

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Roosky** Ref: **554**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **263**
Category: **B** Date(s): **26/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	30	30
The Built Environment	50	33	34
Landscaping	50	41	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23	24
Litter Control	50	38	38
Tidiness	30	19	18
Waste Minimisation	20	9	9
Residential Areas	40	26	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33	34
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	259	263

Overall Development Approach:

Roosky is very welcome to the Supervalu National TidyTowns competition 2012. 14 is a good membership on your committee. You mention that you – Roosky residents Association – have regular meetings but you do not indicate what exactly 'regular' means. Are they monthly meetings? You say that Roscommon County Council and Leitrim County Council are helping you. This shows good co-operation between the local authorities themselves and your village. This is admirable. We notice the involvement of Waterways Ireland, and, indeed as usual their involvement is always an excellent intervention. We are delighted to read that your community continue to help you - both financially and with litter picks and plants maintenance. We notice that you insert notes in the weekly paper, and that you use the parish newsletter. We hope you also circulate other denominational churches in your area about your activities. We notice that you engage with the teachers and parents in the schools, but you do not mention the children. We notice that you consider the competition gives encouragement to present to help your area look its best, and we are glad of that. We missed your Mid summer celebrations and barbecue unfortunately! We are sure that you had a good evening. With regard to your application form you have tended to mix up categories and to enter projects under the wrong category heading. This is quite confusing for an adjudicator, so in future please give time to filling in the application form, read the headings and subheadings carefully, and refer to the TidyTowns Handbook for guidance on this before you finalise your application form.

Thank you for the photographs which you sent us. They are being returned to you safely. The newspaper article about the Shannon River Adventure centre made interesting and hopeful reading. We note that Roosky is spelt both as Roosky and Rooskey in different parts of your application form. We are unsure as to which is correct! Last year's adjudicator commented on the fact that you did not include a three-year plan, and unfortunately we do not appear to have received a plan in 2012 either. 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

your village 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 Tidy Towns Handbook for advice in relation to the preparation of a three or five-year plan. We will also need a map of your area in next year's application as this is a standard requirement to help the adjudicators negotiate their way around the area to be judged. It is very difficult in an adjudication report to describe places when one does not have a map or any names of housing estates or approach roads - apart from what the adjudicator can see on-the-ground. Your map should also highlight the projects you have completed during the last year. Furthermore we had to adjudicate not knowing where your village boundaries began and ended.

The Built Environment:

On the Tarmonbarry approach we noted a very nice black metal gate with a white splayed entrance. This gate is in serious need of conservation. We also admired a lovely gate lodge which had resplendent white walls and entrance splays. We later discovered - in our own research - that this is a Protected Structure in the County Roscommon Record of Protected Structures - Mt Ashleigh Gate Lodge. It is located in a lovely sylvan setting with a delightful avenue of trees leading inwards from it. A lovely long low white cottage along the Tarmonbarry approach was also admired with its delightfully simple garden and window boxes. The entire church indeed needs repainting, especially the tower which is most highly visible. Landscaping on the church site is excellent. We noted your school with its proud Green Flag flying, and we also noted that this school was the overall winner in Roscommon Tidy Schools 2011. Given the overall appearance of the school we were not surprised by this result. A sign in a field gate adjacent 'no trespassing' needs renewal. But this does not appear to be the school's responsibility. We were amused by the scarecrow in the garden who was carefully guarding the herbs and vegetables. The