

# Tidy Towns Competition 2014

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Doonbeg** Ref: **67**  
County: **Clare** Mark: **291**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **18/06/2014**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2014</b>
Community Involvement & Planning	60	45
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	38
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	36
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	58
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	29
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	32
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>291</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Dún Beag. Welcome Doonbeg to the Super Valu 2014 National Tidy Towns competition. You have a mixture of members -those who prefer to meet and those who prefer to work 'on instruction'! You hold monthly meetings which are open to the public from March to September. Do you hold any off-season meetings to assist in your forward planning? You tell us that you get a tremendous level of voluntary help also.

You have support from the Youth Club. Your 'parent group' - Doonbeg Community Development - supports you. You also indicate your long-standing working relationship with various statutory bodies. This shows that you are held in high regard.

You acknowledge the help of the Community Development Office with your communications. Your other communications include traditional and modern. We hope that you include minority churches in your news circulation.

You visit the school and keep up-to-date with plans. The children assist in the annual National Spring Clean and other tasks. You find entering the competition to be very encouraging and motivating. Your work, you say, has created a great sense of community pride. It has also improved your village for residents and visitors alike.

Thank you for submitting your three-year plan. It is quite concise and a little short on detail for the second and third years. Your map was helpful to the adjudicator. In the Entry Form guidelines this year you were requested to number each individual project for this year's adjudication sequentially, and to follow through by marking each project with the same number on your map. It is important to read the guidelines annually. You should also mark and name housing estates on your map.

### Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:

The restored low white buildings on the Kilkee side of the bridge looked pristine with white paint. However the gable at the same side would benefit from being painted to the same standard. The two-storey building on the village side has lovely hood moulding which has been picked out in contrasting paint. Some re plastering of the wall appears to be necessary. A kayaking fly post on a very rusty pole on the immediate approach to the bridge detracted from this lovely location.

Your bridge is a most important part of your built heritage – possibly the most important. We do not recommend the insertion of hanging baskets into such important parts of our architectural heritage, as they can damage the fabric of the structure. Moreover your bridge needs no embellishment. It is more than enough in itself. We would recommend

that – should you agree – you might contact the Architectural Conservation Officer of the local authority with a view to removing the hanging baskets. This needs to be done with care, as otherwise you may damage the stonework in the bridge. In any event for the future it is important to remember this issue. This particularly applies to Protected Structures. We loved the planting on the wall of the abutments to the bridge on the outer side of the village. However, it would be important to ensure that these do not interfere with the fabric of the stonework – especially in relation to root structures.

Caisléan An Dún Beag is a good sign - using Irish - with information accessible to the pedestrian about the castle in the foreground. However this sign was surrounded by very tall grass on adjudication day.

The village pump at the far side of the bridge looked really well with its bright red paint and simple enclosure. The Widow O'Donnell circular plaque here was a most interesting addition, which did not interfere visually with the setting of the pump, but added to the enjoyment of the area. The base of the wall was slightly grubby and there were some dead branches just behind the enclosing wall of the pump.

The church looked well with its nice simple low planting scheme. On adjudication day there was no Green Flag flying at the school. There were two flagpoles with one other flag flying. The grass was nicely cut around the school grounds.

At the Rural Social Scheme and Tourist Information Offices - a lot of signs and banners at the shop beside/turquoise building detracted somewhat from this area. There appeared to be some work going on at the back of these premises. The graveyard was neat but an orange wall/gable across the road needs painting.

Tubridy's was well presented but had a lot of clutter including two sandwich board signs and a flower planter on the public road. The post office on the Kilrush Road was very neat and its simple signage was attractive. The Garda Station wall needs painting. An abandoned house (near the Junior Tidy Towns bed) had old planning notices in the window.

