

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Murrisk** Ref: **566**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **291**
Category: **B** Date(s): **16/06/2009**
24/07/2009

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	47
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	14
Tidiness	30	21
Residential Areas	40	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	39
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	291

Overall Development Approach:

Murrisk Development Association is welcome to the 2009 Competition. Many thanks for your comprehensive and highly professional submission. We learned with interest of a new Three Year Plan. Maybe this could be included with next year's submission. The approach you are taking in relation to presenting the village as an end in itself rather than a place that people travel through is a logical and interesting one. You would appear to have a good working relationship with Mayo County Council, South West Mayo Development Co., Westport Town Council, FAS and the Rural Social Scheme.

The Built Environment:

The work that you are undertaking in relation to monitoring of planning issues in the village and commitment to re-developing derelict sites is laudable. Murrisk Abbey is certainly an interesting historical monument and works in relation to its restoration are applauded. The existing properties of the village were in good condition on the day. The National School was quite fresh and the Tavern was fresh in pink, and was in good condition also. Campbell's was in need of a fresh coat of paint. The stone community centre, lavatories and visitors centre in the car park were well presented.

Landscaping:

The centrepiece of the village is the National Famine Memorial, which is centred in a magnificent and natural park. There, certainly, seems to have been many projects undertaken in this category of the competition, from the refurbishment of the village pump, to the reinstatement of the waterfall at the pitch, and repairs at Murrisk na Boll. The car park area at the base of Croagh Patrick was well landscaped with planted stone beds dividing the rows of car spaces, stone walling and new stainless steel bicycle racks to accommodate the coastal cycle route. We wish you luck with your future projects, this is an aspect of the competition that you obviously enjoy and at which you excel. The picnic areas, with seaside planting and cycle racks along the roadside, were well

maintained. A gravelled landscaped area at the welcome sign on the Westport approach was admired. The grotto was simply presented at the side of the road. The use of permanent planting is laudable.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The willingness of a local resident to work with the school children on a wildlife and habitat study is excellent news. We were pleased to hear that the information gathered will be used in additional information boards. The provision of bird boxes/feeding stations is laudable and we were pleased to hear of the erection of additional ones. Discourage advertising hoarding, as they can give approach roads a cluttered appearance.

Litter Control:

Participation in the National Spring Clean is commendable. The litter rota is obviously paying off as the standard was excellent on the day.

Waste Minimisation:

We were pleased to hear that you are looking at the possibility of acquiring bottle banks in the village, and have already thought about making people aware of them. Do be sure to give careful consideration to its siting. We were pleased to hear of the school's Green Flag award, it was flying proudly on the day. You are to be congratulated for your participation with the schools in this regard. The composting area is an excellent project.

Tidiness:

The village generally looked neat and ordered on the day. Being a small and busy village, you must be all the more vigilant in regards to this category of the competition.

Residential Areas:

We were pleased to hear that you have made contact with the owner of a derelict property in order to get permission to block up windows and doors. We wish you luck with ongoing work in this regard and with encouraging owners to look after their properties. Houses and gardens in the village and along approach roads generally looked well cared for on the day. Coral Lodge B&B was well maintained, with attractive raised garden and stone retaining wall. An attractive garden filled with roses was admired.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads afford the driver, walker and cyclist an unparalleled view of Clew Bay, its islands, Croagh Patrick and Achill beyond. The new sign design is very attractive and we look forward to seeing them in place, along approach roads and the cafe. The fact that it is bilingual is commendable. The pedestrian lights are certainly well worthwhile from a safety point of view. The main news in this regard is probably the establishment of the National Coastal Walk/Cycle route and provision of street furniture to facilitate this, all of which is excellent. The work to the car park has been mentioned elsewhere in this report. Relatively new lamp standards and low stone walls give a cohesive approach. The approach to grass verges is an attractive one, cutting the grass at the roadside and letting it grow longer further back is an effective one. The montbretia at the Louisburgh side of the village must make a marvellous display when in bloom. Relatively new trees are coming along well and mature ones make an attractive canopy.

General Impression:

It was a number of years since this adjudicator had the pleasure of visiting Murrisk and it was reassuring to see how well it is being cared for. We were sorry to hear of your problems in regards to unauthorised developments in the village and read the correspondence with the County Council in this regard. We can quite understand your frustration and hope that this situation is resolved to your satisfaction. Murrisk is an unusual and uniquely spiritual place due to its home to both, the ascent point to Croagh Patrick and the National Famine Memorial.

Second Round Adjudication:

Your 2nd Round adjudicator was delighted to have the opportunity of returning to Murrisk not having visited the area for some years. Murrisk is an extremely attractive and long village, and looked really well on a fine, sunny morning with blue skies. One of your great successes is the excellent manner in which the village facilitates the impact of so many visitors each summer who visit to climb Croagh Patrick. The facilities at the car park are really impressive and have developed so much since this adjudicator last visited Murrisk. The Shrine was visited and this is a most impressive, well designed space. The impact of the Statue here against the back drop of the mountain and sky is dramatic. The very high quality of the information panels and timber tables, and seats in the car park area is highly commended. In contrast, the Famine Memorial tells such a different story and this is indeed a most wonderful memorial to different times in rural Ireland. The landscaping

at the Famine Memorial is presented to an extremely high standard and indeed excellent landscaping is one of the key characteristics of Murrisk. Your marks in this category continue to be extremely high by national standards. The adjudicator was a little dismayed by the many timber posts that line the road on the two main approach roads. These give a slightly artificial and regimented feeling to these approach roads, which is not in keeping with the overall tone of the village. The need for these posts is a little puzzling, as they have been provided where verge parking would not be possible. Hopefully, they are just a temporary measure in preparation for the upcoming Reeks Weekend. Be assured that this issue has not affected your marks for 2009 in any way. The area by the Grotto was much admired and the flower tubs here combined well with the colour of the stone in the Grotto itself. At least two very large Litter Warden signs were noted and these seemed to be a little out of context in terms of the excellent signage noted elsewhere in Murrisk; they could be seen as an environmental intrusion here. The main approach roads continue to provide a great introduction to the village for the many visitors each year. The landscaping on these roads has avoided the pitfall of having an artificial or imposed feeling and natural landscaping is used to great effect. Congratulations on your achievements to date and good luck with your work for next year, when we look forward to revisiting Murrisk.