

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Downings** Ref: **1762**
County: **Donegal** Mark: **195**
Category: **B** Date(s): **23/06/2009**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2009 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 25 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 28 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 20 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 15 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 30 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 8 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 18 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 22 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 22 |
| General Impression | 10 | 7 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 195 |

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the TidyTowns competition for the first time! The adjudicator thanks you sincerely for your entry and wishes you every success in this new project. While this is a competition, it is designed to help all aspects of communities of all kinds and to improve the quality of life for all. Your entry form was very informative and well filled out. Remember that you are at liberty to use additional pages for further information. Please submit pictures, drawings or maps if it will help. It is recommended that your group make out a work-plan over a medium or long-term period. This can be over 3 or 5 years and it should be designed to allocate tasks to certain years, months and personnel as your resources allow and your work develops. Try not to be too ambitious with this and set realistic goals. You are strongly advised to seek help and advice from outside agencies. These can be statutory such as Donegal County Council, or voluntary like others of the many TidyTowns groups in the county. Many of these are setting an excellent standard and rather than feeling that you are far too far behind them, you are encouraged to learn from their expertise where possible. You may also submit your entry in Irish if you wish.

The Built Environment:

The entrance to Casey's caravan and camping park looks quite well but it could be made nicer with some plants, painted walls and gateposts. The Cuan na Long (B&B) is very nicely planted with large rose bushes. Aras Rosgoill is well-presented. The Post Office looks well. Downings bay Hotel looked fantastic on day of visit (a sunny evening). It is painted very well and the flowers looked great. The shop opposite is in good condition and very neat. There was no litter and the litterbins were emptied. The Beach Hotel looks very new and a little unfinished. However, the front is very attractively done and in nice colours. An Teach Thra Mor was To Let at time of visit. It is in a good location and hopefully could reopen before too long. The Anchor and sign here were well-painted and should be kept in good condition. The GAA building looks well and the mural with the logo and colours is good. The amusements/fast-food outlet looks poor and could be greatly

improved.

Landscaping:

The little park at the pier is really lovely and very well finished. The monuments look great and the planting here is first class. The planting at the entrance to the village on the Carraig Art road was admired. There is a bed opposite the entrance to the GAA field which could be improved. The planters and hanging baskets in the village were admired also.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your entry did not give any information in this section. However, this is an area where you can be very creative. It is suggested that you contact the local Conservation ranger of the National Parks and Wildlife Service for advice on this area. Possible projects could be: a baseline wildlife survey of your area and identification of existing habitat areas in the town. Creation of new habitat with butterfly or bird areas. Erection and maintenance of bird boxes. Lough Shore walks with a birdwatcher. Why not contact groups such as Birdwatch Ireland or the Irish Wildlife Trust for advice? You have a lovely beach and dunes. A project based on this might be good.

Litter Control:

Almost no litter was seen on day of visit. The beach was spotless. Well done, this is an area of strength for you. Points are awarded for how you tackle the litter issue. So, in future entries, be sure to tell the adjudicator about any initiatives you've undertaken or been involved with such as An Taisce's Spring Clean event, litter clean-up days, beach patrols or how you've raised awareness of the issue with residents or visitors.

Waste Minimisation:

The emphasis of this section of the project is the reduction and minimisation of waste, not so much on recycling. Your environmental awareness officer (Donegal County Council) will be able to advise you on this. Your near neighbours in an Carraig Airt might be able to help too. They have a community composting scheme in action and this is one of the many ways that a village can reduce the waste that arises. Again, you can be very creative in this category.

Tidiness:

There is good information on the boards opposite the Post Office but these boards do need cleaning. A few flowers here might be nice too! The toilets were open on day of visit and in very good condition too. The GAA grounds are well kept but some planting here would be good. The fast-food outlet trailer opposite the Post Office looks pretty poor. Is this disused? It certainly could be better parked or stored.

Residential Areas:

Radharc na Mara looks quite well but would benefit from some more planting. The greater majority of houses appeared to be holiday homes. Is this correct? Sometimes this can be problematic when such houses are disused or fall into disrepair and the owners are in absentia. Make and keep as much contact as you can with homeowners and users.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The pier was very neat and tidy. The yellow railings are nicely done. The approach from Carraig Airt is nice but there is room for improvement here. However, you have mentioned that you are working on this area. Some weed control might be needed in the main street.

General Impression:

This is a very nice little village in a great location. The adjudicator was lucky with the weather and saw Downings on a beautifully sunny day! There are some lovely premises and the beach is really great. You will no doubt come up against difficult situations in your work but you are asked to persevere and when in any doubt, seek advice. We hope that you will enjoy your work with the Tidy Towns project and that it will give your village many benefits. Good luck!