A letter was missing from the Sean Hayes property sign, and the window looked somewhat untidy because of the number of notices contained in the window. The old school beside needs paint, as does the boundary wall. We admired a lovely white cottage with an unusual gate on the opposite side of the road. At Comerford's it was good to see the use of Irish in the sign 'Ceol agus Caint,' and also the 'Fáilte Romhat' sign. P. Morrissey's premise was clean and well painted. The Handmade Craft building looked well. Local teenagers have helped with artwork. You have been involved in painting many buildings.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

You have upgraded the Lakeside Park area, providing various amenities to extend its use, including a boardwalk and a pier. You also planted a whitethorn hedge here. Other work included the installation of a picnic pod as well as the extension of a footpath to provide a linked walk. You say that you also re seeded the lawn area, but on adjudication day there were still a lot of bare patches. There were a lot of small yellow and other notices on the steps area which detracted from your newly presented Park. A sub standard litter bin located on the grass here should be replaced. It appears also that some weed killer had been used on the banks by the riverside. This is not appropriate – particularly in such close proximity to the river. The lovely enclosed flagged path inside the stone wall bordered by good hedging at the edge of the Park was greatly admired. Thank you for the good photograph with the various notes indicating these works. You have provided disabled access at the Lakeside Park. Well done on this most important aspect. However we have to say that the reverse was the case in the Riverside Park. There is no ramp or graded footpath to the riverbank, and the steps in the park are uneven.

The Riverside Park is beautifully maintained and its location gives wonderful views of your beautiful stone bridge. Sometimes bridges are not appreciated because people cannot see them laterally, and only pass over them. So it is great that in Doonbeg the wonderful bridge can be appreciated. A Famine Memorial was erected at the Riverside Park. The enclosing raised stone bed had a floral display. The mortaring appeared to be rough cement. We would strongly recommend that any in any stone wall building in the area - that either dry stone walls or walls mortared with lime mortar which is traditional - be the choice. The upturned Clare currach with the village name 'as Gaeilge' was very interesting and the interpretive plaque likewise.

You have maintained landscaped areas and pots and bed. You mention spraying amongst this maintenance work. You also mention spraying under the Tidiness category. Please refer to our comments under Wildlife.

You acknowledge the person who has given you land for the erection of a poly tunnel and also the resident who donated the frame for the tunnel.

We would like to particularly commend the Junior Tidy Towns for their wonderful stone enclosed raised bed. The bed with its gravel base and great shrubs is delightful, and very appropriate for a rural village landscaping project. The signage is unobtrusive and we commend them also for that. The Doonbeg village sign in the same area has magnificent lavender planting adjacent.

### **Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádúrtha:**

You erected a bird hide at the Lakeside Park. This is a good and convenient resource for study and enjoyment. You planted a wildflower seeds in the unfinished housing development on the Kilkee Road.

.It appears that weed killer had been used in various places. This is not good for the environment. We would encourage you to consider nonchemical methods of weed control. If you speak to your County Heritage Officer, we are sure that you would be well advised in this matter.

Although you mention the purchase of paddle boats and a pier under this category heading they are not direct contributors to this category unless they are used perhaps for waterborne surveys or field trips – perhaps they will be. Neither are the security cameras contributing in any obvious way nor the tarring and chipping of paths. However the overall upgrading of the riverbank will make riverside nature appreciation more accessible. We enjoyed reading the shore angling information board data across the road.

(You have also installed newly installed a boardwalk in the lake for fishing.)

You maintained a duck feeding programme through the winter. You say that you have investigated the possibility of further walks emanating from the village to the White Strand and Doughmore Beach, but you have given us no further relevant background information on this.

On the White strand road marsh area we read the wildlife sign. However this sign is surrounded by very uneven and churned-up ground. We expect that this is a result of the winter storms, and that by next year you will have this immediate area at least back 'in order.'

You have a very high mark already in this category. As you live in a very rich area environmentally you can move forward with plans to further study/survey, interpret and manage your natural environment for the good of your village and its wildlife. We suggest that you consult the Heritage Office and the Biodiversity Officer of your local authority in relation to how to move forward with plans. You should also read the Tidy Towns Handbook which is quite detailed on this category. The Heritage Council's 'Wildlife in Towns and Villages' booklet is also a useful resource. Engaging with schools (or colleges) on nature study surveys can lead in time to the further analysis and interpretation/presentation of the findings. We understand that Clare County Council has launched a biodiversity plan for the county. We suggest that you look into this plan and see how you can be part of the overall future of Clare's bio diversity.

