

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Connolly** Ref: **1181**
County: **Clare** Mark: **204**
Category: **A** Date(s): **07/07/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	26
The Built Environment	50	28
Landscaping	50	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20
Litter Control	50	25
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	22
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	204

Overall Development Approach:

We are delighted to welcome Connolly to the 2009 Tidy Towns Competition and would like to thank Connolly Tidy Village Committee for submitting the entry form and sketch map.

For a village the size of Connolly it is very encouraging to note that you have 10 members on the Committee, spending time and energy on Tidy Towns projects with the assistance of a worker supplied by the IIRS. Your involvement with the local school through clean up days, Green School project and the traffic warden, is commendable. The use of public meetings to communicate with the wider community is good but we would also suggest the use of local notes in the press or Church newsletters.

For future entries we strongly recommend that you fully complete the application form because it is the ideal opportunity to draw the adjudicator's attention to issues or work which you want to highlight. Under the following sections of the adjudication report, we hope you will find some helpful and encouraging ideas.

We note that you did not manage to produce a 3 year plan (recommended in the 2007 adjudicator's report). In order to make significant progress within the Tidy Towns Competition, a plan based over 3 to 5 years would be advisable and we strongly recommend that you consider this option. It wouldn't need to be prepared by a professional, it can be prepared by your own committee but views should be sought from the local community. Any plan should take into account existing plans for the area such as a County Council Local Area Plan. Ideally it should clearly explain what you are trying to achieve each year, the approach planned and indicative costs for each project, any supporting agencies and an indication of the lead partner.

The Built Environment:

Connolly has a nice mix of older farmhouses, cottages, individual newer homes and a small development of semi-detached properties. The national school is a great asset to the village and its grounds were in good condition during our visit. The Church is a fine building, however as mentioned in the previous report, it was in need of some colourful planting in order to enhance its presentation.

Businesses which looked well included the Post Office with its very attractive planted containers; Carney's Bar, with its lovely bilingual signage, well painted building and pretty hanging baskets and McGrath's Xpress Stop with its very clean forecourt, attractive window boxes and well maintained premises.

Buildings and homes were generally very well presented but one or two properties were in need of attention. It would be good if something could be done about the derelict building prominently located near the Church.

Landscaping:

Landscaping throughout the village was of a fairly good standard. We particularly admired the stone ringed flower beds on the approach from Ennis and round planted containers at the entrance to the housing development.

There were some attractive timber framed shrubberies within the green area at the Miltown Malbay/Inagh junction. We would suggest that additional planting would further enhance the shrubberies and we recommend that some trailing plants be used to cover the rather obvious metal brackets on the frames. At the Ennis/Inagh sign across the road, we suggest that trimming of the grass verge and planting of a flower bed could improve the presentation.

Colourful bedding plants in timber containers, located on boundary walls, were very appealing. Well done to the school on its bird table, planted containers and the lovely plants displayed in the 'little train'.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

We noted that you did not include any comments under this heading in your entry form although we spotted one or two butterflies and bees enjoying some of the floral displays. The bird table at the school was also encouraging.

In order to progress in this category you should try to identify a suitable location within the village where native trees and shrubs could be planted to provide a suitable food chain which would encourage wildlife. You should seek the advice of a wildlife expert or enthusiast, the County Council may be able to help with contact names.

This could be an ideal category for the local school children to gain valuable experience. The children, under the guidance of a teacher, could help by organising a survey of any existing habitats and wildlife in the area and the results could then be used to decide what plants and facilities need to be provided. Your interaction with the local school is crucial to ensure that the children, future guardians of our environment, learn to respect and love that environment from an early age.

If a survey is conducted, the information obtained could be used to create helpful information panels which could be displayed at suitable sites within the village.

Litter Control:

Your Spring Clean Day and litter patrols seem to be working well. During our visit Connolly was almost litter free. Businesses operating in the village had clean and tidy forecourts. A few isolated items were spotted on the approach roads but the centre of the village was clear.

This category is not only marked on the absence of litter during an inspection but it also includes the planning process for litter control. Additional marks can be achieved by submitting a Litter Control Plan as part of the entry submission. Areas to be considered under such a plan would include a survey of problem areas, key litter generators, number and locations of litter bins and schedule of litter collections. It should also include details of litter patrols (eg involvement by residents, school children or other workers and frequency of patrols). Suggestions for resolution of problems, clear targets as the plan is rolled out and a clear method of monitoring progress should also be included.

Waste Minimisation:

We noted from the previous report and your entry form that your national school was involved in Green School

projects. Although we did not see any Green Flag flying, we do hope that the endeavours will be successful.

There are several projects which could be considered under this category including the circulation of waste minimisation literature to homes in the area, the encouragement of individual households to start home composting, and the organisation of a waste awareness day. For further ideas you should refer to the Race against Waste booklet (if you need a further copy of the booklet, it should be available from the Tidy Towns Unit).

Tidiness:

Tidiness of the village has improved since the last report, however, some aspects still require attention.

The derelict property near the Church is in a very prominent location and although it was painted, the paint was in need of a touch up. The opening at the wall opposite the school looked untidy and we suggest that suitable bench seating with planted containers nearby could disguise the opening. There was a large pallet propped against the wall and obstructing the footpath, this would need to be removed.

Grass verges throughout the village were neatly cut and weeds were generally under control at the time of our visit, well done.

Residential Areas:

As mentioned earlier in this report, Connolly has a fine blend of older farmhouses and cottages; individual newer homes and a small development of semi-detached properties. Homes throughout the village were generally maintained to a good standard with neat gardens and many displaying attractive planted containers, window boxes and hanging baskets.

Several properties particularly caught the eye during our visit including a well painted cream and terracotta bungalow on the Ennis approach, a lovely white house with black trims beside the school and an impressive blue and white house beside Carney's Bar.

There will always be room for some improvement and we did notice some boundary walls that were in need of attention but overall the presentation was a credit to the community.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

It appeared that some resurfacing work had taken place since the last report and the approach roads were in reasonable condition. However, the road at the small residential development was in need of some attention and the roadside/layby opposite the school could be better presented.

Signage throughout the village was generally of a good standard but we noticed that one or two posts supporting signs need to be painted. The Mid Clare Walking Way display panel needed to be cleaned and the little 'walking man' post nearby looked as if it was falling over and needed to be straightened.

We admired the lovely stone bilingual signs (Fíoch Rua/Connolly) proudly announcing our arrival in the village, very appropriate.

General Impression:

Well done to everyone involved in the projects undertaken in Connolly for 2009.

Do try to take on board the suggestions offered, particularly in relation to preparation of a 3 year plan and projects under the Wildlife and Waste Minimisation categories. There are many opportunities to progress under the Tidy Towns banner and we look forward to following your progress on future visits.