

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Riverstown** Ref: **417**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **286**
Category: **B** Date(s): **29/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	44	44
The Built Environment	50	39	40
Landscaping	50	39	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27	28
Litter Control	50	36	37
Tidiness	30	18	19
Waste Minimisation	20	12	13
Residential Areas	40	30	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27	27
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	280	286

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Riverstown to the 2012 TidyTowns competition. It is great to see such a strong level of commitment to TidyTowns in Riverstown. The level of participation is staggering with a total of 35 active members on your committee and we are in no doubt that this is a reflection of the quality of work that your committee undertakes and the level of appreciation of this work locally. The fact that the committee can attract up to 100 volunteers for a cleanup indicates a very strong community spirit in Riverstown. Well done also on your partnership approach to the competition. By involving local sports clubs and other voluntary bodies, you have found a very effective way of getting the maximum number of people involved. According to your entry form, Sligo County Council and the business community are supportive of your efforts. Perhaps other agencies can be encouraged to get involved? Examples include Fas, who can often provide excellent assistance with advice, materials and labour while your local leader or partnership company may be able to provide grant aid for community-based projects. Your work with the school's is commended, particularly in helping Ardkerin National School secure its green flag status. The initiative to provide an outdoor classroom in Riverstown number 2 school also sounds laudable. Well done also on your work on joint projects with the local schools and we are looking forward to seeing the wildlife survey management plan that is currently being prepared. Thank you for your completed five-year action plan for Riverstown. Your plan was read with interest and it is noted that you have taken an area-based approach to identifying projects that need to be undertaken. The plan appears very comprehensive, but it is recommended that you check and see that you have included projects under all tidy towns categories. Remember, a concentration of projects under a small number of categories could potentially limit your marks on an annual basis. The most effective approach is to try and ensure that you complete at least one project from each category every year as this will improve your chances of obtaining marks across a range of categories. Aside from this point, the plan was most impressive with a high standard of presentation, good photographs and details on the projects undertaken to date. Thank you also for your plan including your entry form. This was a great help to the adjudicator on the visit to Riverstown. As pointed out in 2011, some projects have been included in the incorrect categories – such as Built

Environment. Please be sure to follow the guidance provided in the entry form carefully in order to avoid this in 2013. This point is important as if projects are not included in the right categories, there is a small chance that they could be overlooked by the adjudicator.

The Built Environment:

The adjudicator was delighted to visit Riverstown for the first time we were amazed at the quality and the variety of the buildings in the town and the many other structures and features of interest. A highlight the adjudicator was the natural stone bridge at the entrance to the Sligo Folk Park which is a lovely feature of the town. Many other buildings caught the attention of the adjudicator such as the Church of Ireland building whose spire could clearly be seen from the surrounding countryside, the Catholic Church, and the National School building in the centre were also presented to an exceptionally high standard. The high standard of presentation of commercial buildings was also noted, while the use of bilingual signage is to be commended. Examples which caught the eye of the adjudicator included the Corner House, the Riverstown Pharmacy, Nairns/Mace and the family butchers (with bilingual signage). The Riverstown Medical Practice was also a nicely presented building. The premises of Martin Baiceir and S. McDermott looked very well. Aside from the many buildings of interest the adjudicator was most impressed with the natural stone walls throughout the town. It is great to see that these walls have been retained as they provide a most attractive and uniform boundary treatment which greatly enhances the appearance of the town. It is strongly recommended that the natural stone walls should be the preferred choice of boundary treatment in Riverstown as a variety of boundary treatments would not be advisable. The old Methodist Church is a lovely building and it is pleasing to see that it is found a productive reuse as a dwelling. The Post Office building is also very attractive. The group and everyone else involved is to be commended on the work to the Morrison Teach Ceoil as it is great to see older buildings being refurbished and restored and brought back into productive use. The adjudicator was also impressed with some of the sensitive infill developments that can be found in the town such as the oasis takeaway building on creamery Lane and the sidewalk housing development on the Main Street. Whilst, it is appreciated that the designs employed in these buildings are modern, it is considered just as important that the sites in the town centre are fully developed. It was noted during adjudication that your projects for 2012 included the commendable work to the derelict site at Brookfield close on Chapel Street and the work to the wishing well. Your work to the forge was noticeable as it looked well on the day. Well done on painting all the field gates in the town area as this has made a big difference. It is also noted that you included projects that would normally be considered under other categories. For example the revision of hanging baskets and tubs of flowers would normally be listed under the landscaping category, while the development of a wildflower meadow at the Fort Field should rightfully be included in the wildlife and amenity section

Landscaping:

The adjudicator was impressed with the landscaping schemes to be seen during adjudication. The landscaping at the wishing well was quite nice, while the landscaping beds directly opposite the Co-Op (on the bank with sign stating village renewal scheme) were very attractive and provided a good diversity of planting and nice summer colours for the central part of the town. The colourful rose bed at the junction of Creamery Road and Main Street was admired while the raised natural stone landscape bed at the entrance to the National School was also attractive but some weeds were starting to creep in. The wooden planters along this stretch looked well with their combinations of perennials and summer flowering plants. Further up the town, the lovely mature tree in the grounds of the creche was admired and an attractive landscaping bed was observed at the entrance to the sidewalk residential development. The planting around the perimeter of the car park of the Morrison Teach Ceoil complemented this lovely refurbished building and attractive landscaping was also observed at the entrance to the wildflower meadow adjacent to the Morrison Teach Ceoil. The adjudicator also admired the mature trees at the access road to Rock Field. The contribution that individual properties made to this category was also noted with colourful hanging baskets spotted outside the Riverstown medical practice and the Corner House. The planting bed outside the Co-Op store were examined and although there is a good variety of species and diversity of plants, the beds themselves appeared weedy and in need of maintenance.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Well done on following the advice of the adjudicator in 2011 and engaging with the County Heritage Officer in respect of the draft biodiversity plan for County Sligo. Once again, we are delighted to see that you have arranged with the students of Coola Post Primary School and Ardkerrin National School to undertake a wildlife survey and complete a management plan. Please be sure to include this with your entry in 2013. It is also important to use this document in your Tidy Towns projects. For example, the plants and trees selected for your future landscaping schemes should be consistent with the findings of the wildlife survey by providing a source of food and shelter for wildlife native to your area. It is further noted that you continually engage in the upkeep of river walks (including signage). This is commendable. However, it is important to remember that the riverbanks are sensitive habitats and maintenance programs are best undertaken with the proper advice.

