

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Drumkeeran - Droim Caorthainn** Ref: **636**
County: **Leitrim** Mark: **312**
Category: **A** Date(s): **22/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	47	47
Streetscape & Public Places	60	43	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	42	43
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	23	24
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	18	19
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	54	57
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	37	38
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	40	40
TOTAL MARK	470	304	312

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

Cuireann an moltoir seo faille roimh Drumkeeran (Droim Caorthainn) chuig Comortas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 2019.

Thank you for the excellent hand written entry form complete with pictorial records of involvement of volunteers and both schools that were involved in Tidy Towns related activities.

The wild life of Drumkeeran survey was a big undertaking and hopefully it will form the basis for a wildlife project that will involve pupils from both schools in the village.

The attached sketch map was also excellent and very helpful to the adjudicator who was on his first visit to Drumkeeran.

Your committee number has decreased by 10 judging by last year's report which stated that you had 30 on the committee.

If this is correct well that is a substantial decrease so it is hoped that you have sufficient numbers to carry out the large body of work documented under the relevant categories.

You are celebrating your 60th year in the competition so well done on that achievement and in the Leitrim tourism website Drumkeerin is described as an attractive and hospitable village – and the adjudicator can vouch for that.

Your communication methods combine the tried trusted like newsletter and social media which has the ability to get messages and updates to the general public in a short space of time.

Your Facebook page is up-to-date and informative about matters relating to clean ups and meetings.

Well done to the person who manages and updates the content so regularly.

The list of agencies combined with your links to Leitrim County Council is impressive and these types of ongoing relationships will be to your advantage in the future.

You seemed to have a large number of volunteers for the clean up that was undertaken a few weeks back, hopefully this type of support will continue to be available to you when its needed in the future.

Thank you for your positive comments on the competition and how it helps to instil a spirit of pride of place mentality amongst the community.

Overall the standard in this category was very good but maybe for next year you might submit a 2 /3 year work schedule that would indicate the different items of work to be covered under each category, start and completion dates.

It would make it easier for the committee to control the work programme and would give definite timelines for completion of tasks.

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

The layout of the village is very attractive and inviting with road surfaces through the main core very good.

The footpaths are in good condition and extend to the extremities of the village on exit roads. Road markings, as is the case in many towns and villages, have faded a little in certain parts and need to be re painted in the next year if possible.

This is where strong links with Leitrim County Council would come into play.

St Brigid's RC Church commands a central position as one enters into the village and was very well maintained with fine grounds and ample car parking.

It has a monastic look about it from a distance but when one enters the building it's not that large inside. Some of the timber bollards at the side car parking area need to be re treated with wood preservative. The adjoining graveyard was also in fine condition.

Well done to the volunteers and TUS workers who maintain these public buildings and grounds.

Lough Allen College or "the LAC" as its known locally is a fine compact educational establishment with grounds well maintained and presented

St Brigids National School on the road out to the Soldiers Grave and Dromahair was equally well presented with spacious grounds.

The boundary wall was a little dirty and could do with painting in due course.

Some of the parking spaces in the front would do with being re highlighted.

Pairc Naomh Brid is a fine facility and credit to the local GAA Club for developing it over the years.

It takes some commitment from volunteers and on the day in question there was what could be perceived as a Cul Camp in full swing.

The large car park was a little rough but one noted that there are plans to re surface it in due course.

The exceptional playground at the fine elevated amenity area was admired for its quality of playground equipment and its protective surrounds given that it's adjacent to the main entrance into the village.

The following businesses deserve mention for the manner in which they have presented their respective premises: G Clarke Butchers in line with the standard of excellent presentation of Butchers Shops that the adjudicator has seen during visits all over the country.

Leonards Your Stop Shop ,Drumkeeran Credit Union fine bright colour with matching shop front sign, The Rowantree Centre, Laura's Cafe and Frank Davitts Public House with unusual outside seating for patrons and Fordes Inn.

Wynnes has a central position in the village as one exits on the Dowra/Manorhamilton Junction.

The Adjudicator parked up near the very nice and colourful Breffni Stores.

There were many fine private residences in the core of the village that were admired for their quality of presentation. Like any village or town in the country there are a number of unoccupied buildings that could fall into further disrepair but one is assured that the Committee is monitoring the situation and engaging with owners where possible.

Overall the standard was very good and merits an increase in marks.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The overall standard of landscaping was very good with colourful summer annuals in permanent and replaceable planters dotted around the village.

The entrance name stones were also complemented sustainable planting that has an all year round effect.

The Amenity Area as one enters Carrick on Shannon and the large green with its sculpture was cut and tidy. Maybe it might benefit from an additional piece of park furniture and a shrub or raised bed; this is just a personal opinion.

The shrubs in the stone beds as one enters the small car park looked a little forlorn; more could be made of these beds.

The Orchard was noted and visited and the adjudicator notes that this Community Orchard project is a county wide initiative.

Well done to those who were responsible for coming up with this excellent idea.

