

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dromore West** Ref: **1520**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **197**
Category: **B** Date(s): **19/07/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	0	27
The Built Environment	50	0	28
Landscaping	50	0	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	21
Litter Control	50	0	25
Tidiness	30	0	11
Waste Minimisation	20	0	5
Residential Areas	40	0	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	25
General Impression	10	0	5
TOTAL MARK	400	0	197

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations Dromore West on your decision to enter the 2012 TidyTowns competition for the first time. We hope that this is the start of a very successful journey for your committee, your village and the competition itself. You certainly have made a very good start as 8 members for a new committee is very encouraging and we have no doubt that the participation rate will increase as the appearance of your village will inevitably improve. Well done on involving Sligo County Council in your projects and they are likely to prove vital in securing improvements. It is heartening to see that you have also been working with Fas, the Leader Partnership and West Sligo Community Forum as their help should prove beneficial. You are also encouraged to try to meet other TidyTowns groups through the community as they may be able to provide valuable tips for your new committee. It is pleasing to read that you are also involving the local schools in your efforts by keeping them informed of your work. Remember that we strongly encourage TidyTowns groups to engage in joint projects with schools as this is a very effective way of boosting participation and raising awareness at a local level. Thank you for your comprehensive cover letter as it clearly set out the motivations for entering the competition, the challenges that are facing your village and your response to them, which sound both practical and achievable. Your common sense approach and medium term view are also commendable. Perhaps the committee would consider preparing a TidyTowns action plan in the coming years? This involves identifying and scheduling short, medium and long term actions that are appropriate (and feasible) to address the challenges and opportunities in Dromore West under each of the TidyTowns headings. Guidance for action plan preparation can be found in the TidyTowns Handbook.

The Built Environment:

Dromore West is a charming village with a very picturesque setting on the Duneill River. Reminders of the town's historical past are illustrated by the mill building, though currently vacant, is a very impressive structure that appears in reasonable condition. It is heartening to see that a river walk has been put in place adjacent to

the mill building and the dramatic waterfall and it would be great to see an information panel of the mill building (and other historical features in the town) at the entrance to the walk. Directly across from the mill is the former lodge building that now accommodates the HSE clinic. This is an excellent reuse of a historical building and it is pleasing to see that it is so nicely presented. The Main Street of the Dromore West is also quite attractive with a number of commercial premises that are presented to a good standard. They include the Pharmacy, the Cost Cutter shop, the Coffee Shop, Feeneys, the Small Animal Clinic and the Garage. The old Post Office, with its fresh coat of paint also looked well, while Dromore House B&B opposite the Garage is also to be complimented. It is noted that there are issues with derelict and vacant properties in the village and it is strongly recommended that the plan of action is agreed with Sligo County Council and that the sites that are located in the most prominent positions should be addressed as a priority. It is pleasing to read about your practical approach to unfinished estates and the idea to use the mural (for the hoarding) to screen the unfinished development is an excellent interim measure for dealing with an unsightly structure. Your work on the Post Office is also commended and it is a positive reflection of the ambition of your group.

Landscaping:

The projects completed for 2012 were observed during adjudication. The raised natural stone landscaping bed at the perimeter of the car parking area of the Costcutter shop was admired and it is great to see that a reasonable diversity of plant species was used. A number of natural stone triangular planted beds were also observed along the main street (on the same side as the Community Centre) which accommodate mainly trees and other plants. These planted beds are quite attractive but some were a little overgrown. Nice planters were spotted at the entrance to the Post Office and the Cost Cutter shop while the planting on display in the Fair Green estate was a highlight as it provided lovely summer colour and greatly enhanced this part of the village. The grounds of the Community Centre was attractive and well maintained while the planting at the entrance to the Church was also admired. Perhaps the approach roads to the village could be considered for landscaping projects in 2012 as this would help to create a positive first impression for visitors.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The adjudicator spent a pleasant half-hour taking in the sights along the River Duneill. The river walk is an excellent initiative and it is great to see that the first phase of the walk has commenced as it provides a lovely amenity for locals and visitors alike. There seems little doubt that the riparian (river) habitat of the River Duneill and the many mature trees on its banks are rich in biodiversity. Have the committee considered producing a survey of the river walk? The findings could be used to monitor the habitat over a period of time and examine whether any changes are taking place to local wild life. The survey information could also be used for interpretive signage that could be placed along the river walk for interpretative purposes. Remember, rivers also function as effective wildlife corridors so links from the river walk to other walks and locations should also be considered as a means of enhancing biodiversity.

