

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dromahair**

Ref: **153**

County: **Leitrim**

Mark: **229**

Category: **B**

Date: **12/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	36
The Built Environment	40	30	29
Landscaping	40	34	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16	16
Litter Control	40	36	37
Tidiness	20	14	15
Residential Areas	30	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30	30
General Impression	10	7	8
TOTAL MARK	300	229	231

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator noted that you have a very small committee of just 6 people working on Tidy Towns. However your co-operation with other agencies is obviously bringing benefits.

Thank you for the Tidy Towns Plan 2005 - 2009. This gives a very clear idea of your vision for Dromahair. There is new local housing development under way in Dromahair at the moment and this may put pressure on environmental standards. Your idea of having a welcome evening for new residents is excellent. The idea of sending out a report to local residents on your annual expenditure is good in that it makes people aware of the good work that you are doing on behalf on the village.

The Built Environment:

The milestones project is a good one and it is important to preserve these old features of the village. Your concerns concerning the old creamery site are noted and hopefully matters will be sorted out to the satisfaction of all parties. Likewise it will be great if the outline plans for the new Community Centre work out for the village. A number of buildings caught the eye in Dromahair including the J.Stafford property with it's covering of Ivy (?).

Your plans for the village square area are of key importance to the village. However in the view of your adjudicator the problem in regard to the abandoned cars on one side of the square must be addressed first. There are at least six derelict cars here in the vmiddle of the village, and this porblem will need early resolution. It is recommended that you get a plan drawn up for the square if

you do not already have one. It may be worth looking at the possibility of removing all car parking from this area to allow it to become a pleasant pedestrian area. The sculpture here is an interesting feature that could become the centre point for this area.

The Library building and The Depot are most attractive stone buildings that are a feature of Dromahair. A high standard of presentation was noted in respect of many buildings.

Landscaping:

Colourful landscaped areas were noted on the approach roads and these give a nice welcome for the visitor to Dromahair.

The river is a fine feature and hopefully you will be able to develop public access further in the years ahead. Hopefully the woodland walk negotiations will complete the the satisfaction of all parties involved.

Flower boxes were noted at the front wall at the Church of Ireland church and these add a nice bit of colour to this part of the road.

The use of hanging baskets and flower tubs in carefully selected places adds an interesting splash of colour to any town or village. However do make sure that this is not overdone. You should be using hanging baskets and tubs to help bring out the character of your village.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

In many towns and villages this is an aspect of the Tidy Towns Competition where there can be significant potential for development. All towns and villages have the presence of wildlife to some degree. It is important that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine the wildlife potential, and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly.

If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat Survey carried out of the wildlife in your area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following –

- Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
- Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds
- Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
- Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The Survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to your area

This need not be an expensive Survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable person in one of your Schools who might undertake this task for you. Basically the Survey would identify the animals, plants, birds, fish that inhabit your area and their associated habitats. It should be remembered that to carry out the Survey properly that it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different time of the year.

Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be do draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats in your area, and investigate the possibility of new ones. For example perhaps there is an old Pond in your area that is disused, but with a little work could be an important area for wildfowl.

It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many Schools there is probably a teacher who may have an interest in this area who would be willing to get involved.

As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof and vandal proof display panels, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland.

Litter Control:

Litter control in the village centre was quite good, with the exception of the laneway leading down to the pedestrian bridge across the river. A lot of litter was also noted at the stile just across the river. Little was also noted on the Drumshanbo approach road and at the bring site. It is recommended that your Tidy Towns Action Plan should have within it a Plan for litter control.

Tidiness:

The unacceptable situation in the village square has been referred to elsewhere in this report. Weed growth at the base of walls and at kerbing is a problem in a number of areas. At the bring site the Local Authority sign is partially covered by plant growth. The general area here needs improvement.

Projecting advertising signs were noted in a number of places in the village and this needs attention. The issue is how many of these signs are really essential from a commercial point of view?

Field gates can become a feature of your approach roads. It may be possible for you to get agreement from the relevant landowners that all damaged gates will be replaced, and that all gates will be painted to a common colour scheme.

Residential Areas:

In general terms private houses were extremely well presented and some good landscaped gardens were noted. Major housing development seems to be a feature of Dromahair and a large scale development is under way at Stonebridge. Many of the housing estate properties are painted white and this can be a difficult colour to keep clean. Have you considered talking to your Local Authority to see if some colour can be introduced to future housing estate developments? At Abbeyvale a number of boundary walls need to be painted.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The cobble lock pavement is most effective and looks neat and tidy. Generally most approach roads need some attention in respect of the presentation of roadside verges.

The overall presentation of all approach roads is of critical importance. It is this that gives the first impression of your village. Attractive well presented approach roads give a great impression of a community that cares about how others see them.

Where there is a wide verge on one or both sides of an approach road best practice indicates that only about 0.5 - 1 metres of the grass verge in from the road should be cut on a regular basis.

The rest of the verge area should be kept wild to allow for the needs of wildlife. However you will still need to pay attention to this area. In general you should not let this area get too overgrown and untidy. Watch out also for litter that may get trapped by the long grass on this part of your verge.

General Impression:

You have great plans for the future, but do be careful not to have too many objectives for each year. Good luck with your work in the future.

Second Round Adjudication:

Dromahair is currently experiencing a rapid growth in population together with a related expansion of the built environment; this presents challenges to the Tidy Towns committee to maintain standards achieved to date in addition to coping with the demands of growth and capitalizing on new opportunities. On-going maintenance requires the removal of derelict cars from the Market Square, the replacement of dated plastic neon fascia signs, the removal of redundant frames and the painting of premises as necessary; both the school and the Leitrim District Engineers Office were admired for their presentation.

Litter Control remains good however small lapses were noted under both this heading and Tidiness hence a small drop in marks.

Stone boundary walls to new residential properties were admired, some older dwellings are in need of attention to their boundaries.

It was a pleasure to note the (virtually) wirescape free status of the village centre.