

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Curraghboy** Ref: **288**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **246**
Category: **A** Date(s): **04/07/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	33	34
The Built Environment	50	33	35
Landscaping	50	25	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20	20
Litter Control	50	35	35
Tidiness	30	20	21
Waste Minimisation	20	10	10
Residential Areas	40	20	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35	36
General Impression	10	6	7
TOTAL MARK	400	237	246

Overall Development Approach:

Curraghboy is very welcome to the 2012 Supervalu National TidyTowns competition. With eight people on the committee and monthly meetings you are kept busy. We think it is a very good idea to hold your AGM in September around the date of the national awards, because this is the time that people are most enthused and aware of the competition due to the huge media exposure in September. It is wonderful that LEADER has supplied the village with a full-time employee through the TÚS initiative and a FÁS worker on a part-time basis. We are sure you appreciate this greatly. Do you have any other agencies and bodies who support you? We notice that you use your church letter in relation to communication issues. We hope that you also circulate any other denominational churches represented in your area. Have you considered the use of the web or Facebook in order to engage with the younger generation? We noticed the contact between the committee and the school, and we are glad that you feel the competition is a 'fantastic way of encouraging people to get involved in the community'. We hope that you have a great weekend at your music festival, which you tell us attracts hundreds of people to the area. We are sure that they admire and enjoy their surrounds as a result of all your hard work. Well done to the Curraghboy national school on their Green Flag! Thank you for the copy of your work programme. However, it is very important to prepare a plan for 3 to 5 years ahead for Tidy Towns work. We note that last year's adjudicator encouraged you 'to prepare a simple three-year plan and work programme' as 'you would find this invaluable in guiding your progress and enhancing your performance in the competition.' This adjudicator agrees. This is an important project which you should give time to. A three or five-year plan will focus your mind on the important issues facing you, and it will help you to prioritise your work. A plan need not be prepared professionally, but you should consult widely locally in preparing such a plan. You should also consider any statutory and non-statutory plans applicable to the Curraghboy area in drawing up your work programme. It is difficult to advance in this category in the absence of such a plan. Please do refer to the TidyTowns Handbook for advice in relation to the preparation of a three or five-year plan. Thank you for your clear sketch map of the village. Your regional location map was also appreciated. However, in relation to the completion of the application form please be careful to enter only the projects

relevant to each category under that category. If you read the sub-headings under the main heading of each category and refer to the Tidy Towns Handbook, this will make filling in the application form an easier task.

The Built Environment:

We note that you stated that renovation would take place at St Brigid's church from June to September 2012. The church seems to have got a new roof and the grounds are very well maintained, with lovely landscaping, although the statue of St. Bridget needs cleaning. Last year's adjudicator mentioned the absence of flags on the flagpoles at the church. This was still the situation this year, although this is a minor issue. Generally the condition of gates around the village is letting you down somewhat, but we note that it is your intention to rectify this situation. We saw an interesting wide field gate close to the bring banks. J.J. Cummins building looked well, although the immediate surroundings of the corner site on which it stands would benefit from landscaping and surfacing of the parking area. Could the redundant petrol pump be removed? It is nice to see the old Carrick national school sign on the Rural Development offices building – which was the old school. The stone plaque commemorates the building of the school in 1890. The nice stone wall outside the office building was admired as were the shrub displays. McDermott's was presented in a clean fashion, but the door to the side of the house needs its glazing needs replaced. The plaque which you mention under the 'Tidiness' category will draw attention to what was – in effect – an important piece of your built environment for many years – the water pump. The stone engraved map of the parish of parish of Kiltoom and Cam within the church grounds is a very artistic, tasteful, and informative sign. We found it very interesting to look at the various town lands and their English and Irish names. Well done on this unusual and interesting feature. Furthermore, well done on the use of Irish in this memorial. We also commend you on the interesting insert in the village wall recollecting the Farney connection erected in 2004. In relation to stone walls in general we would like to see the local tradition of dry stone stonewalling maintained where possible. We note that last year's adjudicator referred you to the book 'Irish Stone Walls' The village pump was presented in a most colourful fashion with its green and red paint. The red floral displays with the splash of yellow added to its brightness and cheerfulness. However, we would prefer to see stone planters to match the surrounding walls rather than composite modern containers at this site. Could your stone mason help here? Well done on the work on the national school. The front elevation of the school looked a little bleak with two planters that had very little contained within. However, given the present climatic conditions we have to say that this is probably a result of the weather. The Estuary petrol pump premises was particularly well presented without the usual rash of signage that often accompanies such petrol stops. We note that you refer to work at the bottle banks under this category, but we consider this under the 'Litter' category. Your description of the approach road work is considered under the relevant category also which is 'Roads, Streets and Back areas.'

Landscaping:

With regard to the walls around the existing trees which you have engaged a stonemason to build, we would recommend that you do not build further walls around trees for two reasons. Firstly, it takes from the natural appearance of the lovely trees which you have in the village. Whereas we admire the stonework, it would be probably be more profitable to undertake the repair of dry stone walls or other suitable stonemasonry work elsewhere. In relation to the purpose of the stone walls – to enclose the flower beds under trees – we would also suggest that you desist from this practice, as the nutrition which the tree requires is taken up by the floral displays underneath. Providing floral displays is more important elsewhere, as the trees are elegant landscaping features which can stand alone. Your references to the approach road again under this category is dealt with under the relevant category. Nonetheless there is a crossover between categories in this work, as your approach roads are indeed very nicely landscaped and you are gaining marks under both categories for this work. We particularly liked the long planted bed in the village with the green shrub groundcover and the delightful edging of red seasonal flowers with its two-semi mature native trees. Well done on this very tasteful area. Well done to the lady watering the plants at the Kiltoom junction opposite the school sign on adjudication day!

