

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Croagh** Ref: **447**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **250**
Category: **A** Date(s): **29/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	37
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	32
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	250

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Croagh to the 2009 National TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your fully completed entry form and sketch map of your small village on behalf of Croagh Community Council. It is good to see that you have an active TidyTowns Committee, with 30 members and hold 8 meetings per year, in addition to 20 executive meetings. This is an excellent response from the community with a population of less than 200 people. The involvement of other volunteers from within the community is commendable, e.g. up to 60 people taking part in the annual clean-up. Your ongoing successes in obtaining support from West Limerick Resources, Limerick County Council, the American Ireland Fund and local businesses indicate good use of initiative. Your communications strategy, including the use of public meetings, local newspapers, posters, text messages, and personal calls, is all positive. Your engagement with the school through the Parents' Council and involvement in the Green Flag initiative formal launch is all very encouraging. The integration of Tidy Towns festivals, with annual Senior Citizens party and in celebrating Lá na gClub with the local GAA club and Camogie club, shows a good community spirit which benefits all segments of the community.

One suggestion might be the preparation of a three year action plan for 2010-2012 for Croagh TidyTowns. The plan would enable you to set targets, in addition to establishing Aims and Objectives of the Committee. The plan would also help you in discussions with other organisations and potential partners, and indeed the general public also. During the plan preparation, consultation with the community and County Council would enable you to maximise the content of the plan for the benefit of the local community, and indeed potentially acquire additional points for this category.

The Built Environment:

The Adare and District Nursing Home premises were well maintained, as was the aptly named Croke Park Public House, with displays of hanging baskets, window boxes and planted containers, as well as colourful flags for Munster Rugby, Ireland and County Colours also. The car parking area opposite the pub was nicely maintained, with three milk churns used as containers for summer planting. The Kaleidoscope Hair Gallery and the Medical Centre painted in bright green and cream were quite attractive. Other buildings to impress, include O'Donnell Newsagent, The Ramble Inn, Kate's Beauty Salon. The cream/light yellow and red painted thatched cottage, complete with colourful window boxes, on the Ballingarry Road was very impressive. The National School looks well painted in brown and grey. The school pre-fab painted grey is in good condition, and the grounds looked clean and tidy with some nice raised shrubbery beds in front of the school. The building opposite the school entitled Carnegie Free was excellently maintained, and just recently painted, in saffron and blue, with again nice half barrel of flowers outside. The Community Centre is nicely decorated in terracotta and blends with the Carnegie Library next door. The gate needed some attention. Ballycannon Lodge Guest Accommodation was a nice feature also.

The GAA complex, with its clubhouse built in 1995, and new Croagh/Kilfinny Community GAA Sports Complex from 2007 were looking very impressive and the buildings, painted white and blue were quite attractive. However, it would be nice if the walls beside the buildings could be painted to complete the overall presentation. It might also be no harm for those responsible to paint the speed bumps on the driveway to the complex.

The new School of Music building is a very attractive, unusually shaped structure and when the landscaping of its grounds has been completed, it will greatly enhance the village.

Landscaping:

The shrubbery at the entrance to the village at the Kerry side was nice.

Your work in the area of the Grotto, in pruning the trees and removal of shrubbery, has certainly paid dividends and the area was looking well. Throughout the village there were some very attractive planted tubs and hanging baskets, they particularly helped the appearance of the site opposite the Croke Park pub. As stated, the car parking area opposite the pub was nicely maintained, with three milk churns used as containers for summer planting.

There were eight well planted half barrels in front of the school and the adjoining church, which also looked very well. It is obvious that somebody has been working hard watering the containers. The entrance to the village from Adare also had some colourful planted half barrels

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It would be an advantage to have completed, by some local interested party or expert, a Wildlife Habitat Survey to examine the indigenous strengths of the area.

