

# Tidy Towns Competition 2012

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tubbercurry** Ref: **721**  
County: **Sligo** Mark: **236**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **19/07/2012**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	33	34
The Built Environment	50	30	31
Landscaping	50	34	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18	20
Litter Control	50	32	32
Tidiness	30	13	14
Waste Minimisation	20	11	11
Residential Areas	40	27	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	24	25
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>236</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Tubbercurry to the 2012 TidyTownsCompetition. It is noted from your entry form that your Committee is comprised of 7 to 10 members and that you appear to enjoy good support from larger groups in your town with persons from local business, the Active Retirement Group, the GAA, the School Parents Association, Residents Associations within the town and the Chamber of Commerce. This is commendable as it indicates a very broad base of support for your work. A host of agencies and bodies also appear to lend a hand with Sligo County Council, Fas and a wide range of local businesses helping out with many aspects of the work of the tidy towns group. This is most impressive and in the view of the adjudicator, it reflects the recognition at a local level of the positive work of the tidytowns group. Your communication strategy was read with interest and it is pleasing to see that a range of media are used, including local newspapers, parish newsletters and the Internet. We encourage groups to develop close links with the local schools in the tidy towns competition and it is pleasing to note that you have a close association with the National School through the Parents Association. We also strongly encourage you to undertake joint projects with the school as this is a very effective way of raising awareness and fostering ownership of projects at the local level. Thank you for your completed entry form and map as it was very comprehensive and quite helpful during adjudication. The map was a little confusing as times however, as some inaccuracies were spotted, such as St Brigids Parish Hall being referred to as the Town Hall and a new school seems to be indicated in the IDA site? In addition, many of the estates observed were not even marked on the map. These inaccuracies limit the usefulness of the map as they can cause confusion and delay the adjudicator. We also concur with the adjudicator in 2011 who suggested that your projects should be included on your map for easy reference as this would make it easier to find the completed projects during adjudication. The appendices attached to your entry form were also read with interest and they provide a good insight into your work and the approach that you adopt to the competition. Your three-year plan was read with interest and it is sure to provide you with a good starting point for planning future improvements. However, when the plan is being reviewed, it is recommended that short, medium term and long term actions are identified for each of the tidy towns categories and that the actions

identified are as prescriptive as possible.

### **The Built Environment:**

This was the first time that the adjudicator had visited Tubbercurry and it was delightful to find that the town has numerous attractions and features of interest. The quality of the buildings is a highlight and many properties of interest were observed and they include; the Church and the Convent opposite within its impressive grounds with lovely mature trees. The adjudicator particularly liked the modern residential development that has been constructed to the rear of the convent building as it provides an excellent contrast to the Convent building itself. The Holy Family National School (adjacent to the Convent) is a lovely building where work was ongoing during adjudication. St. Annes (Church of Ireland building) with its leaded glass windows and the North Connaught College Building also drew positive attention while the adjudicator was particularly impressed with Teach Laighin on Humbert Street as its bold, contemporary architectural style provides a lovely variation in the streetscape of Humbert Street. Further out (on the Ballina Road) St Attracta's Community School is quite impressive as it is a modern building that appears to have been constructed relatively recently with a modern design and the use of contemporary materials in its finishes. The grounds are generally quite nice, with well maintained grassed areas, and semimature trees. Further in, the Connacht Gold Premises was observed and it is great to see that this building appears to have been painted since 2011. The issues with the derelict and vacant properties were witnessed at first hand during adjudication with the creamery building beside the Co-op being a case in point. As the building appears to be used at present (by the Connacht Gold Co-op), would it be possible for the structure to be painted and improved? Despite its rundown appearance, there is no doubt that the structure remains an important part of the town of Tubbercurry. The Triangle in the centre of the town also provides a lovely space with its seating areas and pleasant landscaping. The sculptures, which remind us of the music and dance traditions of the town, add further interest. During adjudication, the space was proving popular with students of the Sligo summer school, which was being held in St Brigid's Parish Hall – which also looked very well during adjudication. The standard of presentation of commercial buildings in Tubbercurry was also admired with a number of notable examples standing out. They include the Post Office, SuperValu, the traditional shopfront of T. Brennans, Foleys, Mickey Macs and McCarricks, Killinascully and the Forge Bar on Teeling Street, while the AIB, M Kennedy's, the Credit Union and Cawleys Hotel on Emmet Street were impressive as they all reached a good standard of presentation. It is noted that a number of projects were undertaken under this category which include repairing the stone walls of the derelict houses on the Sligo Road and power washing of boundary walls in the town.

