

# Tidy Towns Competition 2019

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dromod - Dromad** Ref: **314**  
County: **Leitrim** Mark: **332**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **12/06/2019**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2018</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2019</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	45	46
Streetscape & Public Places	60	45	46
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	47	47
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	32	32
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	21	21
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	67	67
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	39	40
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>332</b>

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

Cuireann an moltoir seo faite roimh Dromod (Dromaid ) chuig Comortas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 2019. Thank you for your letter of invitation to the adjudicator, the very concise and easy to understand entry form and the ancillary material in support of you application.

Unfortunately the map situation was a little bit of a problem, the main Google earth type maps were ok but copies of the work schedule maps were ineligible.

Looks like as if the printer ran out of ink but problems have to be overcome and the adjudicator adapted to the situation such as it was.

Feel assured that the adjudication was done in an objective and fair manner and in accordance with the guidelines of the competition.

Thank you also for giving notice of the proposed plan which you intend to initiate next year.

The committee structure is very good and one assumes that within the volunteer group you have trades people and other service providers that are able to offer practical support as needed.

Your methods of communication are varied mixing the traditional such as notices and word of mouth, very effective still, with the modern platforms that social media offer.

Dromod Facebook Page is very informative and most importantly the uploading of content is managed well and kept up to date.

It is noted that you also have an Instagram account and a newly formed a What's App Group so the message that Tidy Towns is the driver of good things in Dromod is very much in the public domain.

The relationship that committee has with Leitrim Co Council, and a myriad of other agencies and organisations such as Leitrim Development Company, ensures that you are aware of what is happening in terms supports and advice in the public service and semi state sectors.

Other local organisations obviously see the value of your work and how it impinges positively on the wider community so long may this type of cooperation prevail.

It's very important that you have developed a strong relationship with both National Schools as the positivity that emanates from Tidy Towns involvement will benefit the school children in later years and that may well be returned to the community in practical terms in time to come.

60 years is a long time to be involved in Tidy Towns so well done on that milestone and also being at the top end of the marks in both the County and the Region.

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

Two of the projects that you have mentioned as being in the N category are in actual fact consultations with the parties.

What is the objective of these discussions as it isn't clear to the adjudicator from the note on your entry?

Yes the area around the GAA Club and the Copper Still is busy but is there not a zebra crossing at that area and could overtures be made to Leitrim County Council to evaluate the situation there in light of the increase in the volume of traffic?

In relation to the Garda Station, a most impressive stone building, I think it is incumbent on the OPW to at least tidy up the frontage and side area as they are weedy and overgrown.

The old phone box nearby, now used as a mini book library, was noted and well done on making this community oriented mini project happen.

Well done on initiating meetings with the owners of Mac Oisín Place to assist with forming a residents association.

The development was visited by the adjudicator and is in a state of acceptable presentation.

For a relatively small village there are a number of important heritage buildings that fall within the protected structures legislation.

So again well done on being pro active in monitoring these.

The remainder of your inputs in this category fall within the ongoing maintenance or future planning headings.

Your strong relationships with the likes of Leitrim County Council and Waterways Ireland are so crucial to plans becoming actual realities.

The following is cross section of observations and comments that the adjudicator made in the adjudication walk about.

Without over elaborating one had to be impressed with the quality of road surfaces, footpaths and street lighting.

Road markings and traffic calming signs were prominent, very visible and forewarning.

Some exceptional commercial and private residences were viewed during the walk about.

If there is on slight blemish it was the fact that quite a lot verge yellow lines were fading fast.

Annaduff Credit Union, Teach Uí Coiligh, Coxs Steakhouse, Crowes Garage and Forecourt which was well managed and some of the newer businesses including the excellent cafe/restaurant run by very friendly staff.

O Connors has that traditional shop front look to it and one wasn't sure if it is still used for business purposes.

One thought that there was only one Brandywell in the Island of Ireland maybe the owner has a connection to Doire Colmcill!

This establishment was very well presented and the car park was accessible for patrons.

Kickedy Knackedy is very colourful premises as a café should be and it offers excellent fare as well.

Good to note that you monitor the planning applications in light of the fact that you have a number of protected heritage buildings in the village and surrounds.

The Railway Station was in excellent condition and busy, parking can be a bit haphazard because of the layout and size of the parking area.

Barr Na Coille GAA Grounds is a very fine amenity and well looked after.