scarecrow looked unusually corpulent, and appeared to be wearing a hard hat and either a Tidy Towns safely jacket - or perhaps a County Council one. In any event he was supporting Roscommon! The small-scale appropriate fingerpost sign for Avondale accommodation located in a nice gravel bed under a spreading tree was admired. Coxe's Post Office, Bar and lounge is a very fine premises. The name signage looked well, and the well-painted quoins, together with the red coloured ground floor doors and fenestration/name sign were attractive. However we felt there were too many projecting items - such as the down-lighting and flagpoles - which detracted somewhat from the building. A beautifully presented two-storey white four bay premises nearby with was freshly painted and had a first-floor bay window was for sale. Well done on its excellent presentation, despite the fact that it was for sale. Another two-storey cream colour building with a 'for sale' sign (freestanding) needed repainting of its gable. Whereas we would not consider it the design of the stone built lounge as being appropriate to your streetscape, the stonework certainly is a very fine, but unfortunately the premises appeared to be closed, and one of the stone containers outside appears to have been overturned/broken. Two flagpoles on the premises were empty. The gable of the white two-storey consultancy office close to the Post Office requires repainting of its gable. Downhill of here, and somewhat closer to the river is a lovely two-storey quite building with a gables attic plan grey roofed. You mention tree planting under the 'Built Environment' category and also summer bedding plants. These should be inserted as projects undertaken for this year under the 'Landscaping' category. Your future projects as inserted in the application form under this category also involve landscaping. You have given us no details whatsoever of any work on the built environment in Roosky for this year - or indeed for the future - other than saying under 'Residential Areas' that practically all residential and business premises have been freshly painted. This is quite a pity as you have a wonderful built environment in Roosky. It would be important that gates throughout the village would be painted, as metal field gates look quite rough in the middle of the village street. As one approaches the River - on the right hand side - there is a terrace of housing and some commercial premises which were generally presented in a very neat fashion. Such a terrace is very much integral to your streetscape and important to maintain. Some unused projecting signage might be removed. The shed at right angles to the first building in this row of properties would benefit from some repainting. On the opposite side of the road is another terrace of houses - including what appears to be a 1960s type hall - has terrific potential also, but due to the economic downturn no doubt is looking a bit sad. However, some of the buildings - including the beautiful well presented four bay two-storey house with its lovely sash windows - beside the old Hall/cinema - were very much admired. Across the road a beautiful old property with tremendous chimneys looked very forlorn, and had wire security surrounds. It would appear that this is uninhabited. You have told us nothing about this building, but again looking at the Record of Protected Structures online we understand that this is Mount Carmel, a former guesthouse and is a Protected Structure. This building is on a very strategic corner at the entrance to your street having crossed the river. Can you let us know what plans - if any - there are for this building? We note that the Quay and mooring bollards are also Protected Structures, and we noted that some of the stonework in the area of Mount Carmel / bridge has been broken. We think you should have a meeting with the County Roscommon Architectural Conservation officer in relation to such issues. If the County does not have an Architectural Conservation Officer perhaps it has an Architects Department? Or you could approach the Heritage Officer for direction in how to deal with your architectural heritage - concentrating particularly on the protected structures, but not forgetting the other interesting buildings that make up your streetscape and harbour side. We noticed a lot of vegetation on the side of your bridge - which will in time - if left unattended - damage the stonework. However removal of such vegetation from such a stone bridge is a specialist exercise. The Weir Lodge building was well presented on the far side of the bridge, and the white railings and striped signage and barriers on the bridge were presented