### **Landscaping:**

The adjudicator liked a number of the landscape projects that were viewed on the day of adjudication. The Circular Road appeared to provide a number of the best examples with a very attractive and colourful natural stone circular flowerbed observed close to the junction with the link road to Teeling Street. The rockery (Creag ghairdin) with its diverse and colourful planting was also spotted on the opposite side of the same road and it is pleasing to see that the active retirement Association were responsible for this project. The group is to be commended on co-opting other voluntary groups in Tubbercurry and allowing them to take on projects as this can be an effective means of boosting participation and providing a greater sense of local ownership of the work of the tidy towns group. The landscaping at the centre space was attractive and appropriate to this location with an emphasis on perennials and trees, thereby providing for year-round colour while the colourful landscaping at the monument at the top of Humbert Street significantly enhances this important approach to the town centre. The contribution of individual businesses to landscaping also deserves a mention with the landscaping in the car park of the Health Centre and the Kings Inn appearing quite attractive and accommodating a range of different species. The planting baskets at the SuperValu and the Post Office also added nice summer colours to the town centre. You are commended on your work under this category for 2012, which included a revamp of the beds in the town square, enhancement of the Sligo approach road and work to Connolly Park. Please be sure to include Connolly Park on the map for 2013 as the adjudicator had difficulty locating it.

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

According to your entry form you have undertaken a number of projects under this category for 2012 and they include the bug hotel (which was observed on the link road between the Circular Road and Teeling Street) and the swan watch at Talt Lake. The swift project is also an exciting initiative. These are all good initiatives and no doubt are helpful in raising awareness of local biodiversity in Tubbercurry. We were delighted to read that your group has also engaged in wildlife friendly planting schemes favouring shrubs and plants that are attractive to insects and wildlife. We will also encourage you to consider identifying an area that will be suitable as a wildlife and amenity area. Has a river walk been considered? The river represents a tremendous resource of the town of Tubbercurry and rivers are frequently a rich source of biodiversity as they form riparian habitats and function as wildlife corridors. It would also be great to hear about the biodiversity that exists in Tubbercurry and we recommend that a wildlife survey is considered. Perhaps the school would be interested in getting involved in this project? Another option is the disused railway. Could this be considered for a wildlife trail?

**Litter Control:**

The standard of litter control that was observed in Tubbercurry during adjudication was reasonably good with a considerable number of areas, particularly in the town centre, appearing litter free. However, there were a number of areas where litter were spotted and they include; the car parking area of the nest (adjacent to the AIB on Emmet Street), in a number of locations on the approach road from Ballina including at the base of the Tubbercurry sign opposite the old creamery, at the junction of the Galway Road and the Ballina Road (Gallagher Terrace), outside the Mountain View estate and at the bring centre. This is generally a good performance as the vast majority of the town that was observed was litter free. Well done on your work removing posters throughout the town as none were spotted during adjudication. It is pleasing to read that you have adopted a rota system to litter control and in the view of the adjudicator, this appears to be working for most locations in your town. Perhaps, the areas that were found with litter in 2012 could be the subject of continuous monitoring during your future litter patrols.

