

Tidy Towns Competition 2019

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Drumshanbo - Droim Sheanbhó** Ref: **712**
County: **Leitrim** Mark: **319**
Category: **B** Date(s): **13/06/2019**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2018	Mark Awarded 2019
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	48	48
Streetscape & Public Places	60	39	40
Green Spaces and Landscaping	60	47	48
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	35	35
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	26	26
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	52	52
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	30	31
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	38	39
TOTAL MARK	470	315	319

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

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

Thank you for an excellent concise and informative entry form a perfect example of what is required for the adjudicator to do an assessment.

Last year the adjudicator was very complementary of the work that you have been doing since you entered the competition neigh on 8 years ago.

This year similar sentiments apply albeit in a shorter narrative but taking into account all that has been done under the 8 categories.

Feel assured that the adjudication was done in a fair and objective manner bearing in mind that a committee such as yours is very much dependent on volunteerism.

Actually on the first evening when the adjudicator did a preliminary walkabout there were volunteers out watering flowers in the centre of town and a sole gentleman planting trees opposite Mulveys on the Dowra exit

First off you are to be congratulated for achieving such a high placing in the county in such a short time span.

The quality of your map was top class as it indicated clearly where projects and places of interest were in the town.

The Committee structure is excellent six is ideal for the Executive and work then can be assigned to the volunteer under the different categories.

Good to see that you have 10 children involved and that inclusivity is part of your objectives.

The list of agencies and local businesses supporting you is impressive as well as the local schools and parish council.

Is Drumshanbo Enhancement Ltd a local development company?

The communication methods are a mix of the tried and trusted plus the various strands of social media.

The Facebook page is up to date and full marks to those who keep the content uploaded.

The Sunday "spruce ups" are new to this adjudicator but one assumes that they are an effective way of communicating as well as engaging in practical work.

Well done on concentrating on 4 projects that you can achieve results at the end of the year far better this approach than having a myriad of stuff that would be unmanageable.

Your last input in this category could act as your mission statement.

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

The adjudicator had not been in Drumshanbo for a good number of years and this return visit showed that a lot of positive change had happened in the core area of the town alone.

A good number of new businesses had set up and the town looked more vibrant than it was some 8 years ago.

I would suggest that the Tidy Towns committee in conjunction with others was one of the main drivers of this change,
It looked as if things economically had picked up as well but it was sad to see that the Excol Garage had closed down and that whole area has become more than a little tatty and doesn't do justice to the rest of the town. It's kind of inconceivable that petrol or diesel cannot be got in a town with great potential to attract visitors. Consider that many come to stay on the Lough Allen who maybe in need of fuel and a roadside convenience shop and toilets.
The new street lighting was admired on the Carrick Road and this gives a very pleasant appeal.
Further out the Carrick Road improvements have just been made to the entry/exit to the Blueway which make it a lot safer for both pedestrians, including a lot of children who use the excellent outdoor pool and facilities, and vehicle traffic including cycles.
Other good things happen in this end of town as the new Coffee Shop was about to unveil its new sign Jenny's Tea Room I believe.
Good to report that a new visitor centre is proposed for the Shed Distillery (Gunpowder Gin) as at present a visit is by invite only.
It's good to report also that two unoccupied shops have been purchased and are ready for re development.
The adopt a shop concept is a good one that has worked well in other centres and well done to the Tidy Towns Committee for leading by example.
Issues in relation to derelict buildings and suggestions that may help effect change were offered in great detail in last year's report
The following is a cross section of observations and comment by the adjudicator after the walkabout.
The mart area is still untidy and much hasn't happened since last year suffices to say that the committee is aware of the situation that prevails.
No point in labouring the point but that whole area is a bit of an eyesore thankfully other positives balance things out.
The Acres Lough Amenity area with its excellent facility and when the Blueway projects are completed it will be a massive boom for the local economy.
Work progress is good at the moment right down to the entrance of the Lough Allen Resort.
Directional signs in the village and on entrances were in good condition, one or two at the entrances (Dowra) were obscured by overgrowth.
Road surfaces and footpaths in general were of good standard in the town and on out to the outskirts.
Street lighting and traffic calming measures were acceptable.
St Patricks RC Church on an elevated site was well maintained with ample car parking, Drumshanbo NS out the Ballinamore Road was also presented but the traffic was heavy that particular morning.
Other public buildings the Garda Station and the Library were well maintained and it looked as if both had been painted.
The Vocational School and the Mayflower Community Centre on the Sligo exit were maintained in good condition
There are many fine businesses with fine shop fronts and the following are a number that appealed to this adjudicator Drumshanbo Credit Union, the cluster of premises in the middle of the town that include O Miochains Pub.
Drumshanbo Methodist Church on the Carrick road has a long association with the town and the wider hinterland and is still a place of worship.
The GAA Grounds now dedicated to Shane McGettigan who died so tragically is a well appointed facility on the Ballinamore Road and well done to members who contribute to its upkeep.
The Geranium Cafe and Bakery has a very inviting exterior and the fare on offer is top class.
Both the Food Hub and the Enterprise Centre were presented to a good standard with room for improvement in both cases in relation to general tidiness.
Like every other rural town of similar size Drumshanbo has suffered from the downturn of some years back but there has been a change of fortune over the last few years and this has been reflected in a new vibrancy in the business sector.
Gunpowder Gin amongst others has put the town back on the map.
Derelict properties are problematic in all villages and towns and Drumshanbo is no different but you have addressed the issue in a practical manner and over time positive change will happen.
The standard was very good and the work that has been undertaken in the last year warrants an increase in marks.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

