

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tuamgraney** Ref: **90**
County: **Clare** Mark: **287**
Category: **B** Date(s): **07/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	40
Landscaping	50	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28
Litter Control	50	40
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	287

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the 2008 Tidy Towns Competition and thank you for submitting an excellent entry with a very helpful map and clearly defined adjudication boundaries, this makes an adjudicator's life a little easier. Your comprehensive 3 year Tidy Towns Plan (2009 – 2011) is an excellent document with clearly identified aims, allocated responsibilities and a manageable timeframe. You obviously noted the recommendations from last year's adjudication and we wish you every success with your very worthy plans.

We must start by congratulating Tuamgraney Development Association, the wider village community and all those who assisted with the hard work which resulted in Tuamgraney's magnificent achievement in being selected the Pride of Place 2008 All Island Winner (Category 2). We enjoyed viewing the DVD of the presentations made and work undertaken, it really emphasised what can be achieved by people working together towards a worthwhile goal.

It was good to note that your committee has increased to 12 members – this is a good indication of a positive and committed community, anxious to improve their environment. Your monthly committee meetings, weekly cleanups, public meetings (as necessary) and use of newsletters and local press are all very commendable and appropriate ways to progress projects and communicate with the wider community. It is incredible to note that Tuamgraney has more than 20 organisations, that is quite an achievement in such a small community.

Well done on managing to achieve and retain the co-operation and support of Clare County Council, the Heritage Council, Waterways Ireland and FAS – by working together it is possible to create a momentum which achieves far more than working in isolation.

It is very important to ensure that the younger generation in the area learn to appreciate and take care of their environment and your regular contact with the local schools is an excellent way to ensure this is achieved.

We were delighted to hear about your new festival held in May and we hope that this will become a very successful annual event for the enjoyment of the community and visitors to the area.

The Built Environment:

It can be difficult for a small village in close proximity to a larger town to establish its own profile and appeal but Tuamgraney has certainly managed this admirably. From the moment one passes the welcoming bilingual signs it is immediately obvious that this is a well cared for environment where new developments blend effortlessly with historic sites.

Congratulations to everyone involved in replacing the derelict sites with the very attractive and appropriate new developments. We were particularly impressed by Aras Bhriain Bhóru commercial/apartments development which was beautifully finished and had a very imposing sculpture.

Other properties which were well presented during our visit included the Scariff Community College with its attractive grounds and Green Flag proudly displayed, Celtic Stationers, McKernan's Handweavers with its pretty handpainted sign, Teach ni Bhriain and Island Restaurant, Hassett's Lounge, Tuamgraney National School, the Leap Frog Creche, the GAA grounds and Handball Club . It was good to see that St Cronan's 10th Century Church, home to the East Clare Heritage Centre, is continuing to play an important role within the community

With regard to unresolved derelict sites, it was good to note that your 3 year plan includes your intention to continue lobbying site owners and the County Council and based on progress to date, we are confident you will achieve success.

Landscaping:

Well done to all involved in preparing the magnificent manicured green areas, planted containers, hanging baskets and ornamental fencing on the Killaloe and Ennis Road approaches to the village. The numerous planted containers and flowerbeds throughout Tuamgraney were really appealing.

The Memorial Park provided the perfect focal point at the heart of the village with its beautiful blend of tranquil seating areas, bridges, paving and attractive flowerbeds. The village pump located nearby was a lovely reminder of bygone times.

The little riverside haven beside St Cronan's Church was a lovely surprise and tempted us to stop and admire the hanging baskets while listening to the gentle noise of the Croaghrum River flowing by.

Reddans Quay was immaculately presented with well cut grass, picnic tables and good parking area and we were pleased to note that there was no litter in the area although the litterbin was so well shielded from view that we almost missed it.

While there were a few flowerbeds and plant containers which were awaiting fresh plants, it was obvious that planting was still in progress throughout the village.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The new Wildlife Park on the Killaloe Road is a very exciting project and holds great potential for the future. Although we managed to locate the park, there was no identifying sign at the time of our visit and we would strongly recommend that a sign be erected, if not already planned. We were impressed by your very ambitious and exciting plans for developing Phase 2 of the project in partnership with the various bodies and wish all well with the undertaking. The involvement of the local schools in related projects is highly commendable as it is important to encourage the younger members of the community to appreciate and protect their environment.

It is encouraging to note that you have included last year's recommendation regarding interpretative wildlife panels as part of your plans for 2010.

While the new Wildlife Park is a wonderful amenity, Reddan's Quay and Scariff Harbour still hold opportunities for enhanced interpretation of local wildlife and should not be totally eclipsed by the new project.