**Tidiness:**

It was clear to the adjudicator that the committee had been busy with projects under the tidiness category as there was plenty of evidence that weed control, verge and roadside maintenance had received considerable attention by the tidy towns committee as the vast majority of areas observed were weed free and neatly swept. Well done also on your work on poster removal as none were spotted anywhere in the town on adjudication day. Nonetheless, and despite these laudable efforts, improvements are still possible. The signage in Tubbercurry could be improved as a number of examples of untidy signs and sign poles were spotted during adjudication. They include the Tubbercurry sign which is located directly across the road from the creamery building in a very untidy and littered verge. Untidy traffic signs were also spotted close to the junction of the Circular Road and the Ballina Road. A little further in, the appearance of the IDA site could be improved by cleaning up the boundary treatment of some of the units and by painting the entrance gates. The appearance of the industrial units in the estate was mixed, with some achieving a good standard (such as Sligo Haulage), while others, such as Moylough Furniture and Palace Joinery, were in need of some attention. A number of sites were spotted on the Ballina Road which have the appearance of animal pounds (with timber fencing forming the boundary with the road). However, in most cases, very long grass can be found at the base of the fencing and it acts as a litter traps as well as giving a very untidy appearance to this approach. The flower bed and the large wooden planter at the Nest were very overgrown, weedy and in need of maintenance while the bring bank was untidy due to discarded items left at the base of the receptacles. The long landscaping bed directly opposite the National School was in poor condition (due to weed growth) and the metal sculptures in the centre space of the town will need paint for 2013.

**Waste Minimisation:**

It is noted from your entry form that your projects under this category include segregating and recycling waste collected. However, it is noted from the 2011 adjudicators report that you have been undertaking composting. Has this been continued? This is a significant action as it minimises the amount of waste produced as well as avoiding the need for fertiliser and manufactured compost. It is further noted that a waste minimisation seminar with Sligo County Council was planned. Has this taken place? What impact has it had? Please provide us with some further details in 2013. Other actions that could be considered by your group include; harvesting rainwater for watering planters and planted baskets, growing your own plants and avoiding the use of chemical weedkiller and fertiliser. More ideas for actions under this category can be found in the Tidy Towns Handbook.

**Residential Areas:**

There is no doubt that Tubbercurry has undergone significant expansion in recent years with a number of new residential areas appearing in the town, particularly around the Ballina Road. In general, the residential areas that were inspected looked well with signs of regular maintenance visible in a majority of them. The residential area called the Rock is quite nice, with lovely mature trees and the standard of presentation of individual houses and gardens was high. Meadowbrook is an attractive modern housing scheme with a well maintained central green area with attractive planters at each corner. The houses and gardens are also generally well maintained but some kerb weed was starting to creep in. The established and mature Mountain View estate was quite mixed with some parts looking very well, such as the central triangle and the seating areas (which have colourful landscaping and neatly trimmed grass), while other parts appear to have had very little or no maintenance at all. On the Galway Road, the Crescent and Highfield are attractive residential areas with well maintained green spaces. On the Ballina Road, Coill Dubh was quite nice while Cnoc Na Si was reasonable but would benefit from additional and more varied landscaping. Summer Hill, the Nest and Firestation View would all benefit from additional maintenance. Well done on your work to Springvale which generally looked well with good diverse planting beds on display and Parklands (opposite Springvale) also achieved a good

standard of presentation. Has a tidy estates competition been considered? Perhaps one of your sponsors would make a prize available?

**Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The approach road from Galway was good with cleanly swept roadsides, clean and visible speed limit signage and weed free kerbs (beginning at the 50 kmph signs) and a neat and tidy footpath on one side. The Ballina approach road was slightly less impressive as the verges at the 50 kmph speed limit signs were quite long and overgrown and the welcome sign for Tubbercurry on this approach is located much further in (at the Connacht Gold Premises). The Sligo approach road is generally good with the hard work of the committee evident with the repair of broken walls and the landscaping provided.

**General Impression:**

The adjudicator was very impressed with Tubbercurry and there's no doubt that the town has great potential in the tidy towns competition. Well done on a strong performance in 2012 and we look forward to seeing further improvements and new projects in 2013. Keep up the good work!