in an exemplary fashion. Reynolds, near the bridge could do with a reduction of projecting signage and lighting. Centra was presented brightly. However its dense roller shutters gave a very barracks like approach to this strategic corner. Would it be possible to have the roller security shutters placed behind the window displays and yet still lit at night? Having said that we must complement Centra on the magnificent well presented elevation to the quayside - which is bright and cheerful and very welcoming as one crosses the bridge into the village. We admired very much also the lateral planters which separate the car parking spaces and add a nice touch to this area. The row in which the Garda Station is located is neat.

The Lock area looked after largely by Waterways Ireland (do you help?) is a huge asset in your built environment. All the built aspects - the lockkeeper's house, the wonderful stone harbour/lock walls, the gates, bridges, moorings etc. are looked after very professionally insofar as resources permit. We describe this area in detail under 'Landscaping'. Roosky has quite a number of very important buildings and objects of great interest from the built environment point of view, and we would like to see you giving attention to how you will move forward in the future in this area. We realise that finance is constrained everywhere - but perhaps you might apply to LEADER for funding for the preparation of an architectural conservation plan for your village.

Landscaping:

You have mentioned the tree planting on Road R371 under the 'Built Environment' category, but we credit you here with it. We also credit you with the summer bedding plant projects here (also entered under the wrong heading). Under the correct heading - this heading of 'Landscaping' you mention the construction of a new shrub bed on the Golden Mile approach past the church including a wildflower bed. The long landscaped bed beside the car park near the church - at the beginning of the Golden Mile - looked very well despite the vast sea of tarmac beside which it sits. The low shrubs looked extremely well and we noted a directional sign for the Golden Mile. The water feature in the car park in itself was attractive, but looked somewhat lost again in this vast sea of tarmac. The lavender beds in particular were admired at this location. Can anything be done to mark out the car park area and divide sections of it with planting beds? You have already dealt with the boundaries of this site along the main road and along the Golden Mile Road in an excellent fashion, so perhaps you can work on a landscape plan for the interior of the space. Whereas this summer bedding plants can look very colourful and attractive we would encourage you to broaden your planting horizons through planting perennial native trees and shrubs, which are more sustainable and are more attractive in general for wildlife. We note that additional landscaping has been added to the Shannon Lodge nursing home. Some nice stonewalling and trees on the riverside of the old industrial factory site looked well along the street frontage. The 'Jewel in the Crown' in your landscaping - both soft and hard is the Waterways Ireland Lock area downstream of Roosky. Roosky Lock is a most charming and beautifully presented area and once again we would like to congratulate Waterways Ireland on the absolutely delightful presentation of this area. You do not mention what work you have carried out with Waterways Ireland. The red paint which has been used on the old Lockkeeper's house and on some of the machinery looks tremendous against the stonework. The details of the moorings picked out in red, the lifebelt is surrounded in red, the stays in red, the planters in red - all contribute to a most tasteful whole. We noticed some very interesting stone engraved pavement at the Lock area which we could not read in its entirety. We would love to see this protected for the future. The landscaping of the area was also delightfully planned and executed. We realise that the more modern additions to the lock keepers house are derelict, but somehow in the overall picture this did not detract unduly from the totality of the Lock experience. This is interesting industrial archaeology also. Well done on the maintenance of the timber sash windows in the lockkeeper's house. We liked the simple 'Longseoireacht na Sionnaine / Shannon Navigation' lettering over the red hall door of the lock keepers house. Even the red flowering shrub at the corner of the house was an imaginative touch. We hope you appreciate the taste and excellence of this presentation to you by Waterways Ireland in your village. Seating might be improved or possibly painted in red. On adjudication day the area was being enjoyed by a considerable number of teenagers who obviously respect the area - as no litter or evidence of any abuse of the area was present. Credit to your young people! The 'projects planned' listed under this heading are looked forward to - where they relate to landscaping. Where they relate to other categories please enter them under those categories for 2013.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The bird sanctuary area maintained by Roosky/Killglass Gun Club is 2 miles outside the village. Is this used on a regular basis by villagers who are interested in wildlife? If so please tell us more about it. Otherwise perhaps it is not part of the adjudication area for the village. You mention that Roscommon County Council awarded the Golden Mile joint litter free status last year to you, and you are striving to maintain it into the future. The grass edges of this route were trimmed, but we were surprised to find that hedging here showed signs of relatively recent trimming. Remember that it is permissible to trim hedging along cultivated ground (e.g. gardens) throughout the year. However with regard to hedge trimming, you are reminded that it is an offence under the Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2006 to cut vegetation in a hedge or ditch on lands not cultivated between 1st March and 31st August annually - this is for the protection of nesting birds. Please be careful of this in future years. Get your hedge trimming complete by the end of February, and, even

if you feel there are some straggly bits of hedges bounding uncultivated ground (fields) don't be tempted to tidy them after March 1st! We nonetheless admired the great display of irises, daisies and meadowsweet along this route. We admired the bird feeding box on the wooden plinth near the Shannon View estate/ESB substation. There was evidence of chemical weeding along burnt patches by the grass at River Gardens. We would recommend in general that you investigate organic nonchemical methods of dealing with weeds. Either this - or perhaps they can be dealt with in the old-fashioned manual way. You might speak to your County Heritage Officer in relation to further advice on this. Chemical weeding is injurious to the natural environment.

Litter Control:

The bring banks are located on the Quay. In essence they were clean and tidy but lacking in any landscaping or presentational qualities. You are partakers in the annual Spring Clean. Well done on this. You plan to maintain all areas on a daily basis as litter-free as possible. We noticed that the community volunteers and FÁS personnel help you with this. Generally the village was litter free. A few pieces of litter were noted near a small terraced estate set back from Main Street.

It is important also that you consider a Litter Control Plan. This should form part of your overall 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 and increase your marks in this category.

Tidiness:

