

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Drum** Ref: **608**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **240**
Category: **A** Date(s): **12/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	27
Landscaping	50	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	24
Litter Control	50	38
Waste Minimisation	20	13
Tidiness	30	13
Residential Areas	40	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	240

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the excellent submission containing sketch map and 3 Year Plan, plus the equally impressive collection of photographs that both, record the work being done and depicts the culture, and history of the idyllic Village of Drum nestled away amongst the drumlins of Monaghan. The interaction between the committee of 10, the Local Authority, relevant agencies and the whole community of the parish is as good as any encountered by this adjudicator over the years. It is very pleasing to note that old Ulster Scots tradition of the village has been recognized in a very practical manner. One can see why Monaghan County Council chose the village as its category entrant in the Pride of Place competition in 2007. The Committee has succeeded admirably in harnessing all the different talents available within the parish. The work plan is both practical and more importantly achievable with realistic timescales. Involvement with the Monaghan TidyTowns Network, an excellent initiative, might allow you to share ideas with other centres in the County. Last year's adjudication mentioned the work that you are doing with the youth of the parish, this of course will have long term benefits, as many of the children of the parish will no doubt lay down roots in their home place in years to come. I like the "We Drummers" name for the childcare centre as it is most appropriate, given the tradition of the village. Well done on an excellent performance in this category.

The Built Environment:

As was the case last year, you are very upfront with your concerns and problems relating to derelict buildings in the village. It is a pity to see traditional buildings in such a bad state of repair; unfortunately, there is very little you can do as a committee except keep trying to convince owners to change their minds. Hopefully, some compromise can be reached in relation to Andersons, as it has such historical significance in the context of a different era in the life of Drum. The street scape of the core of the village is very impressive and helped in no small manner by good road surface, excellent street lighting and the contributions made by residents in

presenting their respective properties, both commercial and private, to such a high standard. Just a little note on the condition of the seat outside the Gospel Hall, it was damaged and very much out of sink with the rest of the village.

Sterwards, which seems to stock all what a rural community needs, was a hive of activity on adjudication day and wouldn't it be nice to see the local shops become the fulcrum of life in the country again. The Presbyterian Church and Drumcurren School with its excellent grounds and wildlife garden, which will be mentioned in the relevant section later, were both presented to a very high standard. Credit is due to those that are entrusted with the upkeep of these community premises. Allowing for the obvious problems relating to dereliction, the standard under this category was very good and as can be seen from your plan – a lot done, more to do.

Landscaping:

The landscaping and planting arrangements viewed in the central area and on the outskirts were very simple in design, ideal for a village the size of Drum and most importantly very well maintained. The mix of perennial shrubs and annuals such as nasturtiums gives balance and these combined with the plans to plant more bulbs will ensure an all year round effect. Caring for planting arrangements is an onerous task and credit is due to those that do this work on a continuous basis. It is good to note that mountain ash and birch feature prominently in your landscaping arrangements, in time these will be a legacy for a future generation. Finally, the three new beds at the Lake Amenity or park were admired for the simplicity of design and the innovative use of old railway sleepers.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Quite a lot of very good projects have been undertaken in this category and of course you have an ideal mix of wildlife habitats that can be exploited to the full. Nice contribution to the promotion of wildlife by way of some ideally placed nesting and bat boxes, this and other initiatives that you have undertaken is the very essence of wildlife conservation. Life is about learning and this adjudicator came away from Drum with a good deal more knowledge of wildlife preservation than heretofore. The reason for the provision of a floating duck nesting and feeding unit was very enlightening. It was also good to report that the school children of Drumcurren National have been very much part of the work undertaken under the umbrella of your committee, the fruits of their endeavours were visited on the day and one could not be but impressed. Credit to the children and indeed the teachers that gave them guidance with their project. Ensure that these children are kept involved by way of an annual mini wildlife project; there is enough expertise within your own committee to come up with some imaginative ideas. I do note that you have invited other schools to come and visit the wildlife project, this is a very worthwhile approach, as it will both foster inter school relations and also educate kids on the importance of wildlife conservation and promotion.

Litter Control:

Quite a lot of good practical work, including the annual spring clean, has taken place especially over the last few years. The community has bought into the ethos of keeping Drum free of litter, as the village was essentially litter free on the day. Do keep up the coordinated and team work approach as the village and its surrounds is spread out and needs ongoing litter monitoring to maintain standards you have set.

Waste Minimisation:

A huge body of work has been undertaken in this category, when I looked at last year's report I was rather surprised at the relatively high mark compared to other centres and now the evidence is there to substantiate this mark. It would take up too much space in this report to give a full reaction to the work outlined in your submission, but a few novel ideas stood out. The scrapping of the chicken feeders and use as flower containers were both novel and practical, also congratulations to the local farmer who donated these items for community use.

Tidiness:

Dereliction has been addressed under the Built Environment category, but another downside of dereliction is that immediate surrounding areas are often untidy and overgrown. Suffice to say that you are addressing the issue and trying very hard to come to an agreed solution. In any rural area, one has farm related activity and this creates a little untidiness by its nature, from what could be seen on adjudication day most of the residue of such activity had been cleaned from the kerbs and verges. Road surfaces were good, signs were clean and visible, and most importantly local residents have maintained properties, frontages and back areas to a good standard. There was some ongoing building work, but the condition of sites in question was well managed.

Residential Areas:

Drum village has avoided any major housing development foisted upon it and long may that scenario continue. A place like this has to be protected by the planning authorities and let's hope that you, as a committee, are making your feelings known to the recently elected councillors for the area. Drum has a very nice appeal to it as it stands and the addition of a major housing development would encroach on that, as well as creating major congestion problems. Residents of the village take pride in their homesteads, some of which possessed many fine gardens with nice planting arrangements including some very colourful and healthy rose beds.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Both main entrances into the village gave a very good impression to any one in transit. Road surfaces were good if slightly chippy resulting from recent surfacing. Verges have been well maintained and the new footpaths on both, the Cootehill Road and between the Lough Park and wild life garden, make it easier for both residents and indeed the casual traveller to traverse from place to place. The painting of some farm gates makes a big difference to the general appearance of the Village as a whole.

General Impression:

It has been a pleasure to visit the scenic and historic village of Drum for the very first time and see the excellent work that has taken place, primarily facilitated by the Tidy Towns Committee. The amount of local cooperation that has gone into making the Village such an attractive place to live in has been substantial and an example to other towns and villages of what can be done with a little bit of up and doing attitude. Difficult issues have been dealt with in a planned manner and one hopes that some positives will come out of your interaction with the owners of derelict properties. Other difficult issues have been dealt with in a planned manner.

Well done to all concerned and you are wished well in the competition in the years ahead.