The adjudicator took your advice and did visit the Lough Allen Centre near the Lough Allen Resort Hotel and experienced firsthand the work that horticultural students were doing.
The fruits of their labours –ignore the unintentional pun- were seen in the excellent Blackrock Orchard on the Sligo Road
Many of the planting arrangements in the town and on the outskirts were viewed by the adjudicator.
One can understand the need for providing all year round sustainable plant effectiveness by introducing more perennials to the planting programme.
The adjudicator witnessed so many examples of good public planting arrangements during his travails around the town.
There were a number of individual planters with colourful annuals around the centre of the town and both these and hanging baskets were being watered on the evening of arrival rather late as well which is of course the best time to water,
Well done to the two volunteers involved.
Whilst is labour intensive to maintain beds of annuals its rather nice to have such colour on view in central areas of villages and towns as it gives an inviting look especially in the weather that we are having at present.

The adjudicator was impressed with many individual private well maintained gardens that mixed colour with shrubs to great effect.

It's also noticeable that in a spell of good weather interspersed with showers bring out the best in lawns and flower and shrub beds

Trees are part of the fabric of rural Ireland but surprisingly many towns and villages have sparse numbers.

Drumshanbo could do with a tree evaluation survey which would determine the type and the locations that would be best suited for additional trees be they be in boxes or in the ground.

It was noted that saplings were being planted at the Dowra exit but it was felt that the centre area could do with more,

There are a few overpopulated shrub beds that need to be thinned out or just cut back.

Just a note of reminder that the information panel on the Bank of Ireland Gable wall is still obscured by overgrowth.

Overall the standard was quite good and what was in place in terms of public planting was well looked after so retention of same mark is recommended.

The Community Garden was very much admired and the objectives for its very existence shows the positive measure that you have taken to promote inclusivity in the Community of Drumshanbo.

It also has a cross over into the Biodiversity category as well as Sustainability.

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

The key overall issues in respect of this adjudication category are –Education – knowledge of local species and their habitats and knowledge of local designated areas (SACs, SPAs, NHAs).

Conservation – maintaining of important wildlife areas and implementation of survey results and Wildlife interpretation that is sustainable.

The promotion of these objectives to the local population and to the school children is key to ensuring that the community is aware of what Bio Diversity in the Locality is all about and how they can play their part in the The projects that you have listed are varied and more importantly are practical and certainly fall within the ethos of the previous statements.

There is no point in repeating them all back to you but the adjudicator was very impressed with your imitative to organise a series of educational display boards and pull up banners that will reflect the bio diversity of the immediate area.

It goes without saying that you are so fortunate to have such a myriad of wildlife and lake life habitats on your doorstep.

Good to note that you submitted a project for the Pollinator Award

More information is available www.biodiversityireland.ie where one can access the National Pollinator Plan as well as the pollinator friendly planting code www.pollinators.ie

The Green Communities Project under the auspices of An Taisce is a source that can be tapped into for idea generation information on various biodiversity projects

The National Parks and Wildlife Service www.npws.ie is another source of exceptional information on bio diversity matters.

Overall the standard was very good.