You have removed weeds along footpaths and kerbs. This is quite noticeable as the road edges looked very tidy generally. Well done to Leitrim County council on the fencing off of the vacant estate passed the Vistamed factory. Some gates along the Golden Mile route are poor in presentation. There is an abandoned mobile home and an auctioneering sign in this area also. However, it is good to see that people were using the Golden Mile on adjudication day. Some very poor green fencing – well past its 'sell by date' at the end of the estate near the school and some rubble looked untidy. A small terraced estate close by with setback main Street houses looked well. The car park wall near Weir Lodge needs painting. Seating on the village side of the Gate Lodge on the Tarmonbarry approach road (set against the grass embankment) was in need of renewal. The untidy grass behind and around the seat was in serious need of trimming. Near the Shannon View estate - what looked like a small substation on a concrete plinth - had a gate which was falling down. This is set within a broad grass road edge. Another substation-like block with flat roof and cream walls requires repainting and general tidying of its surrounds, including screening of its lateral security fence. For identification purposes this particular building has a notice attached with red tape to its door. You have dealt well with the small derelict shed adjacent to the two-storey stone coloured house - beside the setback green space with hedging and floral containers. The power pole in this nice green space is particularly strident. However we appreciate that it is going to be difficult to find funding for undergrounding of power lines in the present economic climate. On-footpath car parking was noted throughout the village, and this lends a very untidy appearance to the street, and also damages the footpaths. A large concrete set-back area from the street with corrugated sheeting as a boundary looked bare, and could certainly benefit from some planting - apart from the baskets attached to the block wall. Part of the corrugated sheeting also needs renewal. A bungalow in the Main Street, although in need of some attention had a nice colourful shrubbed garden and delightfully clean and its well-presented outbuildings and boundary wall were admired. The old factory site looked extremely poorly, apart from its very nice gates which require painting. These gates could become a feature in the street if the surrounds were in any way worthy of them. The footpath here needs surfacing, the wall needs painting, the flagpoles need removal or having flags attached. But the worst feature was the large splayed area with the redundant blue poles and the excessive amount of signage, not ameliorated in any way by the plastic flower pots which had nothing of any colour left beside the gates. Perhaps you could make this area a priority to improve for next year, as it is very central in your village and presently very poor in its appearance. An adjacent planning application notice - in relation to further information sought dated 2008 should be removed, unless it is still current – which is unlikely. The Roosky notice board in this area is somewhat faded, and the backdrop of the brick wall and unclean plinth certainly do not add to its embellishment. We would hope that some of the temporary signage for the hotel – now that it is closed – could be removed. We can understand a reason why you would wish to leave the more permanent signage - hope for a new owner. The Roosky boat hire premises would benefit from a rationalisation of signage on all sides, and the corrugated building beside needs repainting. The metal and wire enclosing wire fencing around this property looks poorly in this lovely location. The Shannon sign on the bridge is dirty. And the lifebelt holder in raw metal along the quayside would benefit from painting. We notice that you are maintaining and keeping the toilets tidy. The toilet block has a lot of signage. Is the Fabric House closed - as we noticed a for sale sign? The gable facing the approach to the village from the river has excessively scaled signage.

Waste Minimisation:

We have considered the tidiness of the bottle banks under the litter category. You plan to segregate litter collected by Roscommon County Council. Waste minimisation is about more than segregation. It 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. 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:

You say that practically all residential houses have been freshly painted. Well done on this. In your 'projects planned' under this category you refer to 'the maintenance of roundabouts on approach roads' - which is not relevant to this category - and you also refer to the maintenance of open spaces in the estates throughout the village which is very relevant to this category. Water Vale Estate has nice laurel hedging and nice trees. It is well presented and the kerbs are weed free. Shannon View estate is clean and has no weeds. Lios na hAbhann has nice low shrubs and paving. The unfinished part of this estate is well screened. However, the large auctioneering double sided hoarding - at the corner with the main road - detracts from the entrance area, and should if possible be removed. A creeper-clad B and B is well presented and well landscaped. Shannon Lodge nursing home is clean and tidy. The road boundary walls for River Walk – the estate at the foot of the Golden Mile need painting and the verges need weeding. The boundary walls at the hammerhead area internally in the estate also need painting. The open space would benefit from more trees. At River Gardens some walls need painting. Port Rose estate looked really well presented and maintained.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The village street has been completely resurfaced by Roscommon County Council. Well done to the local authority! You are hoping to have the footpaths throughout the village upgraded. On the Tarmonbarry approach road in the general area of the 50 kph speed limit sign we admired the Fisheries building/Lakeland Fishing which was very well presented. We also noted something less attractive – a burnt-out car and a derelict house on the opposite side of the road. The traditional Fáilte County Roscommon Village welcome sign sat in a nice rockery type flower bed on well-trimmed grass, and the approach from here towards the village was very sylvan with tall green trees and hedges. The yield sign at the Tarmonbarry approach junction with the main road had some graffiti added on adjudication day. Beside this however was the lovely flower bed containing the other signage relevant to the junction.

The Strokestown road approach is well trimmed, and has another good sign of the generic County Roscommon village sign – the tall sign with the semi circular head. A bungalow on this approach had good yellow flowers in planters/gravel bed. The junction sign needs replacing, as does the Roosky metal sign on this approach also. This is a nice treed approach with mature trees. It has good road markings and new planting. A large sign exiting Roosky in this area has no kph notice on it. This approach is quite suburban in character, but almost all the properties are well presented. The Longford Road is well presented generally but the Roosky metal sign is slightly bent and the pole attached to the 50 kph speed limit sign / black and white/ is extremely dirty. The circular speed limit signs themselves are clean. On the Vista Ahmed approach a weedy bridge was noted outside the speed limit sign. Close to the industrial/power station two derelict houses were noted one on the corner of the main road. The unfinished estate just outside and inside the 50 kph was noted. On the Dromod approach a post and wire fence along the river requires landscaping. The grass was neatly cut. The spring flowers must have looked very beautiful in February and March. You replant the flower beds and troughs with summer bedding plants. In the future you plan more flower beds on the M4 side of the Shannon to be raised for a better visual aspect and planted with summer bedding plant.

General Impression:

Go n-eirí libh!