

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dromod** Ref: **314**
County: **Leitrim** Mark: **315**
Category: **B** Date(s): **09/06/2014**
19/07/2014

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	43
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	43
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	44
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	65
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	39
TOTAL MARK	450	315

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

A warm welcome to Dromod to the 2014 SuperValu TidyTowns Competition. Your Tidy Town's involvement is a memorable and proud one stretching back for more than 40 years. Your 50 page entry form was accompanied by 6 substantial documents which all but over whelmed your adjudicator. Dromod is a community favoured by topography and with a deep seated awareness of its interesting and varied history. We admired the 'Keep Dromod Tidy' signs in many places. Also catching the eye were the delightful old mile stones with distances to the four towns. The Harbour area, for many the focal point, continues to be very well presented and enhanced now by the wildlife amenity area here. The area was being well respected and was very suitably presented on the day of adjudication. Winning the Leitrim County Award has become almost an annual fixture. Your submission makes clear that there is widespread approval and good will towards the Tidy Towns Campaign with both old and young actively engaging in the various tasks you undertake. These range from the national schools, Annaduff and Boracoola, the ICA Group and GAA teams while you avail of assistance from the Rural Social Scheme and Leitrim Development Company. The addition of the TUS Programme worker has broadened still further your scope to undertake worthwhile projects.

Your skill and expertise in utilising social media is also quite valuable. However you haven't overlooked the more traditional methods of keeping in touch with the community - the local newspapers, posters and public meetings. Visibility is heightened by your innovative 'Cleanup in Progress' signage which was much admired. Your May time Dromod Family Festival, which continues its 5 year long success story, is a valuable social activity which helps to inculcate a community wide identity.

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

Consultation with stake holders involved in all your activities has clearly proved successful. The thatch work done on the two, previously derelict, properties has enormously enhanced their respective areas. We admired especially the thatched cottage with its new mock windows. The Credit Union was very well presented as was O'Conner's Fine Food and News Agency building with its strong blue and white primary colour scheme while the shop front itself stood out in bold red. The fine mural on the gable end of Brandywell caught the eye. Cox's Steakhouse and Bar was very well maintained and presented. Attention to and maintenance of the many stone walls was noted. Your programme of attention to currently unoccupied premises ranging from the provision of net curtains inside, to the painting of the outside, to the installation of a mock window on block board are splendid stop gap measures which you have used to good effect in a number of locations.

Your identification of the various building of architectural/historic interest throughout the town is a worthwhile exercise. Many of these are focused on your railway heritage and this area is delightfully well presented. Of

particular merit is the splendid Cavan Leitrim Railway Museum utilising the red brick building, itself dating back to the late 19th Century. The closure of the Garda Station is a setback but may only be a temporary one. In common with the success of the Railway Museum located within the current Railway Station it may be fruitful to apply the same thinking to the now available Garda Station. The National Garda Museum in Dublin Castle has been closed for a number of years; perhaps Dromod could fulfil that role in their station. Equally there is growing interest in the personal of the RIC and Garda from a genealogical as well as a historic standpoint. A section dealing with significant Garda - or infamous individuals - who have occupied the cells could certainly become an interesting and worthwhile additional attraction, perhaps staffed by a retired Garda with an interest in these matters. It is pleasant to acknowledge the focus on the Irish language which is very evident throughout the village.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Clearly this is an element of the competition to which great attention is paid. We admired greatly the little boy precariously perched on the railway signal and on the opposite side of this open area, the well, small fountain, shrubs and miniature thatched cottages sculpture. This was a delightful and colourful set piece presentation. Other incidental opportunities were fully availed of to enhance landscaping opportunities. The extensive tree planting on Boffin Avenue and also the Old Coast Road Nature Walk were a delight. The new trees planted near the existing Railway Station were admired. The splendid Sensory Garden opposite Crowes Garage is both innovative and visually satisfying and this area was delightfully well presented. The use of murals in many locations contributed substantially to a colourful and always interesting vista. The very interesting hedging reflective of a train shape was greatly admired. The landscaping in Shannon Harbour among many other locations collectively gave a wonderful sense of natural movement yet unobtrusive tranquillity throughout the centre. The practice of suitably sited murals added greatly to a splendid sense of colour often containing an agreeable educational element as well.

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

Thankfully an awareness of the wildlife and the essentially creation of a food chain has informed choices which has lead to and facilitated a far greater presence of birdlife particularly also wildlife throughout the area. The walkway to the harbour, the Old Coach Road and the village walk are all significant in this regard. The Butterfly Garden and Insect Hotel at the very centre of the village emphasises the importance given to this element of your presentation. Nowhere is this more apparent than at the Sensory Garden. Although still in its developmental stage, over time this will become a significant resource available with equal facility to the old and young, those with special needs or visually impaired. At the same time it is clearly likely to prove of value to birds via the insects on which they feed and wildlife generally.

Congratulations to all involved in the selection of Dromod to represent Ireland in the Entente Florale Competition. It is well merited and you are wished well in this year's keenly contested, Europe wide event. The commissioning of a bio-diversity and wildlife survey for the village is an important development and we look forward to the fruits of it in subsequent years. Taking advice from Conservation Ireland and Birds Ireland to facilitate the development of wildlife and birdlife habitat is commendable. The wildlife habitat at your harbour has the potential to offer refuges for a wide variety of wildlife. The careful and appropriate treatment of marshes and pond areas all feeds in to a more extensive and varied birdlife as did constant, unfailing attention to the availability of the essential food chain. Nesting boxes and bird houses in trees likewise is an important inducement. Have you given any thought to the creation of a suitable bat sanctuary? Bats are notoriously shy creatures so it would be wrong to expect any quick results.

Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaíthe:

It is clear from your entry details that you are very much on message as far as this category is concerned. Its primary focus is and ought to be on the prevention of avoidable waste both in terms of food, water and scarce energy for heating and lighting. Your campaign 'Zero Waste Dromod' - featuring encouragement to all businesses to reduce waste and implement sustainable practices - is precisely the intended focus. The monthly newsletter is a commendable initiative but as far as possible this should use social media rather than hard copy to get out the message. Undoubtedly encouraging individual householder to grow some of their own food has many positive and beneficial side effects apart from the obvious savings.

We admired the three separate litter boxes at the harbour inviting people to divide their litter into plastic, paper or tin. No opportunity has been missed to get out this important message. In addition to reducing, creating ways to insure durables are reused is valuable. Well done on the book sale at this year's Family Festival. Utilising the election posters by using them as bird boxes and insect hotels is an innovative and imaginative reuse. The recycling initiatives you have undertaken is similarly worthwhile. Metal recycling and especially that for electrical goods in March last are worthwhile. We will be interested to learn of the outcome of your mobile phone recycling programme. In all of your activities you have been energetic and creative in getting the message to the wider community.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The related activities of litter control and tidiness have been amalgamated this year into one composite category.

The creation of your litter plan which focused attention on the issue and created a monitoring programme is worthwhile. We will be interested in learning how this has worked out in practice. While the advertising signs on approach roads are not too extreme there remains room for improvement and it is pleasing to note that you are continuing to contact the businesses involved to enhance this aspect of your approach roads presentation. The use of sprayed stencils on the ground, rather than vertical signage, has in itself reduced the clutter which can sometime unwittingly occur with a too liberal profusion of signs. Well done on the decision to eliminate the chemical spraying

of weeds in preference to dealing with their removal manually.

It is pleasant to report on the absence of litter during the day of adjudication; we observed the large number of litter bins all of which appeared to be fully respected. Your litter patrols once a week and the involvement of local schools are all contributing to improvements here. Well done on your enthusiastic and energetic involvement in the National Spring Clean Week. In addition to the obvious immediate benefit it continues to raise awareness of litter among the wider population. It is significant that the actual amount of litter collected in the last three years continues to fall while on average more than two thirds of the material involved is suitable for recycling.

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

Not all housing estates have visible name plates at their entrances which makes it difficult for us to direct our comments accurately. We welcome your decision to seek entrance signage to all estates by next year. Having 5 members from various residential areas on your Tidy Towns Committee helps to insure a two-way flow of information and ideas. As you rightly point out the absence of a management or residential committee is an obstacle to be overcome. One development which has proved successful in many centres is the introduction of inter area competitions for overall presentation, best garden and other categories as appropriate in each precise setting or circumstances. This adjudicator has great sympathy with the difficulties you encounter where a substantial number of the properties in any given estate is rented, especially when this situation is coupled with a number of houses still awaiting occupiers. The new playground is a wonderful addition to the facilities and amenities for children and has a substantial beneficial social dividend as well.

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

We admired greatly the village name spelt out in hedging. Many informational signs were consulted and admired. Some signs are partially obscured by encroaching vegetation. Ballinamore, Moyhill and Enniskillen signs for example. The enhanced road surfaces at the traffic calming devices were admired. The extensive tree planting schemes carried out on all approach roads is a wonderful and long term development. The grass verges were suitably but not excessively cut back. It is a good idea to leave an area uncut near the hedges to promote wildlife and create the much needed wildlife corridor and food chain. The presentation of streets and back areas within the town has received considerable attention and well done on the manner it has been presented.

This is a splendid presentation in which it is obvious a great majority of those fortunate to live in Dromod participate. Compliments to all on a job well done.

Second Round Adjudication:

Congratulations on your very comprehensive entry. Your excellent annotated map and photographs were particularly useful to this adjudicator as were the useful town maps in the village and at the harbour. Perhaps the playground could be added to the map at the harbour as families arriving by boats may miss this chance to give the kids a treat and a place to run about. The villages' participation in the Entente Florale meant the floral presentations throughout the village were spectacular. I particularly liked the use of strong blocks of colour over large beds as at the road junctions as it creates such a strong coordinated impression which really drew the village together. However the emphasis you have placed on perennial and structure planting is what really impressed this adjudicator. The use of nectar rich shrubs and perennials such as the butterfly garden ensure a more sustainable approach to your landscape structure. This approach is to be applauded especially the effort shown to concentrate your resources on avenue and road side trees. We especially loved the introduction of the edible landscape concept with your community orchard and edible hedge and even tasted one of your strawberries from the hanging basket at the sensory garden. Build on this approach to advance sustainable living and community building. We hope initiatives like these will inspire joyful community engagement, and educate citizens while making sustainability delicious. Ensure all planting is followed through with adequate aftercare. We noted some of the new roadside trees showing signs of stress and larger trees newly planted need to be watered during dry spells to ensure they do not succumb to drought. Remove tree ties on all trees after 2 years to ensure they are not damaged by rubbing. Some of the beech hedge at the playground may also need to be replaced where it has failed and the hedge here could be continued all of the way around the boundary fence to enhance its setting. Any litter that was noted was minimal and consisted mainly of cigarette ends with the exception of the playground where a little more litter was in evidence at the end of a sunny day, mainly ice cream wrappers. One of the main strengths of the community is the high standard of presentation of your residential areas so well done to all for all the efforts involved to reach the standards seen on the day. This year's adjudicator has comprehensively commented on your entry submission and I fully concur with the comments outlined. It was certainly a pleasure to visit Dromod and the committee and community are to be congratulated on their impressive submission which was followed through with impressive works on the ground.