You are fortunate as a committee to have students from the local Lough Allen College to help with ongoing landscaping maintenance.

The students' involvement has been noted in the pictorial records that you have included with the application. As well as being of practical help these students are also learning new skills and are being exposed to what voluntary commitment is all about.

Some excellent wooden planters, hanging baskets and window boxes were observed during the walkabout. Communal planting arrangements viewed were well maintained and all seemed to be recently replenished as there were none that were overgrown or weedy.

Well done to the personnel who are responsible for the upkeep of these excellent public planters.

The adjudicator feels that there is even more potential for the village in this category and you should make contact with a local person with landscaping knowledge or indeed with Leitrim County Council Horticultural section.

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.

Good to report that you have developed initiatives that suit your community and that you can manage with the resources available to you.

The adjudicator forgot to take in the tree at the PO that had a complement of bees- mea culpa.

These are the type of local things that appeal to people and you know what it might become a mini visitor attraction. Well done on your bio hub idea one that can be expanded upon over time. It's great to see the enthusiasm that you have for this particular category and it fits the ethos outlined in the first paragraph. It would be beneficial in this adjudicator's opinion if you would consider putting together a Biodiversity Plan as a sub part of the recommended 2/3 year plan. Advice can be got from the wildlife ranger who you have ongoing contact with. I would suggest also that you involve the school children from both schools as part of the above. The Schools have been very progressive in the green schools programme and other related activities.

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 slogan that should be publicised more widely country wide. The practical benefits of good waste management and control of unnecessary production will be seen as a major contribution to a better environment. The measures that you have listed certainly fit in with the stated objectives of the category and again it's noticeable that you have tailored these to suit your own community needs. Well done on drawing up a sustainable and waste management plan and you have listed many tasks that need to be undertaken over a specific timescale. One concern that the adjudicator has is have you got the resources to maintain these on an ongoing and sustainable basis. Lets us know things are progressing as the saying goes. To get more out of this sector in terms of creating even a greater awareness of all things that contribute to a more sustainable environment consider looking at the following websites for idea generation. www.localprevention.ie, www.greenhomes.ie and www.sustainableprocessing.ie Also something that this adjudicator became aware of over the last few is the growth of 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 of tidiness and litter control was good on the day of adjudication and one feels that you have been marked on the low side somewhat over the last few years. The adjudicator likes the way you have broken down your input under both headings and how you go about the work outlined. There is no point in repeating back to you what you have included but the main thing is that you need buy in from local businesses and the wider community for these to work. All the work cannot fall on the shoulders of volunteers it is up to members of the community to play their part by looking after their individual homestead, side areas etc. There were a few back areas that could do with some excess material being removed or stored in a more organised way rather than have stuff strewn haphazardly. In a small village of the standing of Drumkeeran little things like the above stand out. Organising litter pick groups is an effective way of ensuring that all areas of the village are addressed and cleared of any litter on a regular basis. It certainly has paid off as the village and its surrounds were free of litter except for a few pieces. A few boys and ladies must have been having an "Orchard Thieves" (a kind of an inadvertent pun) party at the amenity area as there were a few of the brand cans lying around. "Love where you live" is a great concept and it encourages people to get involved with their communities in a practical manner.

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

The input in your entry form shows that the Committee has any involvement with the residents of the housing estates in the village. The work that you did in painting the boundary walls of the Sheena Estate was noted by the adjudicator so well done on that score. The most significant work that you do is encouraging people to take ownership of their own areas and any issues that may be particular to those areas. A very practical approach taken for example in encouraging estates to put in place a mini waste prevention scheme. The housing developments visited were well maintained and most residents with the few exceptions that you find everywhere are doing their best to keep in line with the "Love where you live" concept. The core area of the village has some very fine private residences maintained and presented to a high standard. Some nice individual front gardens were admired in the immediate outskirts. You are wished well with your efforts to seek permission to paint or camouflage derelict premises and to be honest there are not many.

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

The road in from Carrick on Shannon entrance was in very good state of presentation with the verges cut in

accordance with recommended practice and of course the amenity park on an elevated site added to this. The Drumkeeran name sign and the box hedge Failte sign gave a welcoming feel to this entrance. The entrance from Dromahair was very pleasant with the Failte Stone across from the "Soldiers Rest top class. The road out to Dora was in an acceptable state as were those out at the same junction to Manorhamilton and Arigna. The internal road structure was good and the few side lanes encountered very tidy. Overall the standard was very good and merits an increase of an additional mark mainly because of the ongoing list of maintenance tasks that you have listed and that you are working on at the moment. Not sure what the "phone box" corner is all about but maybe you could elaborate for next year. You have attained high enough marks in comparison to other centres of note in this category so continuance of your work is the only way to guarantee retention of this mark.

Concluding Remarks:

This was the adjudicator's very first visit to the idyllic rural village of Drumkeeran and it was a most pleasant. The Tidy Towns ethos is very much to the fore and the work that you as the Committee is doing is certainly helping to make the village attractive for both locals and visitors alike. You are wished well for the future.