One also was impressed with the quality of private residences as distinct from housing developments in the village proper.

An increase of one additional mark is warranted

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

This is a category that Dromod has done well in over the years and this has been reflected in the high marks achieved.

On the day of the adjudication some landscaping maintenance was taking place by CE personnel.

You are fortunate that you have 3 workers available to you as many places have had such resources cut due to lack of funding.

You have taken some innovate steps, such as the appointment of a tree warden, that one does not see in other centres that indicates a proactive approach and response to the landscaping needs of the village.

Good to note that you have taken very encouraging steps to address a problem that is prevalent in the country – the over use of chemical weed control spray

It seems, like the adjudicator, that those entrusted with landscaping duties have a fondness for colourful annuals interspersed with perennials.

This has been balanced with some excellent shrub beds containing favourites such as berberis, spirea and euonymus as well as some that were new to the adjudicator

The quality, creativity and overall maintenance of planting arrangements in the village and its peripheral areas including entrances to the village were of the highest order.

This is not surprising as one note that you have engaged with businesses and residences in the village to make them aware of what planting plans you have in mind for the future and also encouraging the use of peat free compost.

There were one or two shrub beds that were getting a little crowded, especially in front of businesses on the Carrick end, and need to be attended to.

One liked the wheel barrow arrangements in front of Knickedy Knackedy well done to the owners of same.

The Sensory Garden is a beautiful space with the smell of lavender and mint to the fore and the central island as mentioned in last year's report, is very much the focal point of Dromod.

Well done to those who are responsible for its ongoing up keep.

Pollinator planting is been very much encouraged and you have reacted very positively and dare I say very practically to this important need.

Some fantastic private gardens were viewed on the adjudication walk about.

Trees are part of the make-up of rural Ireland but surprisingly many villages have sparse numbers but this is not the case with Dromod and the appointment of tree warden as been referred to at the start of this section.

Entrances into the village had grass verges cut in accordance with good practice.

Finally this adjudicator was impressed with the window boxes and hanging baskets on view at a number of premises, not overdone but instead add that little annual colour that we all associate with well maintained Irish villages like Dromod.

Overall as per other years the standard was very good.

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

Some very pertinent projects have been undertaken in this category and your input notes outline these in great detail.

There is no need for the adjudicator to repeat all these back to you suffice to say that you as a committee have embraced this category with professional approach.

Having the services of a person with such a background in environmental science and an appreciation of bio diversity on your committee ensures that you receive the proper guidance in the preparation and implementation of nature and biodiversity strategy in the village

It also helps that you are in an area that has such a diverse range of natural habitats being on a lake shore and on the Royal Canal as well as having an unspoilt rural hinterland.

The following observations were made as part of the adjudication.

There are many varied ongoing works and future proposals outlined in your submission but the one thing that immediately comes to mind, for this adjudicator at any rate, is that there is no mention of interaction with either of the two National Schools that serve the village.

This and tidiness and litter usually have a strong involvement of schools and it is actively encouraged in the promotion of the competition.

Maybe for future years you might consider communicating with the schools associated with Dromod and making them aware of your activities with a view to getting them involved by way of mini projects in areas such as biodiversity.

Children offer a lot in terms of enthusiasm and creativity to any community related project and it offers them in return knowledge that will help them in years to come.

The new works such as submitting records to the National Biodiversity Centre in WIT Waterford, snipe survey and farmer awareness programmes are worthy of an increase in marks.

It is hoped that you have good support resources to manage all these mini projects on an ongoing and sustainable manner.

Some of your future plans are ambitious and very well documented in your application, one wonders why you need funding to employ an ecologist to devise a biodiversity strategy for the village when you have enough expertise within your committee.

Maybe there is a need for resource support elsewhere, this is not a criticism just a personal observation.

The adjudicator took in the circular walk and was impressed with the wild life on the walk information panel.

This is an excellent village feature that serves as both a nature and fitness trail.

The community garden and allotment boxes were noted and provide herbs for the villagers if they so wish to avail of same.

Finally the provision of wildlife meadow spaces in the village for pollination purposes was another highlight of this category

"If the bees die we will die" is a slogan I encountered a few years back

This is a fairly upfront reminder to highlight how important bees are to our every existence.

Dromod has embraced the bees with open arms – not literally I hope.