The Croagh Park area of the village is an oasis for restful leisure just off the busy N21, the main Limerick-Kerry Road. It is a hidden gem, previously not known to this adjudicator, even though I have passed by this road many times. The area includes the Grotto, the water feature, and the village park. The park is nicely landscaped, with clean gravel pathways and a number of well painted green park benches, with lovely display of hydrangea shrubs amongst others, as well as various nice rock features. There are some young trees including silver birch, oak, and ash. The grassed area is well maintained and, apart from three or four pieces of discarded litter, the area was generally tidy. A few litter bins might be no harm. The welcome entrance sign is a nice feature. The information stone on the history of Croagh is nearly lost in its present hidden location; the intention to move it outside, near the road would be a good one. The surrounding boundary stone walls are very impressive, and these lead nicely into the grotto and the water feature area. It is a pity however, not to see the water feature working. The steps down to the river are a nice feature, even though the river itself had a lot of weed growth. It would be a good idea, as suggested, to put some Information Panels around this area about the indigenous bird life and wildlife that is to be seen. Your plans, as previously stated by you last year, for a wildflower meadow should be a very interesting project for the future.

Litter Control:

The area around the village park was very tidy and litter free, as was the grotto area and water feature. One litter bin was seen in front of the Church. The regular weekly clean ups are to be commended and particularly, the special evening involving local children. Generally, there was very little litter in the village, however, there was a small amount in the Park area, near

some of the benches and on the grassed lawns. Your plans for the continuation of clean-up events and planned aesthetic signage to promote litter awareness are most commendable

Waste Minimisation:

The compost area of the Croagh Park was noted, well hidden in the town park, appropriate and clean. No recycling depot for Cans/Bottles and Clothes was seen in the village. As part of your involvement with local school, your new compost area, built as part of the Green Flag initiative, was noted.

Tidiness:

The Grotto area was looking very well, weeds had been attended to and there were no obvious signs of litter. The new fountain behind the Grotto looked well, but was not working at time of our visit. The park benches were well placed and indeed seemed to be in a good condition. The stone welcome signs in Irish and English were very attractive.

Well done in keeping the pressure on local businesses to get involved and it was good to note their sponsorship of planted tubs in various locations. The participation of the sporting groups seems to have worked, judging by the tidy appearance of the sports complex.

The Church and next door school building, and cabin in its grounds were all well maintained. We were pleased to see that the litter bin outside the church grounds was obviously being emptied regularly and was coping well with the litter.

Residential Areas:

Some lovely individual houses are seen in the area, both traditional and modern, and these all appear well maintained. The lovely traditional thatch cottage is an excellent feature and a lovely residence. The 11 new semi detached houses, opposite the church called Adamswood Avenue, are finished quite well, with nicely finished grounds. The new building which houses the Croagh School of Music, next to the Church, is a very impressive structure, and a great facility for the community of Croagh. The grounds are quite nice, and the hard surface parking is in a good condition. The D&M Restaurant and Garden Centre looked very well.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads from Adare, as you enter the village, are very welcoming, with two "Welcome/Fáilte" signs, one in Irish, one in English on either side of the road. With nicely built stone walls on both sides of the road, balanced with the nice grassed area on the left hand side, the entrance to the village is quite impressive. The stone walls continue past the Nursing Home, right the way into the village. There are 3 nice half barrels of lovely summer annuals of flowers in evidence on the road side.

The presence of overhead cables on the approach road is a distraction to the eye from the well maintained areas at the nursing home and other private residences. The removal of these overhead cables might be considered as a long-term target. The highlighting of the speed bumps on the road to the GAA complex by a brightly coloured coat of paint would assist .

General Impression:

Croagh village provided a welcome haven of peaceful retreat from the busy N21, main Limerick/Kerry road, and should be enjoyed by many. Congratulations on some excellent work being carried out by all concerned in Tidy Towns activities. I certainly enjoyed my first visit to Croagh and we wish you well, as you continue the good work.