

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Coolaney** Ref: **680**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **309**
Category: **C** Date(s): **19/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	45	46
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	37	38
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	42	42
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	33	34
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	17	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61	62
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	37
TOTAL MARK	450	302	309

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Many thanks for your entry in this year's Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for a really lovely collection of documents, pictures and examples of your work. It was thoughtful of you to include a snippet from your website. Our workload doesn't permit us to view all the web-based material we might like to so this was very welcome. Especial praise is due to your map and the talented cartographer(s) responsible for same. This is a model of how it should be done and on a manageable scale. A humble suggestion: on the blank space to the right hand side of the map, why not add a key to the 18 items numbered? It would save the adjudicator next year' having to take your entire entry form along for the walk (which may be in the rain...).

Communication is not a problem for you and you use modern and traditional media to effect as evinced by your press and web cuttings. You name-check the relevant organisations, well done. You cite texting as being important as a tool it is assumed that you use web-texts - very cost effective! You are to be congratulated for your 46 years of involvement in this competition and indeed for the motivations that have kept you involved.

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

Dereliction is not a major issue for you but appear to be tackling the limited number of empty buildings in a concerted way. Keep up your efforts on the house on the Main St The new Sligo Way map was admired. You mention two outdoor pursuits that are underway or planned. These are excellent initiatives to foster and support. Your role as an environmental group is very important here. This adjudicator believes that such pursuits are of great benefit to smaller towns and villages and are low/no carbon activities we should all get behind. Similarly the proposed Greenway is a hugely important development which requires all the community support that can be mustered. Such projects can be real positive game-changers for communities.

The Rockfield RC Church is stunning. It's a mixture of styles but it's most remarkable for the impeccable paintwork in strong colours. Scoil Críost Rí was spotless on adjudication day. The planters were admired. Should there be a Green Flag on display here? The name stone is beautiful. The Mountain Inn (public house and shop) was also in perfect order on the day with a nice planter at the front. Several appealing business premises were admired including Flair Salon and the Cabinet Makers. A good effort has been made on a couple of derelict buildings but could be better dealt with. For example, the old garage on Main Street could be improved.

Happy Landing is a great name for a bar and it's a very pleasant building. A beer sign is missing from its holder. Opposite, O'Grady's shop, bar and B&B also looks great. The River Inn looked very inviting but this adjudicator wasn't able to assess any of these premises from the inside alas.

Work on empty sheltered housing units was noted. Could these be used by your group as storage or sheds? The old garage is a premises that really could be improved. The shop beside it and the garage opposite likewise would benefit from more attention. The unused 'Town Centre' units at the main junction have been kept ever so well and are a credit to your diligence. There are some weeds in the gutter above which could be removed when possible.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Your plan of steady accrual of the recycled planters is approved here. The Yeats Rose is a really unique project and certainly benefits Coolaney. Best practice advises against planting around the base of trees in order to avoid impact on the constantly developing tree roots..

There has been very nice and restrained landscaping at the 'Town Centre'. This space has been very well kept. Did the clock overlooking this ever work? There are beautiful geraniums on the way to the riverside walk. The Millennium Park here comes as a lovely surprise to the casual visitor (or to an adjudicator who didn't want to get the map wet). This is a beautiful little space which could be enjoyed for a long time. The Community Park is another lovely space. Some hardy teenagers were braving the elements to socialise here. The mural looks great. The containers here could be painted or removed if they are not in use. Very good attention has been paid to the little avenue approaching the park. Well done. It was great to see Coolaney Litter-free on an advertising banner at pitchside.

A fantastic job has been done on the 'space' around the Sligo Way information board but what is the intended purpose of this space? Would you consider tree-planting at the back wall of Rockfield Cemetery in order to cover the boundary here?

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

Well done on commissioning the flora and fauna survey. This is an important step. The use of Facebook is ideal here. You are advised to look at the Irish Wildlife Trust Facebook page for ideas on how to promote wildlife and conservation in an engaging way. Nature walk & talks are also very good ways to get people interested, so again well done. You have met with and had genuine consultation with both National Parks and Wildlife Service and Inland Fisheries Ireland and this is so important. Keep the channels open with these organisations as much as possible. Your approach to this category is very good.

The River Walk is a lovely project - well done. There was a mayfly hatch on at time of visit and the adjudicator watched many a little trout rise and two kingfishers patrol their territory. The wildflower area here wasn't spectacular, only silverweed (pretty of itself) was seen here. It is regrettable that hedgerows on the Sligo side had recently been cut. Hedgerow cutting is forbidden between the end of February and end of August in order to protect nesting birds. One point is therefore deducted in this category.

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

This category causes difficulty for a lot of groups. Not Coolaney, it appears. You describe and indeed illustrate exactly the type of activity the Tidy Towns Competition is attempting to promote. The adjudicator won't take up time here by listing your many initiatives back at you. Suffice to say that they are several and suitable. However, a couple really caught the eye. These were the promotion of public transport (so simple, yet yours is the first group to list it to this adjudicator) and the proposal to start a community orchard. Your coordination with the national school on such activities as the WOW Days and rainwater collection are noted. Now, can we get adults to be as 'green' as their children..?

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You are playing an active role when it comes to many of the facets of this category. The Every Can Counts initiative is a great one to keep up. While litter control was to a very high standard, unfortunately some broken glass was noted at the Brehenny monument. Watch out for faded or illegible signage like the finger sign at the main junction. Two sheds at the bus-stop don't look good. Are these in use? Weed control was seen to be very good in most areas.

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

This is a category in which you do very well. It's obvious that this doesn't spring up overnight and that it is the product of years of work with residents and their associations. This continues and is very important. You have also encouraged the Gardaí to take care of their boundary wall. New name sign for Rockfield - has this been installed (check).

The adjudicator was struck by the quality of the paintwork and maintenance on so many houses. This speaks volumes. Super work has been done on the side of the house at the entrance to the river walk. There is a substantial block of unoccupied houses in the centre of the village but these are so well kept on the outside that only one broken pane gives it away. Well done.

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

Again, you've contacted the HSE and worked with them. A new footbridge would be a great addition and would add benefit for the walking routes and general recreation. The Riverside Walk is just beautiful and the adjudicator spent

much longer than necessary here enjoying the beautiful surroundings.

Well done on the commissioning of the new sign for the old pathway at Rath Óise. One wonders how the new name would be anglicised - would it be Sliddergawkley? There is a lovely approach from the Sligo side with great landscaping work done on the bend facing. This is a very neat and tidy approach road which really does your village justice.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done on an outstanding entry this year. You have approached your work in recent years carefully and carried it out with great attention to detail. You'll go far.