

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Banada Tourlestrane** Ref: **539**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **245**
Category: **A** Date(s): **19/07/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	28	28
The Built Environment	50	32	33
Landscaping	50	41	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25	26
Litter Control	50	30	31
Tidiness	30	18	19
Waste Minimisation	20	9	9
Residential Areas	40	24	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	24	24
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	239	245

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Banada Tourlestrane to the 2012 tidy towns competition. We note that you have 15 active members (rising to 25 for special occasions) on your committee and this represents a very good level of participation for a small village. You have not referred to connections with other voluntary groups in Banada but we have no doubt that such linkages exist given your high level of participation. Well done on establishing relationships with such agencies and bodies as the Banada Housing Association and An Taisce, but it was noticeable that Sligo County Council were not included. This is surprising as the 2011 adjudicators report refers to your links with the Council. You are strongly encouraged to make contact and build links with the Council as their assistance can be invaluable. Other sources of support that should be considered are Fas (for advice, labour and materials for project), while the Sligo Leader Partnership should be contacted in relation to guidance and funding. It is noted that links have been made between the Committee and the National School and this is to be commended and we would also encourage you to engage in joint projects with the School – perhaps in the area of litter control, landscaping and waste minimization. Thank you for your entry form, excellent map and photos as they were a great help during the adjudication. The adjudicator echoes the comments included in the 2010 and 2011 reports in relation to a 3 – 5 year action plan and once again it is strongly recommended that you consider producing one for your village. An action plan is not only an effective means of identifying and scheduling projects, but it can also help you to increase your marks under this category.

The Built Environment:

The adjudicator was fascinated by the village of Banada Tourlestrane. We were surprised and delighted to find that there are so many features of interest to be found in such a small village. We arrived into the village of Tourlestrane where we admired the work of the committee on the O'Hara house – which appears to have continued from 2011 as it was also referred to last year. This now appears to be occupied as a residential dwelling? A number of other buildings were observed that require work such as the derelict cottage (with

boarded-up windows), directly opposite the Village Inn shop and another dwelling that appears to be a very poor condition and which overlooks the junction. From here, we proceeded to the village of Banada passing the National School building on the way. Once we entered Banada over the bridge, we are amazed at the number of features of interest. The Abbey is a fascinating complex of historical buildings and we would love to hear more about each of the structures therein, of which, sadly some are in poor condition. It was not surprising to read in the 2011 adjudicators report that a number of these structures are listed. There is no doubting the significance of the Abbey to the settlement of Banada and it would be great if this history could be explained by a storyboard in the village. The bridge itself is a lovely structure and we admired the Ancient Ireland Theme Park, with its Ogham stone and the John Hume Peace Park directly opposite. Both of these amenities are excellent and are of interest to locals and tourists alike. Mullarkey's, opposite the Theme Park was also admired and it appeared to be getting a fresh coat of paint to its sign during adjudication. Have the committee considered a heritage trail? As mentioned by the adjudicator in 2011, the built heritage of your village is a tremendous asset and the group is encouraged to explore the various possibilities of informing the public of this through a heritage trail and / or information signage. In the view of the adjudicator, there is no doubt that there are ample features of interest within the village to justify a Heritage Trail. However, a small difficulty relates to identifying Banada as there is no speed limit signs or welcome signage to the village itself and it is recommended that some consideration is given to providing welcome signage on each approach to the village. Perhaps this could be included as a project for 2013?

Landscaping:

It was noted from your entry form that trees were planted in the woodlands in 2012 and that it is proposed to plant another significant number of trees in the next few years. This is an excellent project and we would strongly encourage you to continue with this as deciduous trees provide for an excellent habitat for wildlife. You're also commended on your choice of tree as you have chosen a variety that is a food source for birdlife. A number of other attractive landscaping schemes were noted such as; the colourful and the diverse planting observed in the Theme Park which also appears to be regularly maintained, while attractive and diverse planting was also observed in the landscaping beds that line the perimeter of the car park of the primary daycare centre. A special mention should go to Mullarkey's as an attractive raised natural stone landscaped bed was spotted outside the Pub. It was also observed that a new landscape bed (complete with weed blocker) was being constructed on a bank of the bridge and we look forward to seeing this complete in 2013.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It was great to read about your wildlife project at Banada Bridge, which involves the successful introduction of breeding ducks and the evidence of just how well the ducks are thriving could be found on the river walk where we were greeted by a large number of drakes, mallards and their chicks! It was further observed that the canoe storehouse under the Bridge appears to have been colonised by doves. We would be very interested to hear about the next stage of your wildlife project. Is a wildlife survey planned? It would be great to have some information and interpretive signage on the section of river walk that is already in place. Your plans to further develop the river walk are also noted and we would encourage you to consider providing a combined history and natural heritage trail that could link up all of the features of historical interest in the village with the numerous features of natural heritage.

