

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castlefinn** Ref: **538**
County: **Donegal** Mark: **275**
Category: **B** Date(s): **21/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	43
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	17
Litter Control	50	37
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	19
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	275

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your entry into this year's TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your very complete and helpful entry and plan. Thank you for the map. You have good numbers on your committee and it is clear that you communicate well within your community. You have also secured funding from a range of bodies which speaks well of your level of organisation. It is good that you find the competition useful and it is clear that you work toward this event throughout the year.

The Built Environment:

The HSE building is well kept. There is good use of colours on McBride's Pub. McGinley's looks very good. Dereliction is a problem. Some towns have tackled this and conducted a project whereby contact is made with owners and with permission, interim 're-decoration' is undertaken which can conceal dereliction and improve the overall look of the streets where empty buildings are common. A community collection for unwanted paints is often held and this allows the project to be cost effective and has the added benefit of using up unwanted (and often hazardous) materials. Many towns have been most creative with this. You could contact another TidyTowns group for advice or ideas with this.

The empty lot beside the Topaz station does not look good. The old Methodist church on the Castlederg Road is lovely. What will become of the old RC church? The new RC church looks good and the grounds are well kept.

Landscaping:

The planted at the CPI (business centre) is very good. The Ogham alphabet trail is excellent. The playground was very nice and busy at time of visit! The landscaping at Milburn Park is lovely. There is very nice planting

opposite McBride's at the crossroads. The Topaz/Centra could be better. Hanging baskets are used to great effect in several areas. There is also good use of tubs for planting. The planting at the Diamond is the epitome of the care that is lavished on your town's centre. Well done. The tower monument looks great.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Well done on the use of native species for roadside or landscape planting. The Finn River is a wonderful resource. During the adjudicator's visit, trout, kingfishers and sand martins were seen on a very short walk! The bridge looks as though it has been re-rendered. There may not be much room left for bat roosts. Was a bat survey done before the bridge work?

There is a little Himalayan balsam growing on the banks and this should be treated before it spreads. It is recommended that you contact the National Parks and Wildlife Service Conservation Ranger for advice on this or any other works that may impact upon the river.

A female buzzard was seen above the village during the visit, always a nice sight!

Litter Control:

Litter does appear to be an issue in some parts. There was also evidence of dog owners not being as considerate as they might. However, it should be noted that there was absolutely no litter on the approach roads, a big effort must have been made on this. Well done.

Waste Minimisation:

The setting of your bottle banks is very nice but this facility has been treated poorly. Although the bins were not full, 'users' are dumping beside them. This included general and household waste. The facility becomes ineffective if this is allowed to occur.

Is it known how many of your community use composting for treatment of biodegradable waste? There may well be a site suitable for community composting. Do focus on minimisation of waste arising and work with businesses to reduce packaging.

Tidiness:

Most litterbins were seen to be clean on day of visit. The Diamond is wonderfully wire-free. The mural at Chapel Road is great. The graveyard of the old RC church was immaculate. The gable-end of McBride's could be made to look better.

Residential Areas:

This is an area in which your residents can be justifiably proud. The standard of presentation and upkeep of houses and gardens was almost uniformly good. The house beside the old Methodist church is just one example. Caislean Court was lovely. Milburn is really very good all round. Hill Heights could probably do with some more tree-planting.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

This is another area of strength. There is very good use of trees. Both of the approaches on the main road have well tended verges which gives the impression of lots of green space. They are also amazingly litter-free! The hanging baskets and mixture of tree species on the Lifford side is excellent and the choice of trees very good indeed. There are plenty of benches. Most businesses seem to have made great efforts to keep looking good. Do see if you can replace the block repair work on the stone wall between the two ash trees on the Castlederg Road. The name stone is very nice on the Lifford Road. This approach is great.

General Impression:

One of the most admired touches was the repeated use of the Castlefinn logo on the signs. This is very clever and the colours are very good. It is suggested that you concentrate on the sections of the competition that deal with waste management and wildlife. There are a range of projects that you could take on in both of these that would boost your progress. Your attention to detail and evidently hard work has stood your community in good stead in this competition and will doubtless continue to do so.