Grass margins around the village have been cut according to good practice for the preservation and encouragement of various species of wildlife.

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

The objective in this category has moved on from one 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 very apt heading or slogan

The practical benefits of good waste management and control of unnecessary production will be seen as a major contribution to a better environment.

You have listed a number projects in this category, some of which are particular to Dromod, but others are similar to those observed in many other centres around the country,

Well done on engaging with Leitrim County Council with a view to providing an electric vehicle charging point in the village.

If this project goes ahead you will be to the forefront in advocating the need for such a facility in rural village and towns.

You have attained a high mark in this category compared to other high marked entrants in the last two years and this will be retained

To get more out of this sector in terms of creating even a greater awareness of a more sustainable environment consider looking at the following websites for idea generation

[www.localprevention.ie](http://www.localprevention.ie), [www.greenhomes.ie](http://www.greenhomes.ie) and [www.sustainableprocessing.ie](http://www.sustainableprocessing.ie)

Also something that this adjudicator became aware of and something that you as a committee may have become familiar with is the circular economy

The websites [www.dccae.gov.ie](http://www.dccae.gov.ie) and [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie) explain concisely what it is and its objectives.

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.

The Bring Bank Recycling facility in the village was well managed and free of loose bags around the immediate area.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

It was very hard to find fault with the village in the context of litter control or general tidiness. The committee has harnessed the goodwill of the local community in rowing in behind your efforts in this category. It goes without saying that you have a distinct advantage over many other places in that you have a community committed to keeping the village litter free and that Dromod is a relatively small place. You have mentioned giving talks to school children in this section and it is good to note that you have plans to develop links with the schools in the coming year. Great credit is due to the residents of the newer housing developments maintain their homesteads in a tidy fashion. As mentioned last year public spaces such as the well appointed playground were tidy and clean. The nature walk had a number of notices deterring dog fouling and littering and that walk was very tidy and free from litter. An update on the undergrounding of remaining over head wires would be welcome for next year's competition. As it is the village has not been affected by criss crossing of unsightly overhead wiring. A few plastic bottles noticed near the GAA grounds and the Copper Still as well as a plastic bag of waste atop of a waste bin in the centre of the village. The Bring Bank at the aforementioned grounds were well maintained. There is no point in repeating back to you all of what you have done except to say keep up the sustained effort and full marks to your CE workers who as previously stated were very much in work action on the day in question.

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

The housing developments viewed were of high quality with some exceptional frontages and delightful gardens. Just a few observations that were noted during the walkabout. Shannon Haven and Shannon Cove off the Rooskey Road were well presented although one cannot understand the rationale behind the "gated" entrance to Shannon Cove when one can walk in the side entrance – defies logic. A number of exceptional compact front gardens were noted in this development. Ard na Cuin residents are wished well in the Pride of Place competition and indeed it's a worthy entrant as homesteads were well maintained and the green communal space tidy. The entrance name stone here is obscured by a flower urn and slightly overgrown shrub. Cul Na Sraide nice and compact and well presented in the village proper. The unfinished estates were visited and one is aware that you have made overtures to the new owners of one of these and received positive reaction. Finally there is a large tired landscaping feature in one of these housing development, the name of which I have forgotten mea culpa, that needs immediate attention as it is becoming overgrown and weedy. Overall the standard was very good and worthy of an increase in marks.

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

The approach roads were maintained to a very high standard and on par with any of the high achievers in the competition. The basic of good management of verges was adhered to making provision for the nesting season and in accordance with good practice for the promotion of bio diversity. Speed signs and traffic management provisions were visible and clean. Road markings with a few exceptions were in good condition – not faded. Good to report that you have approached farmers to paint gates all the same colour. In conjunction with your adopt a road scheme maybe consider a novel idea observed in County Louth a few years back where some farm gates were given due recognition by means of plaque of their historical association with the area. The entrances were enhanced by nice and simple name signs and thankfully free from roadside advertising hoardings that are prevalent this time of year advertising festivals etc. The Rooskey entrance had some road works further out the road and traffic was controlled by traffic lights. The new initiatives that you have undertaken have warranted an increase in marks.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It was the adjudicator's first time being back in the village of Dromod for over a decade. The visit was a pleasant and many positive infrastructural changes have happened in those intervening years. The Committee has been extremely proactive in its approach to the development of the village and its community. You are wished well in the years ahead.