Litter Control:

This is likely to be a challenging category for the village of Banada as the area is potentially quite extensive. As there are no speed limit signs to denote the beginning or the end of the village, it is difficult to ascertain where adjudication should begin. For the purposes of adjudication in 2012, judging began at Tourlestrane and finished at Tullamoy sign (where verges had been trimmed). Throughout this stretch, the performance was generally good but some litter was observed at the pump directly opposite the entrance to the Theme Park, at the parking area of the church (quite a lot trapped in an untidy verge) and one or two pieces on the road in between Banada and Tourlestrane. However, despite these small and isolated incidences of litter, this performance is generally regarded as being good. Keep up the good work! You also refer to mobile litter collecting units being used and we would love to hear more details of them in 2013.

Tidiness:

The issue of verge maintenance in your village is complicated by the lack of clarity on where the village begins and ends. In general, verge maintenance was observed in Tourlestrane from the 50 kmph speed limit signs. As there is no 50 kmph zone in Banada, this criteria does not apply. It was noted during adjudication that some verges were strimmed, but the majority were not. Once again it is recommended that the committee make a decision on what areas of the village are to be strimmed and this should be made clear in your entry form for 2013. Aside from the issue of verge maintenance, the standard of tidiness was generally good. However, it was noted that hedges had been cut close to the Tullamoy sign and this is an offence under the wildlife act as hedge cutting has been outlawed between March 1st and August 31st to protect nesting bird populations. Improvements are possible under this category. It is disappointing to note that the children about sign with a very rusty sign pole (just opposite the primary daycare centre) that was referred to in the 2011

adjudicators report, is still in place and it is strongly recommended that it is replaced. A black and yellow traffic sign close by is also in poor condition. The pump, which is immediately opposite the entrance to the Theme Park, is in very poor condition and it is a shame to see such an original and distinctive feature of your village in such a neglected state. The area around the pump (which is strewn with hard-core and weeds) is also most untidy looking and this is unfortunate, given its central location in the village. In Tourlestrane, the landscaping beds outside the church were noted, but they were quite weedy while the surfacing of the footpath directly opposite the parking area of the Church is in very poor condition and it is beset with weeds. An untidy area was also observed beside the Village Inn (and directly opposite the entrance to the Banada Housing Association residential development). The Banada Community Centre looked quite well but the weed growth at the base of its walls and forecourt detracted from it somewhat whilst the boundary wall of the GAA club was untidy looking.

Waste Minimisation:

It is noted that the committee maintained the bottle bank, which was observed at the entrance to the housing association scheme and it looked very well during adjudication and is clearly the subject to regular maintenance. However, the focus of this category is on reducing and minimising waste as well as raising awareness of the need for waste reduction. The tidy towns group is encouraged to undertake audits of their own activities to assess where and how waste minimisation or elimination can be achieved. For example, do you make your own compost? Is rainwater harvested for watering your landscaping schemes? Do you grow your own plants? Are your bird nests and shelters made from recycled materials? Actions such as these would help the tidy towns group set an example for others in the village to follow. In order to raise awareness, it is recommended that a waste minimization \ home composting seminar is organised with the assistance of Sligo county council.

Residential Areas:

The only residential area that was observed was the Banada housing association scheme in Tourlestrane - which is an attractive and modern residential development. The standard of presentation of individual housing in the scheme was good and the estate looked well during adjudication but in a small number of instances, the boundary treatment of some properties could be improved. The vast majority of other dwellings observed in the village looked well, achieving a high standard of presentation.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads to Banada are generally good, although the apparent lack of identification for the village is an issue. It is noted that the 2011 adjudicator referred to a welcome sign from the main Sligo to Galway road but this was not observed by the adjudicator in 2012. Once again, it is recommended that consideration is given to providing welcome signage on all approach roads to Banada. The Tourlestrane approach from the Tubbercurry road could be improved by trimming the verges beneath the speed limit signs and by washing the speed limit signs and signage poles.

General Impression:

The adjudicator was most impressed with the village of Banada and there is no doubt that it has lots of potential in the tidy towns competition. It is recommended that the committee try to identify and complete tidy towns projects in all categories each year as this will enable you to make steady progress. Well done and keep up the good work for 2013.