

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Culfadda** Ref: **1408**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **232**
Category: **A** Date(s): **27/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	28	30
The Built Environment	50	32	34
Landscaping	50	27	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	14	15
Litter Control	50	34	35
Tidiness	30	15	16
Waste Minimisation	20	9	10
Residential Areas	40	27	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27	28
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	220	232

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Culfadda to the 2012 TidyTowns competition, particularly after such a strong performance by your village in 2011. Clearly, the level of enthusiasm and commitment amongst your committee of 10 is as high as ever. It is encouraging to read in your entry form that participation rates in your village are high with good local involvement at cleanups. No details have been provided of your engagement with other voluntary organisations in Culfadda however. Have links been established with local sports and social groups? Voluntary groups are often a valuable source of support in the tidy towns competition. It is good to see that you enjoy good relationships with statutory agencies and bodies such as Sligo County Council, Ballymote Enterprise and local businesses. These are particularly important in achieving environmental improvements. It is recommended that contact should also be made with Sligo Leader (possibly for funding purposes) and Fas. Both of these organisations have traditionally been supportive of the efforts of TidyTowns groups in Sligo and elsewhere. It is noted from your entry form that you engage with your local schools through regular meetings and emails. This is to be encouraged. Have you undertaken any projects in partnership with the school? Have the schools or the teachers been involved in any of your litter awareness campaigns or cleanup days? Once again, schools are generally very interested in getting involved in the projects of tidy towns groups and working with the Schools is an excellent means of raising environmental awareness. Thank you for your comprehensive entry form as it was most informative. The adjudicator was also grateful for the map that was supplied as it was a great help during the visit. Your plan is a useful list of projects for the years 2012 to 2014 and you are commended on identifying partners for each of the identified projects. The plan could be further improved by listing projects under their TidyTowns categories as this would help to ensure that at least one project is completed under each category on an annual basis.

The Built Environment:

It is heartening to see that the village of Culfadda continues to make such marked improvements in the

competition from year to year. The village, with its attractive mix of new and old buildings, looked very well on adjudication day. Highlights for the adjudicator included the school building, which was presented to a high standard with its fresh coat of paint and immaculately presented grounds. Further into the village, a number of other interesting buildings were observed and they included the Community Hall, which is a lovely building and it was clear to the adjudicator that it had undergone improvements in advance of visit as it looked exceptionally well. The Church was also exceptionally well presented. The green house opposite the Community Centre deserves a special mention with its fresh coat of green paint and the blaze of colour provided by the meticulously maintained hanging baskets on its front wall. Close to the Ballymote approach, what appeared to be an old agricultural or stable building was observed with its fresh coat of white wash. Is this one of the oldest buildings in the village? The unfinished housing across from the Church was observed and it was noted from the 2011 adjudicators report that progress was being made with the developer. Has there been an update on this? Perhaps the matter should be discussed with Sligo County Council? The boundary treatments throughout the village are also very nice and relatively uniform with natural stone walls dominating. This is a big positive for the village and is recommended that residents are encouraged to provide natural stone boundary treatment to the properties. Well done on your projects for 2012 as the entrance to the sewerage plant looked well with its smart new entrance gates (and landscaping). It is further noted that more improvements are planned for the sewerage treatment plant including tree planting at the boundaries.

Landscaping:

The Committee have clearly been working hard in this category as there were numerous landscaping schemes to be observed on adjudication day. They included the colourful landscaping that could be found in large wooden planters on the approach roads from Keash and from Boyle which provided lovely colour. The landscaping bed with trees, grasses and what appear to be small hedging plants opposite the School was quite nice and the wooden planters and the picnic table are nice additions. The landscaping beds at the new timber entrance gates to the treatment plant were also observed and while it is generally attractive, it is recommended that as many native species as possible should be included in your landscaping schemes. The adjudicator particularly liked the landscaping bed just up from the school which is a raised natural stone bed with attractive summer flowering plants and ornamental wheelbarrows used as planting boxes. Further into the village, the colourful planter boxes that are attached to the wall of the Community Hall are very attractive and add lovely colour to the streetscape and this part of the village. We were pleased to see the colourful hanging baskets that were located at the bring bank as they brightened up what would otherwise be a rather functional area. The approach road from Ballymote is also quite nice with attractive and colourful landscaping observed. It is noted from your entry form that you have proposals to landscape at school, upgrade the shrub beds of the church and install a new rockery and feature to the rear of the community hall – we look forward to seeing these projects in 2013.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

