

# Tidy Towns Competition 2012

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Coney Island** Ref: **1232**  
County: **Sligo** Mark: **275**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **22/06/2012**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	33	39
The Built Environment	50	32	35
Landscaping	50	32	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	35	35
Litter Control	50	37	37
Tidiness	30	20	21
Waste Minimisation	20	7	8
Residential Areas	40	31	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	29	30
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>275</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

There is always a certain anticipation about a trip to an island. Even the smallest island has its own unique identity. In the case of Coney there is the strong Atlantic character, as well as the wider Sligo context. This adjudicator's visit to Coney Island yielded all the best of these features.

It is clear that the local community has been active over the past twelve months in enhancing and expanding the previous undertakings. The high level of participation reflects very well on all concerned. Molaim sibh go léir. The map you included in your entry proved most informative for its interpretation value.

### The Built Environment:

Coming to an Atlantic island brings certain expectation such as dry stone walls, white painted building, rocks, pebbles, shingle and sand. It is obvious that your committee fully understands and appreciates the natural methods to engage with that in a sustainable way. You are justly proud of the old barn renovation which is so central a feature and landmark. Informal treatment of buildings/site frontages adds to the unspoilt rural character. Ward's public house was very well presented and the fine memorial to all Coney emigrants (by Michael Leyden) was impressive. Interpretation of the island's riches is facilitated by the large colourful well-positioned panel.

### Landscaping:

On an Atlantic island such as Coney one would not expect any urban style landscaping. There could however be some planting of native Irish material that would help sustain the maritime habitat and wildlife. Hedges are on your list and these will certainly provide shelter and nesting sites for small birds, as well as the insects they feed on. Carty's Strand was impressive on adjudication day as were the other areas the you have cared for so

well. The community garden is a commendable initiative with vegetables such as potatoes and onions. The old village post box forms a bright landmark. So does the village pump although its setting needs some cleaning up. Perhaps some strategic planting would enhance its setting?

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

On adjudication day a wide variety of plants and animals was seen. Swallows were flying low as I passed delightful rock pools, climbing roses, thrift (sea pink) and other flowers, all of which are identified on your bright information sign/panel.

It is clear that your committee fully appreciates the high priority required by nature conservation on Coney Island. Animals such as otters and corncrakes are treasures of Irish wildlife and you have, quite wisely, been guided by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

This is certainly something to continue because any intervention needs a light informal approach. The emphasis placed on the inter-tidal habitat is noted- this is a valuable asset as it again strengthens the Atlantic identity. It is recommended that you carefully choose material you wish to plant in the wildlife garden in terms of the source and the species. This is another area where the National Parks and Wildlife Service might be consulted.

### **Litter Control:**

Your initiatives about litter control are commendable because this will always be a sensitive topic for a small Atlantic island such as Coney. It is great that the initiative involves the residents in discouraging any nuisance that might be caused by day visitors. Coney was virtually litter-free on the day of the adjudication. Molaim sibh.

### **Tidiness:**

The National Spring Clean event comes at a good time. It can take away material that has built up after winter storms, some of which might be damaging to both humans and wildlife. It is also a good policy to strive for a litter-free island.

The area surrounding the pier was in pristine condition and people were seen to be engaged in bringing waste articles from dwelling/outhouses to a central collection point. Your efforts will be further rewarded by involving the children in litter disposal. Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The outcome in this category will, of course, take into account your location, situation and population. It is appreciated how waste management and recycling facilities might best be managed. It is noted how you have taken an initiative in composting. Well done.

This is an area, however, where the prevention of waste arising in the first place can be addressed and you may seek advice from the County Council's environmental awareness officer.

### **Residential Areas:**

It is true that there has been a continuing surge in the upkeep of houses on Coney Island. This extends beyond the buildings out onto the gardens and boundaries. The central cluster of houses form a distinctive feature and these properties were well presented. The house beside the renovated barn was very impressive and the barn itself is now smartly set out - will the stone facing on the roadside wall be raised to screen the concrete block work? A fine house was admired on the way to Carty's Strand as was a bungalow closer to that shore.

The old farmstead at the island entrance really stands out by reason of its elevated position and its current dilapidated condition provides a good opportunity for remedial work.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

On Coney Island the main thoroughfare has an intimate connection with the buildings alongside it and this feature is well respected in the upkeep and maintenance. Again, the committee appears to be striving for the best balance between landscaping, privacy and nature protection. The hedges, gardens and whitewashed walls of the village made a good impression.

The first introduction for motorists is the newly repaired entrance and the white pillars form a bright welcoming marker when viewed across the strand. You mention a new bi-lingual welcome sign (for erection this summer) but it was not in place on the adjudication day. Beidh fáilte roimhe.

### **General Impression:**

It is noted that you say there may be no more than five families on Coney Island at any given time. This will

obviously place a burden on those people who are participating in waste management/disposal. It is clear that you are advancing towards the goals you have set yourselves. Coney is now a delightful haven of tranquility and it was with some regret that this adjudicator followed the line of 14 markers along the sand at low tide returning to the mainland. Well done.