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

We note that you have had bird boxes in the village in previous years. You tell us that the pond at the back of the church is an attraction for children after Mass each weekend. We strongly suggest that you get advice on The proposed wildlife plan for Curraghboy village. You are located in beautiful countryside, which is full of wildlife, and the biodiversity which is around here just needs to be understood and observed. Roscommon County Council, in association with The Heritage Council has produced some great literature with regard to biodiversity in County Roscommon generally. The Heritage Officer of the County Council would be a very good person to talk to about this aspect of your environment. Meanwhile the schoolchildren could undertake a simple survey of - for instance - the birdlife in the school grounds. As you progress in the competition you could consider conducting more scientific surveys, with a view to interpretation and management of the biodiversity of the area.

Litter Control:

The bring banks were maintained very well, and have a backdrop of mature trees and an edging of shrubbery as seen from the distance. Even the fact that they are slightly stepped takes from the bulky appearance that is so common on practically all bring bank sites. Perhaps this is an idea other centres could follow. Well done on taking part in the National Spring Clean in April. You say that you have regular cleanups during the year – perhaps you would let us know how regularly these occur. We are sorry that you have such a problem on the Athlone Road with regard to dumping just out of the village. It is important also that you consider a Litter Control Plan. This should form part of your 3 or 5 year plan. This need not be a complicated plan, but should involve working jointly with your local authority's Environment Section. You should consult the "The Roscommon Litter Management Plan 2011- 2014". This will give you lots of ideas and suggest ways where you can dovetail your projects with that Plan. Such forward planning will give you an additional advantage in this area also.

Tidiness:

It is awful that the 'Welcome to Curraghboy' sign on the Roscommon road was stolen! We noted the two empty upright poles here awaiting the replacement. We also noted the lovely pink flowers which will set off your new sign in due course. As an adjudicator this is the first time this problem has been encountered. We note that you have a new sign on order. We would suggest that instead of spraying kerbs that you investigate organic methods of weed control - or indeed use the old-fashioned manual methods, as spraying is detrimental to the environment. Well done on removing the cable ties from lampposts in the village. A derelict house on an approach to the village requires some attention. We noted a redundant B and B sign on an otherwise very well landscaped and presented house. The corrugated shed behind the house would benefit from painting. A shed wall at the Rural Development Company office site - which faces the adjoining field - would benefit from painting, as it faces ones approach from the Four Roads direction. An area beyond Menton's had a gravel mound and weedy access area to farm buildings. At this point the stone wall would benefit from your proposed repair work throughout the village. A house as you approach the Kiltoom junction would benefit from painting - although the garden looks really well. The front white boundary needs repainting. The gate at the school could do with some repairing. The Eircom building near the school would also benefit from painting.

Waste Minimisation:

We note that you have had regular cleanups and that you continue to encourage schoolchildren to help you. However cleanup days antilitter segregation do not in themselves constitute waste minimisation. Waste minimisation involves the prevention of waste accumulation in the first case. It is really what it says – to minimise on waste production before we, as a community, private or public create it. You could increase your marks considerably in this section. The Environment section of your local authority, Roscommon County Council, could certainly help you to move forward in relation to this category. You might even consider conducting an audit of the waste produced in the village with a view to considering how it can be reduced. The wall so remember to read what the Tidy Towns Handbook has to say about this category. Your Green Flag school will also be of great assistance in this area.

Residential Areas:

Well done on encouraging residents in the village to paint their houses in the past year. We are glad that everybody takes responsibility for their own 'patch.' This shows good community spirit. You referred to the painting of all walls and gates to be painted by the Tidy Towns under this heading 'Residential.' However, we assume you mean all communal walls or are you undertaking to paint all residential walls and residential gates in the village yourselves? In general boundary walls throughout the village are in need of a re-paint and we note that you are planning to do just this. We look forward to sparkling boundary walls in 2013! This includes really good clean residential front boundaries throughout Curraghboy.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Thank you for your photographs of the situation before you attended to work on the approach roads. These are being returned carefully to you with all your other submission material. We note that your main aim this year was to deal with all approach roads into the village and we acknowledge the work you have carried out in this area. We also acknowledge the help that the TÚS and the FÁS worker gave you. We assume you were also helped at some level by Roscommon County Council when working on public roads. We also note the extra work you wish to undertake on the Mount Talbot/Four Roads approach. We note – although you insert this under 'Landscaping' category – that you have cleaned all the sides of the approach roads and lawn seed has been sown to make them more attractive. You are also planning in the future to contact the local

landowners for permission to rebuild the stone walls along the roadside. Good luck with this – as it is a good idea. We particularly liked the lovely treed approach from the Athlone side, which was also nicely trimmed. The Athlone sign on exiting the village is bent. Some front areas outside the boundaries of houses in this area need surfacing. Evidence was noted here of chemical weeding. We liked your Fáilte /Welcome to An Currach Bui sign with its lovely pink flowers. The rustic fence here needs fixing and some boundary walls need painting. The Kiltoom sign close to McDermott's is bent. The road sign at the edge of the JJ Cummins site for Athleague and Roscommon is very dirty.

General Impression:

You have tackled the problem of approach roads and as you correctly said that 'this gives a great first impression'. Curraghboy is a lovely village, and we feel that it is in the hands of a very caring community. Keep up the good work and we wish you all the best for the future. Go n-eirí libh!