According to your entry form, you have installed new bird boxes and bat nesting boxes in the village and that a wildlife survey is in progress. It is also noted that there is wildlife information panel proposed once the wildlife survey information is available. These are all laudable projects and we look forward to seeing how they progress in the years ahead. We also read that you are attempting to preserve a natural habitat at the corner of the school grounds. However, this was observed during adjudication and the small size of the area as well as the relatively narrow range of plants observed may reduce its potential. Have you considered preserving a wildlife habitat along the river? Generally speaking, rivers can play a significant role as wildlife corridors and are generally hotbeds of biodiversity. The provision of a wildflower meadow on the site of the treatment plant was also noted. Please be sure to keep us informed of developments in this category in 2013. Don't forget that the plans that you select for your landscaping schemes can also make a positive contribution to biodiversity, particularly if you choose species that provide a source of food and shelter the native wildlife.

Litter Control:

The standard of litter control observed on the day of adjudication was good. Apart from some litter spotted on the approach road from Keash, the village generally litter free. It is pleasing to note that you have completed a number of projects under this category for 2012 which include; the installation of new cigarette receptacles of the church and community hall and antilitter promotion at school and the erection of new anti litter signage in the village. Well done also on undertaking regular litter pickups.

Tidiness:

The standard of tidiness was generally very good in the village and it was evident that the committee had been working hard in maintaining and improving verges, roadside edges and footpaths. The work of the committee on removing weeds was also observed. However, further improvements are possible. The landscaping beds on the perimeter of the car parking area of Higgins Bar were overgrown and untidy looking and would benefit from some attention. The gates of the school that border the main Ballymote/Boyle road are in need of a new coat of paint. The car park to the rear of the Church was a little untidy looking due to the rather rough surfacing and the presence of small amounts of weed. We were delighted to find that bring bank,

observed to be in poor condition by the adjudicator in 2011, looked very well during adjudication.

Waste Minimisation:

Under this category, TidyTowns groups are expected to undertake projects the result in a reduction in waste generated as well as raise awareness in their local communities about the benefits of waste minimisation and reduction. It is particularly important for TidyTowns groups to aim for waste minimisation while carrying out their own projects and examples of actions would include; making your own compost for use in your landscaping schemes, using mulch mowers to avoid the generation of grass cuttings and growing your own plants for your planting schemes. You are to be commended on acquiring a new rainwater harvesting system in 2012 as this will mean that scarce treated water will not have to be used for watering plants. As noted from your proposed projects, you intend to hold an information evening on energy awareness. This is an excellent idea and you are encouraged to consider organising other waste minimisation workshops such as home composting. Other ideas for actions under this category can be found in the TidyTowns Handbook.

Residential Areas:

The community social housing scheme was observed and it achieved a good standard of presentation on the day of adjudication. This was due to the well maintained green area (with its recently cut grass) and the attractive and neat appearance of individual houses and gardens. Cloonshanbally was also observed and the landscaping at the entrance is quite attractive and gives a good first impression to the visitor. In general, the standard of presentation of individual houses in Culfadda was high and individual owners and occupiers are to be commended on the work they've undertaken to achieve this standard. It is noted that a number of projects were presented under this category for 2012 and they included painting a number of houses in the village, controlling weeds throughout the village, maintaining green areas and providing a new picnic table in the green area near the monument. The proposed project to acquire a grass composting bin is perhaps best included under the waste minimisation category.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads into Culfadda were generally of a good standard. The approach from Keash and Boyle both looked very well due to neat and tidy verges, clean and visible name signage and colourful landscaping. These factors combined to give a positive first impression of Culfadda to the visitor. The approach road from Ballymote was also in good condition.

General Impression:

The adjudicator enjoyed his first visit to Culfadda and there is no doubt that the hard work and dedication of the committee and local residents is having a positive effect on the appearance of the village. We look forward to seeing further improvements in 2013. Keep up the good work!