

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Croom** Ref: **448**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **256**
Category: **C** Date(s): **19/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	34
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	18
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	256

Overall Development Approach:

We are pleased to welcome Croom back to the 2009 TidyTowns National Competition after a 4 year absence and we hope that you will find the experience rewarding. Thank you for your completed entry form. It is evident that the 12 member new sub-committee is part of a well thought out structure for TidyTowns activities. The strategy, as articulated in the entry form, is very comprehensive and your level of voluntary commitment is commendable. Your group has been very busy preparing the town for adjudication and holding monthly meetings, additional site meetings and contact with the various groups, and organisations in the town. Your enthusiasm has no doubt been instrumental in achieving the support of FAS, Limerick County Council, Ballyhoura Development Ltd, among others.

The work, as articulated in your entry form, already done by your Committee will be very valuable in the planning process, yet to be started later this year with the task of preparing a three to five year plan for Croom TidyTowns. Your communications strategy of using local newspapers, flyer drops to houses, posters on public notice boards, and use of local Limerick radio is excellent.

The audit of the community carried out by you on the street and residential infrastructure will also be positive as input to the plan preparation. Your engagement with the local schools, through participation in fundraising and support for the Green Flag initiatives, is worthwhile. Best of luck to you on your planned festivals for the remainder of 2009.

The Built Environment:

The Church grounds were clean and nicely maintained, as was the car park (apart from the recycling area,

where illegal dumping was evident). The entrance to Croom House, with its high stone wall was quite impressive, and the green area opposite Croom House in front of the Church Car Park was well kept, with nice cut grass. More nice green area at the other side of the church car park entrance was also well kept, with magnificent mature trees.

Impressive stone walls lead to the Church of Ireland, and onwards up to the Old Mill, which is now closed. The Old Mill area is a beautiful location, with the magnificent mill building overlooking the river Maigue. It is such a pity that this business is closed. The adjoining car park is clean and well maintained, even though trading is not taking place. The derelict Mill structure, opposite the renovated Old Mill, is a bit unsightly.

Buildings to impress include Táirne Uí hAilpín, Donnie Daffy Car Sales, Spar Supermarket, Croom Stores, Delaney's Gala, O'Donoghue's Pharmacy, Hickey's Pub, Jays & Kays Foodstore, Plunkett's Pharmacy and the Croom Family Resource Centre. Ulster Bank could do with a coat of paint, as indeed could some of the other commercial and private properties throughout the town.

The building with the name Mid Western Health Board Health Clinic, which appeared to be closed, was in bad need of a touch of paint. The laundrette was in a good condition.

The AIB Bank is located in a nice old building and is in generally good condition. On the outskirts of town, Croom Precision Tooling Ltd. complex looked clean and tidy, with a nice entrance and attractive, well maintained landscaping.

It is a pity to see the old railway station in poor repair, but what can one do!

Public Buildings, the Garda Station is in good condition, Croom Community Centre was generally in good order, the grass area could do with some cutting however.

The entrance to the Mid-Western Regional Orthopaedic Hospital was impressive with its tree lined avenue and well cut lawn opposite. What a pity the road surface is not of the same standard. The grassed area closer to the hospital was in need of maintenance, with some roadside weeds and litter visible on the ground. A lovely restful sylvan setting for an excellent hospital.

Croom GAA Pitch is found on the outskirts of the village. Renovations to the exterior boundary wall and front gate would make it much more presentable. As is the case with some towns of similar size and economic structure to Croom, there are some derelict sites, mainly commercial premises from a different age. Your committee has been active in communicating with the County Council in attempts to rectify the situation. The solution should be an active item in the action plan for 2010-2012.

Landscaping:

The two roundabouts, off the dual carriageway, are very well landscaped, with neat planting and gravel on both and one appearing to be "Sponsored by Murray's Furniture", as indicated by a sign on the roundabout.

Landscaping in front of Cois Sruthain was nice, as indeed was the area in front of Meadows Well. The whole area of Meadows Well is a magnificent asset, right in the heart of Croom. It's a treasure to be developed with care and attention to detail, it requires input from many sources as to the best possible use of this oasis. Well done on your work to date, both on the site for grass cutting and general tidy up, and off site in the planning process.

Nice hanging baskets with summer floral displays are to be seen on supports over the bridge. Some nice flower pots were noticed near the post office. There is a new road near Croom Hospital, relief road to School as per your map, complete with cycle paths and good quality footpaths that is closed off to traffic. This area could do with landscaping and some grass cutting to increase its tidiness.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The information panel entitled "Croom, 'An Ancient Land' ", is one of the Stories from Times Past series, and is found in a nice paved car park, with well painted black and amber bollards, and located in the heart of Croom.