Litter Control:

The standard of litter control in Dromore West was reasonable on the day of adjudication. Litter was spotted on the approach road from Ballina, outside the Mill View Housing estate, on the communal parking area of the Fairgreen, at the entrance to the Community Centre, outside the Still Pub, at the river walk leading down to the mill, at the river walk entrance (opposite the Mill Building entrance), and at the Bring Bank. It is recommended these areas are continuously monitored in your litter patrol and perhaps more frequent litter patrols should be considered. Well done on involving the local schools in your litter patrols as this can be an effective means of raising litter awareness.

Tidiness:

The standard of tidiness in Dromore West was generally good and it was clear to the adjudicator that extensive work had been undertaken on weed control on roadside verges, kerbs and footpaths. However, improvements are still possible. The bring bank area was untidy looking due to poor surfacing, while items such as wood and other debris had been deposited around the parking area giving it an untidy appearance. The bring bank receptacles themselves were also in need of power washing. An untidy site on the left-hand side of the Ballina approach road (behind the sign and immediately adjacent to a house), was observed and this accommodated some litter and some dumped black bags. The group are also encouraged to monitor the use of signs and sign poles in the village as some sign poles (such as the directional sign for Easkey) was used for temporary signage and this can lead to undesirable clutter. The ongoing issues with both Battles Pub and the service entrance to the Fairgreen Housing estate are noted and the area behind the Cost cutter premises (that fronts onto the Easkey Road) was weedy and untidy looking.

Waste Minimisation:

The purpose of this category is to encourage TidyTowns groups to find innovative ways of reducing and minimising the generation of waste when undertaking their TidyTowns projects. Recycling is also encouraged and in this regard, you are commended on segregating litter from your clean ups. Actions that could also be considered include; making your own compost for use in your landscaping projects, growing your own plants and harvesting rainwater for your landscaping schemes. TidyTowns groups are also encouraged to use recycled materials such as old timber planter boxes and old tyres for planters and waste paint for their painting projects. TidyTowns groups are also encouraged to raise awareness of waste minimisation. This can be achieved by undertaking a waste audit which will indicate who is generating waste, what waste is being generated and how it is being disposed of. Once the survey is complete, actions can then be devised to minimise waste generation. Your proposal to have a public information night on waste reduction is also welcomed. Other ideas for actions can be found in the TidyTowns Handbook.

Residential Areas:

A number of residential areas were observed in Dromore West on adjudication day. The Ox View estate (located between the cost cutter shop and the Community Hall) looked very well and each of the dwellings and their gardens achieved a very high standard of presentation. De Velera Park was observed and while its appearance was reasonable, the entrance was a little untidy looking due to the overgrown area and a discarded auctioneers sign lying in the verge. The Fairgreen was visited and the adjudicator was most impressed with the well maintained green areas, colourful landscaping and a good standard of presentation of individual houses and gardens. In Mill View, some untidy property boundaries were spotted. Perhaps a paint day could be organised? Is there a local shop that would be interested in providing some paint (with a discount)? The unfinished building on the R297 was observed and we agree with the approach of the committee to screen the site with a mural and we look forward to seeing the project completed for 2013.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach from Ballina was reasonable with clear and visible signage spotted. The verges on this approach were a little long, but it was clear that maintenance had taken place. It was noted that hedges appeared to have recently been cut on this approach and it should be noted that it is an offence under the Wildlife Act to cut hedges between March 1st and August 31st in order to protect nesting birds. The approaches from Sligo and Easkey also achieved a reasonable standard of presentation.

General Impression:

The adjudicator was very impressed with the village of Dromore West and the encouraging start that the village has made to the 2012 TidyTowns Competition. We look forward to seeing further improvements in 2013. Well done and keep up the good work!