

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Connolly** Ref: **1181**
County: **Clare** Mark: **240**
Category: **A** Date(s): **20/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	30
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	30
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	31
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	24
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	28
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	29
TOTAL MARK	450	240

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Romhat Fiach Rua. Welcome Connolly to the Super Valu 2014 National Tidy Towns competition. You have 10 members which is an excellent representation in a small village. You meet monthly. Clare County Council helps you, and you have a TÚS work and sometimes a FÁS worker.

You use traditional and modern methods of communication. This is good. You get involved with the schools on nature walks and antilitter campaigns. You say that the feedback from the wider parish is very positive. You feel that other areas have followed your example and that the community has a sense of pride in their own place.

You have not sent us a Tidy Towns plan, but rather have inserted your planned activities into your Entry Form under various category headings. We would ask you not to do this, but to contain your proposed projects in a Tidy Towns plan. The guidelines issued this year asked that you number your projects undertaken this year 2013/2014 sequentially through the Entry Form and mark these projects with the same numbers on your village map. We would encourage you to draw up a Tidy Towns plan – a three or five-year plan will focus your mind on what you can hope to achieve. A plan need not be prepared professionally, but you should consult locally in preparing such a plan. You should also consider any statutory and non-statutory plans applicable to Connolly in drawing up your work programme. Please refer to the Tidy Towns Handbook for advice in relation to the preparation of a three or five-year plan. It is essential to progress in the competition and to gain extra marks under this particular category that you submit such a plan in 2015.

We are sure that the senior citizens enjoy their Christmas party, and it is good PR for the Tidy Towns to organise this. Well done on your community commitment in having a Day-care centre and voluntary community houses - as well as a community bus. The school project in a window at the edge of the village was admired.

Thank you for your helpful map – but remember the comments re showing numbered projects for the adjudication year.

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

We admired the lovely cut stone church which was well presented, and we admired the seats here, together with lupin planting. Would it be possible to surface the car parking area and to mark out parking as well as landscaping the area?

The School was very well presented, although we felt that there were too many notices the school window which tended to look a little untidy. Well done to the children on attaining a Green Flag which we saw flying proudly.

McGrath's is neat and we admired the floral displays in a gravel bed and in tubs here.

Carneys bar looked really well and the white gable facing the approach to the village – as all its other walls and gables - was pristine. Well done on the Ó gCearnaigh lettering on this gable also. The metal pole with the advertising sign for the premises on the opposite side of the road could be improved. The two uprights stretching far above the sign looked a little ugly for such a well -presented premises. It was interesting to read about the derivation of the name of your village on the information board at Carneys - as it had intrigued us - being so different from the English version. As the general use of the Irish language is 'markable' under this category heading, you can thank the proprietors accordingly!

When constructing and reconstructing stone walls we recommend that you use natural local stone in drywall construction and also in stone walls which should be mortared with lime mortar – were mortar is required.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Your extensive daffodil bulb planting last autumn at the entrance and exit to the village must have looked wonderful in the spring.. We agree that seeing the first flowers of spring in abundance brings hope and joy to a community. You have placed new flower and shrub boxes at the church and around the village.

You have planted trees and carried out work on the river area. Grass areas have been maintained.

With regard to planters on the Milltown Malbay side of the village, we would suggest that you leave this area in its natural unspoiled state and concentrate on maintaining the natural landscaping in this area – as you have done on the Ennis approach. The lovely green road side edges with lupins in stone beds around the area of the shop looked well.

We admired the floral FÁILTE sign and the milk churn stand.

At the Ennis approach we enjoyed a wander around the lovely bridge area, with its added interest. We noted the farm yard fruit garden, the wildlife park and the Bealcragga Falls area..

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

What a lovely nature appropriate Irish name your village has in relation to its great natural surrounding!

Organising a spring and autumn nature walk with the pupils from the local school is an excellent idea. The project which they then complete is shared with the local community, as this is displayed in the local church and on the school notice board. The monthly school newspaper in which the students have a section dedicated to a nature calendar type of article is an unusual and excellent idea. Perhaps next year you might send us a copy. Would it be possible for the students to carry out a survey of existing wildlife in the area, which you can then perhaps share through a wildlife notice board?

You are a very enthusiastic community in relation to your habitats and we think that you would benefit from talking to the County Heritage Officer and County Biodiversity Officer who would be delighted, we are sure, to help you. 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.

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

Well done to the school on its Green Flag achievement. Perhaps the children may help you to carry out a survey amongst the community in general in relation to waste minimisation. We note that you are involved in scrap collection, (although we do not think that wheel frames are suitable visually as flower containers). Sustainable waste and resource management is about trying not to produce waste in the first case. The Environmental Awareness Officer in your local authority would be an excellent contact to help you to put a programme together in relation to this topic. In the meanwhile look at the Tidy Towns Handbook, and the revised guidelines on this topic - which were sent out with your Entry Form in 2013.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

You have painted gates and walls and maintained seat at the church. You have maintained the milk churns and farm machinery. You have painted fences. Some dead vegetation on private property has been causing you some concern. All you can do is to do your best to encourage people to allow you to have them improve their area. You do say that you are making progress on this.

We noticed a little fly posting in the village.

Your footpaths are very weed free.

Would it be possible to paint field gates throughout the village? This gives a very neat appearance, and also gives a sense of unity to the geographical area of the village – especially as your village is very linear in form.

You have a good appreciation of how important litter control is. This shows in the absence of litter in your village. You get involved with the An Taisce clean-up in April. You also run a school poster anti litter competition.

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

The standard of houses - and gardens in particular is very good in Connolly. There are some excellent gardens throughout the village. We admired a light lilac coloured house near the church. We also admired a house on the Milltown Malbay side of the school. Another property on the east side of the school was admired. Residents at the Fiach Rua estate maintain this estate.

Schoolchildren assist in maintaining window boxes.

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

There are lovely views to the hills surrounding your pretty village as one approaches from the Inagh side. The area around the black and white metal village sign looked a little rough. Could this area be surfaced? The box planter had not sprouted any summer flowers by the time of our visit – which as you can see was mid-June. This was a little surprising. Would it be possible to plant around the second village stone sign itself to disguise its angular form – which is rather ‘tombstone-like.’? We generally feel that it is unnecessary to have two village signs. However in this case the two village signs are much too close together. On this approach we admired the lovely monbretia hedging on the right-hand side and good garden hedging on the left-hand side. A good new footpath was noted on the left-hand side. There was one ‘headless’ striped road sign pole on the right-hand side. (Generally the standard of painted road signs was very good). The sign should be replaced, or the pole should be removed. The edges of the grass island at the junction near Carneys would benefit from tidying and reseeding. Along stretches of stone wall in this area it appeared that some chemical weeding killing had been used. This is bad for the environment. We admired your lovely landscaped corner on this approach with its well mown grass, welcoming flags, and very clean road signs. However the hard shoulder would benefit from resurfacing here.

The Ennis approach is by the lovely area described above under Landscaping.

The Mid-Clare way walk signs are maintained by you.