents of the new estates. While one could be concerned that the native population might seem threatened one sees how these estates for the most part enhance the appearance of the village already and the dwellers will begin to contribute to community life. Your submission mentions the dumping of landfill in the village. The death of the Celtic Tiger may solve that problem. You mention the material thrown up by the tide. The new dwellers brought in by the Celtic Tiger tide may help you with the clean-up. Finally a visit to Union Hall is not complete without viewing your picturesque village from Pollgorm and then watching the village shape change as one winds towards Union Hall.