Litter Control:

It is noted from your entry form that regular litter patrols take place, including on Sunday night and early Monday morning. You're also to be commended on your collection of litter and remains of dumping on approach roads. The adjudicator was delighted to see that you continually engage in litter, graffiti and gum awareness campaigns. The standard of litter control observed was high during adjudication with the central part of the town (i.e. Creamery Road, Main Street, Chapel Street and Church Road being litter free. In addition, the areas identified as having litter present in 2011 (the river bank, the Sligo Folk Park) were devoid of litter. Unfortunately, a black spot was noticed at the Council pump house (opposite the Old Methodist Chapel) with litter and a dumped bag or rubbish were observed. It is recommended that this area receives continuous monitoring in your litter patrols.

Tidiness:

The standard of tidiness observed, particularly on the central streets of the town such as Creamery Road, Main Street, Chapel Street and the Church Road was very high and it was obvious that careful attention has been paid to weed removal and verge and footpath maintenance, with all paths and roadsides neatly swept. Well done as this contributes to a very high standard of tidiness. The maintenance work undertaken to signage was also noted. However, improvements are possible, particularly on the cul-de-sac leading to the Community Park, where the site (does it belong to Sligo County Council?) adjacent to the entrance of the Park is untidy looking due to its concrete fencing posts, untidy fencing wire and the dead grass and weeds that could be clearly seen adjoining the boundary fencing. We agree with the adjudicator in 2011 and agree that the site is quite unattractive and that its screening would be welcomed. In addition, the verge opposite the entrance to the park (adjoining the river) was also untidy looking due to the concrete post and unattractive wire fencing and an untidy verge. The cul-de-sac road could also be improved by the removal of the heap of tarmac at the base of a telegraph pole. At little buddies, the sign plinth, boundary walls and capping stones would benefit from paint while the pavement outside Tommy Macs bar remains badly cracked. The area that appears to accommodate a pumphouse (opposite the old Methodist chapel) is very untidy as the gates needed paint, the wire fence was in poor condition and the soil vent was untidy looking. Some signage was also in need of attention with a very untidy children about (black and yellow traffic sign) observed on Ross road. The roof of the wishing well would also benefit from a fresh coat of paint in time for 2013.

Waste Minimisation:

We're delighted to see that you followed the advice of the adjudicator in 2011 by liaising with the environment section of the county council and organising a public presentation by the waste environmental officer on top tips for waste reduction. These events are very effective for raising public awareness of the issue of waste minimisation. You are to be commended on the use of composting facilities of Sligo Folk Park and for undertaking the segregation of waste collected. Perhaps you would consider organising a workshop with Sligo county council on community composting for 2013? Have you considered growing your own plants? Once again, it is recommended that you consider growing plants that make a positive contribution to the biodiversity of your area, either in a common area or in committee members or volunteers gardens. Well done on encouraging people to use the bottle bank. Have you considered undertaking a waste audit? This can be a very effective way of identifying what waste is being generated and by whom and what actions are required to achieve waste minimisation. Other ideas for actions under this category can be found in the tidy towns Handbook.

Residential Areas:

It is noted that you have power washed boundary walls and painted derelict houses as well as maintaining all TidyTowns gardens, flowerbeds and open spaces. Well done also on the successful outcome of your negotiations with the developer of Cherry Tree Park and it is great to hear that all newly developed houses will be finished in the near future. During adjudication, the small residential area with access junction off creamery road and Main Street was attractive and individual houses and gardens are presented to a good standard. Cherry Tree Park was also observed and its appearance was mixed, with maintenance having taken place to parts of the estate (around the entrance) but the area around what appeared to be the bin store was untidy while the road surface could also be improved. Brookfield Close is quite nice with well maintained green areas (and trees) and it is considered that it would also benefit from landscaping. In Cultylough, there was a good standard of presentation of individual houses and gardens but the landscaping in the central green space was in need of maintenance and the verge opposite the entrance was untidy looking. Brookfort is also quite nice but some weeds were evident at the entrance.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

It is noted from your entry form that all approach roads have been improved with resurfacing taking place on two of them (from the Diamond to the Heapstown Road, on the Ross road past the health centre to the rock field gate). Well done also on getting a new footpath to the Park Road at the post office. Your work on the repair and maintenance of are grass margins and regular cleaning and repainting of signs is also noted. The

adjudicator was impressed with the approaches into Riverstown on the Castlebaldwin and Drumfin Roads, where neat and tidy verges, clear visible signage and attractive landscaping (particularly on the Drumfin Road) was observed. The approach from Heapstown was generally good but the roadsides opposite Cherry Tree Park were in poor condition and gave an untidy appearance. The Ross Road approach is reasonable while the approach from Ballyeanley is let down somewhat by a 50 kmph sign obscured by vegetation and some untidy roadside boundaries.

General Impression:

2012 represents another great performance for Riverstown in the TidyTowns competition. You are to be commended for your comprehensive and determined approach and we wish you every success in the future.