

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dromahair - Droim Dhá Thiar** Ref: **673**
County: **Leitrim** Mark: **313**
Category: **C** Date(s): **28/07/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	49	50
Streetscape & Public Places	60	42	43
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	43	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	28	28
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	19	20
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	59	60
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	35	35
TOTAL MARK	470	308	313

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Cuireann an moltoir seo faille roimh Dromahair (Droma Dha Thiar) chuig Comortas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 2019.

Thank you for the extremely professional entry form which includes amongst other material a 3 year action plan, litter plan and map of village all of which are key elements needed for the adjudicator to carry out the adjudication process.

As there is quite a large information content contained in your submission the adjudicator would like to point out that it was not feasible to cover all items in the recommended 3 page report covering 8 categories.

Feel assured that the adjudication was done in a fair and objective manner in line with the guidelines of the competition and in a much shorter form of narrative than last year's report.

Thank you for responding to some requests from last year's adjudicator in supplying a 3 year plan with a sub plan for litter.

Congratulations on winning tgyuhe Love Where You Live Category Cleaner & Greener in the Manorhamilton Municipal District.

Judging from what you have submitted and without repeating everything back to you it is evident that you have an excellent committee structure and volunteer core to call upon for work duties; one assumes that you have an executive of Chair, Secretary etc to direct operations

The voluntary commitment from the wider community is forthcoming and is backed up by practical support
The list of agencies, local organisations and particularly the local business fraternity that you work with is extensive and no doubt you benefit enormously from this level of support.

Methods of communication are a mix of the long established like newsletter and notes in the local paper coupled with relevant form of social media that suit your needs.

The Dromahair Development Association/Tidy Towns Facebook presence is packed with up-to-date information. Looks like you are a winner in the fundraising stakes as the Blotto Jackpot was up around €4,050 at the time of writing this report.

Well done to the volunteers that run this on a weekly basis as one who had an involvement in similar type weekly draw it is not a doddle to keep such fundraising activity going smoothly every week.

One notes the problems you have had with Junior Tidy Towns and you are not alone in that; hope fully this lack of interest will not impinge negatively on the competition nationally in the years ahead.

You sound hopeful that you will have a youth group next year

Well done for your involvement with Drumlease NS in a number of mini projects.

Thanks for the update on specific projects that you have a co involvement, the list is quite impressive.

The level of voluntary involvement, the planning that you have engaged in and the new projects that have indicated in this category merits a one mark increase which brings you to a total of 50, not too many centres around the

country are at this level.
What follows in other categories may not always match.

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

Maybe the adjudicator is being a bit nitpicky but the narrative in this and indeed in other sections of the entry form would be best broken into bullet points to make it easier to see the salient points.

Good to see that the Abbey Hotel was made safe over the last year.

The owner parked up near and it is a pity to see such a fine premises and indeed one synonymous with the village closed.

A little bit of local information is often critical to finding out what state of play is in relation to situations.

It seems that you are somewhat correct in what you have said in your entry but there is a little more to it than that.

Unfortunately there is very little that a voluntary committee can do to change the situation and all you can do is monitor it as best you can.

You are not alone in this regard as the adjudicator has witnessed a multitude of similar situations in villages and towns down through the years.

Just a comment on its condition it is not in a derelict state as of yet and you can rest assured that when it suits the owners will act in a way that suits them.

Sorry if I come across as being a bit of a cynic on this one but I've witnessed these scenarios down through the years.

You have done very good work in this category and the positives far outweigh the negatives, unoccupied premises will always be part of rural towns and villages often resulting from disputes of ownership to economic circumstances. So we will leave it that.

The following are a few observations that the adjudicator made on his walk about.

Oifíc an Phoist Droim dha Thiar (what a lovely Irish name The Ridge of Two Demons) looked very well with its nice shop front which looked as if had been given a recent coat of Sadolin Teak 3.

The Woodview Inn is a fine establishment but maybe the sign could be changed to reflect the tradition of the vernacular architecture of the village.