We wondered if the Heron we saw by the river was the same Heron that last year's adjudicator noticed!

### **Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:**

Litter is segregated on cleanups. You stored and replanted begonias. Remember that recycling – although praiseworthy is low on the Sustainable Waste and Resource Management pyramid. We think that you would benefit from some help in moving forward in this category. We would recommend that you consider attending or organising a Sustainable Waste and Resource Management seminar. Perhaps your County Environmental Awareness Officer might be able to suggest where you might attend such an event. You may even host such an event. You could increase your marks in this category as a community by taking on board some of the suggested projects in the leaflet distributed with the Entry Form in 2013. The Tidy Towns Handbook is also a good source of information in this regard.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Well done to the local school and youth club on helping you in the National Spring Clean and on regular cleanups. The regularity of cleanups increases during the summer period.

You planted honeysuckles near the unsightly pipe on the bridge.

The relocation of the bottle banks is an issue for this category heading rather than for the Sustainable Waste and Resource Management category. You power washed the bottle banks but the white bin is still dirty. Perhaps it needs replacement. The sign is a little faded. We noticed a few pieces of litter around the bins and also the hub cap of a car.

Further litter was noticed around the access to the school near the bins and on the unfinished footpath.

We would suggest that you consider a painting scheme for all field gates within the village and on the approaches in a suitable chosen colour. This will improve the appearance of the approaches and also give a sense of unity to the village. It would be particularly helpful, if, for instance the field gate near the village sign on the Kilrush approach were painted, as this is right beside the generic County Clare village sign.

We noticed fly posting just outside the church grounds on a pole with a black and white flag.

Fly posting was noted on rusty gates on the Kilrush approach. We noted some litter there also in the form of two plastic bottles. There was a weedy footpath on the left-hand side of this approach to the village. As one exits the Kilrush road there was a fly post and empty sign holder facing the exit.

### **Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:**

In the Main Street most of the houses are very well presented. Well done on providing assistance to the elderly

residents with painting. You also are working on the provision of a social housing scheme adjacent to the church grounds. We hope that you have made provision for the retention of as many trees as possible on this site. We understand your frustration with the unfinished estate.

The Radharc na hAbhann houses – which appear to be holiday homes – were well presented. They are in keeping with the village streetscape - type and scale.

We observed no name to the housing estate on the road to White Strand. Perhaps you can look into this. It is also important to mark this (and other) estate(s) on your village map. There was a rusty sewer vent pipe near the access to this estate.

The Rent an Irish cottage village has good planting. One property needs painting, and the estate would benefit from additional landscaping.

### **Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:**

On the Kilrush approach trimming was required between the village name sign and the 50 K pH speed limit sign. We noticed parking on a footpath on this approach. Car parking on footpaths is obstructive to footpath users, and also looks untidy. As we already have commented - Fly posting was noted on rusty gates. We noted some litter in the form of two plastic bottles. There was a weedy footpath on the left-hand side of this approach to the village. As one exits the Kilrush road there was a fly post and empty sign holder facing the exit. The Fairgreen Park and Slí na Sláinte signs looked very nice in an enclosed space.

On the Kilkee road advertising for Tubridy's detracts from the village sign. Some trimming was needed along this approach. As you correctly indicate your village is situated on the Wild Atlantic Way. Signage to this effect was observed.

You have renewed the safety marking colours on the bridge. We noticed a 'headless' pole near the junction/Junior Tidy Towns bed. The relevant sign should be re attached or the pole should be removed.

On the White Strand road approach there were some weedy footpaths. In general throughout the village the road would benefit from resurfacing. Fly posting was noted on this approach road and the village sign was a little lost on a grass bank with grass growing close to its lettering. The untidiness around this area will, we hope, be improved as we observed a road works sign adjacent. There were not any road works in place on our visit. Trimming is necessary at the 'stop' sign exiting the White Strand road on the right-hand side only. We admired flowers in the traffic island here and also the bed on the opposite side of the road.