The Famine Memorial Park was a poignant reminder of the tragic loss of life during the Famine, however, it also provides a natural home for wildlife in the area, particularly birdlife with its wonderful range of native Irish

trees.

Litter Control:

The daily litter patrols and weekly clean up evenings have been very successful in keeping Tuamgraney relatively litter free, so congratulations to all involved. The paper shredding policy in the local schools and the fact that the community has access to the County Council recycling facilities located in Scariff are also very positive arrangements.

The Business Park/Industrial Estate was generally neat and tidy on the day of our visit.

We noted that there were several recycling bins located in the grounds of the Community College and it was good to see that they were being used and were coping adequately with the volume of litter.

While Tuamgraney is performing well within this category, there is an opportunity for gaining additional marks by submitting a Litter Control Plan which will clearly show the strategy being adopted to ensure that litter does not become a problem. The plan should include a survey of litterbins (number and condition), frequency of litter collections, any problem areas; solutions being used or proposed; clear targets and a suitable method of monitoring progress.

Waste Minimisation:

As mentioned earlier in this report, it was good to observe the Green Flag proudly displayed at the Community College. It takes a very serious commitment and a lot of hard work by the staff and pupils to achieve this award and we congratulate all on the achievement so far and would encourage them to continue to strive for excellence in their endeavours.

The ongoing segregation of litter by businesses and schools in the area is very encouraging and as part of your Waste Minimisation Plan we recommend that you consider including some of the following actions:

A waste audit, undertaken with guidance from the Race against Waste booklet which should be available from the Tidy Towns Unit

Organisation of a waste minimisation workshop with the co-operation of the County Council. This might be organised as part of a public tidy towns meeting.

The committee might work with local businesses to encourage them to undertake waste reduction programmes.

As your Waste Minimisation Plan is rolled out, a special newsletter could be circulated to households, businesses and schools, highlighting the proposed actions. The Community Notes in the local press could also be used to spread the message.

Tidiness:

The removal of overhead wires and installation of new lighting near the Memorial Park is a very positive development for the area and we note your intention to pursue further opportunities for similar improvements with the ESB and County Council. We did notice that a wrought iron bench, near the Crucifixion scene in the Memorial Park, needed to be repainted and some weeds nearby required attention.

It was good to see the new entrance wall at the house opposite the Memorial Park and also the new development progressing well alongside Teach ui Bhriain

The planned roadworks due to be undertaken by the County Council this year should have a very positive impact on the appearance of Tuamgraney as several large potholes were observed during our visit, particularly in the area of Drewsborough Road and the road to Reddan's Quay. On a positive note, the new section of pavement near the Equestrian Centre was impressive.

St Joseph's Church and grounds were well maintained but a piece of ground at the junction between the Church and Leap Frog Creche had a very overgrown appearance. It would be good if action could be taken to improve it.

Tuamgraney had some good advance bilingual signage, complemented by new County Council directional signs, Welcome to East Clare and East Clare Way signage. The stone Failte Tuamgraney signs were particularly appealing.

Residential Areas:

Residents in Tuamgraney generally continue to lavish great care and attention on their homes and the resulting image is very eye-catching. Your Front Garden & Hanging Basket Competition is a wonderful way to encourage the community to enhance their environment.

Attractive homes and gardens were observed throughout the village, particularly Clareville Guesthouse and several detached properties on the Drewsborough Road and other homes near the Memorial Park. The new houses on the Wood Road are located in a lovely setting and are appropriate additions to the residential stock of the village. The Killaloe approach was enhanced by some lovely houses with good landscaped gardens. The Riverview Estate near Scariff Harbour was a credit to its residents with well maintained houses, green areas and colourful planted containers.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

All approach roads to Tuamgraney were well presented with the Killaloe and Ennis roads exhibiting excellent green verges, small ornamental fencing and a wonderful selection of planted flower beds and hanging baskets.

The road leading to Reddan's Quay was still experiencing problems with potholes and the lettering on a directional sign for 'Fishing' at the start of that road needed to be re-outlined. Potholes were also visible on the Drewsborough Road but hopefully the planned resurfacing works by the County Council will soon resolve the problems.

General Impression:

The action taken to tackle and resolve the problem of derelict sites has made a huge improvement to the village and we wish you well with further campaigns in this regard. The removal of overhead wires was also an excellent achievement and your continuing co-operation with various bodies augurs well for the future of Tuamgraney.

Your community can feel justifiably proud of what has been attained to date and we look forward to following your progress in the coming years.