At the moment it looks like a throwback to the 70s an era which was often disingenuously referred to as Country and Western time, but you know what Country is back in vogue.

G Clarke Butchers in keeping with the many butcher's shops observed all over the country has a very attractive frontage and Leonards Gala Shop was presented to a very good standard.

The Stanford Village Inn and Tea Rooms was a hive of activity on the evening in question and is a well run establishment to boot.

The Shamrock Chinese is a well run establishment as well but maybe the owners might consider having a more traditional type shop front sign.

The Riverbank Restaurant on the outskirts was well presented.

Some fine individual information panes were observed but just keep an eye on these as they tend to get dirty easily. One nearly forgot the basics of this category the condition of road surfaces, footpaths and street lighting all of which were in very good condition.

St Patricks detached RC Church and Grounds was well maintained as was the Protestant Church in secluded area near Churchfields.

The Depot is a fine community facility and the hall part of the building was hosting a judo or take wan do session for the younger generation

Overall the standard was very good.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Much maintenance work has been carried out in this category and the results are to be seen on the approach roads into the village and in the core area itself.

The adjudicator already motioned that the excellent tree boxes that were placed near the Bring Bank would be seen to better effect in the centre of the village as they would complement the existing ones.

The line of half barrels as one sweeps into the village from Ballintogher direction were a site to behold.

Individual householders and business premises had a variety of window boxes and in some cases hanging baskets that enhanced the village immensely.

You show a very nice gesture of thanks to the lady that donated 10 sapling oak saplings that you are nurturing for planting next year.

One does not have to advise you to choose the locations where these will be planted as decades down the years they will be the legacy that you will leave to that generation of residents.

Hope you are successful with your funding application for approach road planting programme.

Where did the funding come from to develop the Community Park, it looked as if ongoing work was taking place at this facility during the visit.

Much work has been done and much more in the offing as per your development plan

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

The key components of this adjudication category are a) knowledge of local species and habitats and knowledge of local designated areas and b) being able to promote the knowledge gained to the local community and the passing visitor in format that would be easily accessed such as wildlife information boards in a central location.

Good wildlife advice and communication of the importance of the local wildlife heritage to the local community is so important.

Being aware of invasive and possible destructive plants such as Japanese knot weed is also essential. The adjudicator is impressed with the number of simple projects that have been put in place since last year. Actually getting people interested in subjects such as the protection of the bee population is all part of the objectives mentioned in the above statement. So well done in encouraging people to become aware by providing signs to attract people's attention and the results have been forthcoming. Well done to local man Michael McGoldrick for donating seeds that are pollinator friendly and more information of this subject can be got from accessing www.pollinator.ie Excellent initiative and foresight to engage with the County Wildlife Ranger in getting a wildlife survey done over the last twelve months period. The results can form the basis for as you state a series of wildlife talks and can also be the catalyst for a specific wildlife project such as new information boards on the fauna and flora of the area. This also might be the way to get the youth of the village and its surrounds involved. The younger generation show great enthusiasm for project work if encouraged and directed properly.