The Meadows Well riverside walk offers wonderful opportunities for the encouragement of wildlife. The Park provided a little oasis of peace and, one can imagine, it is presented with neat paths, red bench seating, appropriate mixture of mature and young trees, attractive hanging baskets, flowerbeds and shrubberies. I look forward to the results of the research on Flora and Fauna, and the creation of the Information Panels to show the results. I applaud your attention to Water Safety issues relating to the closeness of the River Maigue,

which is a wonderful facility and amenity to have in the heart of town.

Litter Control:

The streets in the town were generally litter free, and there were numerous litter bins around the town. However, the recycle Bank area was most disappointing with much illegal dumping in evidence.

Waste Minimisation:

It is a terrible pity to see indiscriminate dumping of waste at the recycling facility in the Church grounds. This facility of 7 bottle/can bring banks and 1 clothing bank is an excellent initiative, and it is hoped CCTV cameras here can catch the culprits and prevent further dumping. The bottle banks themselves needed to be emptied, which is important to keep people positive about the act of recycling and prevent them from just abandoning bottles and waste. One of the negative effects of a badly maintained recycling depot is that it creates a poor image for the surrounding area, in this case the Church car park.

We congratulate your Schools on Green Flag initiatives and wish them further success. The programme involves a high level of commitment on behalf of the school children, teachers and management, so their endeavours should be appreciated.

Tidiness:

Some nice wire free lamp standards were seen in front of the post office, but it is recommended that as many as possible of the remaining overhead wires be removed and replaced underground. While it is accepted that this is a big undertaking, it could be incorporated in the 3-5 year plan you have commissioned.

It is a pity to see derelict houses on the Main Street, but again this is a difficult problem to overcome, and your letters to the County Council are a commendable approach to this problem. It is a pity to see the remains of one of the European Election Posters thrown on the ground.

Residential Areas:

The new development, just off the main road, called Cois Sruthain is a very attractive new scheme of houses, with nice public grassed areas well maintained, nice shrubberies and wooden sleepers used in pergolas, all situated on the banks of the river Maigue. The two magnificent mature evergreen trees act as a sentinel to the entrance to one part of this estate. One of the side effects of the current recession is the number of unfinished residential areas in many rural villages and towns, as unfortunately is the case here in Cois Sruthain also. There is a lovely row of cottages and two storey houses opposite the church entrance that is nicely maintained.

Elm Park residential area has a nice stone sign at its entrance, planted with colourful flowers. This scheme of houses has a display of mature bungalows and in Elm Park Drive some nice new storey houses looks well, but the grassed areas need to be maintained better. Individual houses were nicely maintained with pretty front gardens. Some kerbside weeds were in evidence however. Across from Elm Park, there is a nice terrace of single storey houses. They are brightly painted and show an abundance of colourful window boxes and hanging baskets. The grounds of Coláiste Chiaráin were neat and tidy, with grounds well maintained. The lawns needed some grass cutting however. The old stone building, which is now St.Mary's National School, is an attractive feature, but window frames require some painting. The Community Centre looked in tidy order.

St.Senan's Terrace is a nice mature terraced area. Opposite that is the Tower Field, a new development of terraced houses with a nice stone wall entrance to the estate. It is a pity that the grassed area at the entrance was growing wild, and had not been cut for quite some time. The lovely sculpture, depicting 4 birds in flight, was obscured by the tall grass, reducing its effect.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach road off the dual-carriage way looked clean and tidy, with nice landscaping on the roundabout off the slip road, and clean signage for Croom. On the old Limerick road entrance, there are some impressive residences, including the beautifully manicured residence on the right as one enters the town, and "The Poplars" residence. Nice old stone walls line this old Limerick Road, and the grass margins are well

maintained. The mature trees add to the positive feel of the area. Sign posts for the 60Km/h speed limit need painting badly. The approach road from Manister and from Bruff/Hospital would benefit from some grass cutting along the verges. There is a nice shrubbery area on the Hospital Road. This road would benefit from cleaning back the significant amount of greenery that has grown on the road margins, revealing the lovely stone walls that lie beneath.

General Impression:

We were impressed by the amount of effort which had been put into the preparation of your entry and feel sure that your three to five year plan will be a well thought out and comprehensive document, when completed. It is evident that there is a good community spirit in Croom, a town with much potential. We hope that your Committee will get the support it deserves to carry out its proposed projects. There are many positive influences in the town and these should help to overcome the difficulties being faced in relation to dereliction.

Well done and best of luck, it's good to see Croom back in Tidy Towns.