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

The objective in this category has moved on to some extent from one of reduce reuse and recycle to one of promoting the concept of reducing the productions of potential waste at source such as excessive packaging. "Doing more with less" is a very apt and should be in the public domain more frequently.

Activities that describe how as a community you manage waste and promote efficient use of resources and promote awareness is the key to gaining marks in this category.

The projects that you have listed in the entry form are very much in keeping with the ethos of the sector but they are not new as such.

You have received quite high marks in this section over the last few years and it's important for you as a committee to engage further with category requirements to retain these marks.

This is the adjudicator's recommendation and indeed his mantra when it comes to advice in this particular category.

To get more out of this sector in terms of gaining marks and creating 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 for instance there are novel way of reusing old newspapers that have very practical benefits and as a follow up its worth checking 36 uses for old newspapers at www.foe.co.uk

Also something that this adjudicator became aware of during last year 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 and www.sustainableprocessing.ie you will get a pretty good idea of what it's all about.

Let's not forget about the younger generation in this category visit the green schools organisation

www.greenschools.org

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 of both litter control and general tidiness in the town was acceptable with exceptions as can be expected in any town of similar size.

One is aware of the area around the Mart and the now defunct Service Station and it has to be said that it is a major eyesore in a central location.

There is no pint also in labouring the point except to wish you well with your deliberations to obtain funding to erect a maintenance free fence that will screen that whole area.

Well done on having the foresight and the determination to address this problem.

There are few other litter black spots in the town but they seem to be under the radar of the committee it is hoped that these will be improved upon before the tourist season fully gets into swing.

The adjudicator found weed growth at various points in the town and it is important that these are monitored and regularly cleaned

In general the town centre and the immediate outskirts have good litter control measures in place.

The bane of this adjudicator's time doing adjudications around the country is the myriad of road side type placard advertising that spring up at roadsides advertising anything from country music festivals to 5km runs.

One could accept a gable end mural if it was tastefully done but roadside placards are unsightly and distracting.

This year the adjudicator did not have to engage with Johnny Brady at every turn of the road like he did in another neighbouring county a few years back.

An increase of one mark is justified.

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

The positive work undertaken under this heading has been noted and the adjudicator took time to visit a cross section of housing developments, established and comparatively new on the day.

It took a bit of stamina and good feet to traverse to the town extremities.

Radharc an Bhaile very appropriate name for an estate that overlooks the town on the Dowra Road was visited and to be honest it was in a poor state.

Some house that were occupied didn't look in the best of shape and to make matters worse the adjudicator encountered a fairly feisty dog and it took all of his dog whispering powers to calm him down.

Glad to note that it has been purchased the estate that is not the dog!

It will take quite a lot of remedial work to bring it back to its best.

Corryard Wood was well presented and the amenities you mentioned were noted.

Ashdale and Hillcrest Grove out towards the Enterprise Centre were well presented and the green area in the latter was cut but could do with some planting arrangements.

Naomh Padraig Estate was also in an acceptable state of presentation.

Some well presented town houses, one near the Garda Station especially, were presented to a very high standard.

Keep up the good motivational work in encouraging residents to maintain homesteads and communal areas in their respective estates to a good standard.

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

Excellent work done on the Carrick Road entrance very inviting and gives a very good first impression as one enters the town.

Jenny's Tearooms should be a hit with visitors.

Well done on the wildlife preservation measure on this road.

The Hilly Road does need to be re surfaced if people want to make the best use of the Rockwell Trail.

The Ballinamore Road was acceptable but the area around the National School could be examined to see if it required additional traffic calming measures.

The Dowra entrance has as you say had significant upgrading and the adjudicator became very familiar with this entrance.

Not too late to mention Mulvey's Store which was very well presented,

The Sligo entrance has been enhanced so much by the Blackrock Orchard and yes the Blueway Project was examined closely and extensive work was being carried which meant that road entrance into the Lough

Allen/Ramada resort was pretty rough.

When complete this will be a major tourist and walkers attraction and should bring large volumes of visitor traffic to the town

Concluding Remarks:

It has been a good number of years since this adjudicator was to Drumshanbo the home of the longest running family festival An Tostal which is still going and associated with one Joe Mooney.

The visit on this occasion was very pleasant.

There has been a very positive change to the town and its surrounds primarily due to its proximity to area that offers a variety of water based activities.

Your achievement in gaining 3rd place in the County in the Tidy Towns Competition in a short space of time is an example to any other centre that has just embarked on the same journey.

You are wished well for the future.