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

The objective in this category has moved on to some extent from of reduce reuse and recycle to one of promoting the concept of reducing the production of potential waste at source such as excessive packaging. "Doing more with less" is a slogan that will come more to the forefront in the years ahead. Activities that describe how as a community you manage waste and promote efficient use of resources is the key to a good performance in this category as well as being a mechanism to keep the local population informed of the importance of this subject. The list of projects that you have entered in the application form are very much in keeping with the ethos of the sector but these could be expanded upon for next year. Much of what you have included has been replicated in other centres around the country. For further idea generation and to come up with some novel ideas for your community do consult the following: www.localprevention.ie for ideas would be www.greenhomes.ie and www.sustainableprocessing.ie Also something that this adjudicator became aware of during last year's adjudication is the circular economy. It is a bit too long to explain the concept in detail in this report, but if you access the following www.dccae.gov.ie you will get a pretty good idea of what it's all about. The idea of what is called a linear economy of "take, make and waste" is now being seen as not sustainable and alternatives need to be found.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The standard in this category was rather mixed and some negatives were witnessed during the adjudication walkabout. You have a very detailed litter plan in place which contains sections on annual actions and actions for the immediate 12 months ahead. All these actions are very much dependent on the buy in from the local residents who for the most part adhere to good practice when it comes to litter control and general tidiness. Well the adjudicator paid a visit to the recycling centre first off and was taken a back at the untidiness of the receptacles. Duvet hanging out of the clothes bank and other item of clothing on the ground, a rusty pole up against the wall and plastic bags tucked in between the Gloine ghlas agus the Clear Glass receptacle. I was told by a local that it was like this for more than a few days. Right beside the bottle bank is an area populated with what seems to be redundant buses, maybe some are in use but it didn't look like it. Anyway it was noted that you have been unsuccessful as of yet to get an improvement on the matter but hopefully it will happen in due course. Maybe subtle dialogue with the owner by one of the committee might result in a change of heart. Personal communication is still the key in this Twitter and Instagram age. The adjudicator would suggest that the placing of the small planters containing alyssum and lobelia etc in front of the bottle receptacles is more of an obstruction than being of aesthetic value and this is just a personal opinion. Also there are a number of beautifully crafted tree boxes that seem to be lost to the general public's eye by being placed at the Bring Bank and maybe would have more of a visual presence if placed at a focal point in the village. The adjudicator feels that a bottle bank area just needs to be tidy and compact and well managed. You have documented the unoccupied buildings and dereliction situation in detail and there is no need for me to make further comment except to say these problems are often well outside the control of any voluntary committee but you are wished well with your deliberations with owners, A number of boundary walls could do with refreshing and they will tackled in due course no doubt. You have put a lot of effort into documenting all issues and indeed improvements in this category that have occurred during the year and one feels that this merits a retention of the mark which seemed to have been deducted last year.

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

Plenty of positive advice was given in last year's report and you have encouraged residents of cluster housing areas to act on this. There is no point in the adjudicator advocating any change to that message as it was as positive as one could get. It is just important that residents in the first off present their frontages and gardens in the best possible manner.

Most of homeowners do just that but there always a few non conformists.
Well done on your Estates Competition it has certainly engendered certain competitiveness amongst the residents of the housing developments of the village.
The two main competitor areas were visited by the adjudicator as were the following Larkfield Lawns lovely name stone with red writing against the sandstone, Abbeyvale name stone unusually placed behind the stone wall, Woodlands Avenue a really nice spacious development of single storey.
Good to see that you have been responsible by way of encouragement of getting an older estate to reinstate the residents association.
Well done on doing this as it's important that you have residents voice on your committee to be part of your work programmes.
Nothing more to add as they was plenty to be going on with from last year's recommendations!
Excellent performance in this category and one that merits an increase in marks.

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

The standard in this category was also good with most entrances into the village maintained in accordance with good practice for the preservation of wildlife.
It looks like that the footpath out to the Park was in the process of being completed and one hopes that you do not have to look for a time extension to satisfy draw down conditions on funding as this process can be time consuming and somewhat unwieldy – speaking from experience here.
So good luck with that.
The Ballintogher Drumshanbo R 288 entrance was very inviting and swept down into the village with the banners such as Tog go bog very colourful.
That banner, which was torn at the base, could cause problems for tourists unfamiliar with the Irish language!
The entrance in from Sligo was equally as well presented.
You are wished well in securing permission for the 2 new name stones and hopefully they will be in place in 2020
Overall the standard was good and on par with what was reported on in last year's report.

Concluding Remarks:

It was the first visit to Dromahair, the original seat of the O Rourkes of Beffeni, for this adjudicator.
The English translation from Irish is intriguing and one must re visit the historical background to it.
You have achieved a lot over the years with more to come no doubt.
You are wished well for the future.