

# Tidy Towns Competition 2015

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Drumlish** Ref: **478**  
County: **Longford** Mark: **293**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **20/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	40	41
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	40	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	39	40
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	31	32
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	13	14
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36	36
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	33	33
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>293</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Ta Fáilte Droim Lis! Welcome Drumlish to the Super Valu 2015 National Tidy Towns competition. You have 25 people involved on your committee. This is good representation from a small village. You meet bimonthly during the winter and monthly - or more often as required during the spring and summer. This is good organisational procedure. You list 11 agencies, bodies and businesses that have supported your activities. This is a representative group, and we are delighted that you have this help. It means that you are appreciated and trusted. You have several different methods of communication both traditional and modern, together with public events. You have collaborative workshops, visits to the school, and input from the school on their Green Flag work. We are delighted to see that some of the children are anxious to join you. We look forward to hearing more about this. This is your 11th entry and you have gone from strength to strength. Well done on being selected to represent the county in the Pride of Place competition. We are delighted that the Tidy Towns competition is a stimulus for the enhancement and positive presentation of the village. In the trebling of the population you have found people with commitment and generosity who have added to the existing welcoming hard working community. Thank you for your map. You should show all housing estates and name them on your village map. A number are missing from the map, and this is unhelpful to the adjudicator. You were asked to number this year's projects sequentially through the Entry Form and to relate these numbers to the projects entered on your map. However the numbering is not sequential through your Entry Form. Please try to follow the guidelines accurately next year. Thank you also for your draft Tidy Towns Plan. When is this going to be adopted? And what process do you have to move the plan forward from a draft plan to a final plan? The 'before' and 'after' photographs were useful on adjudication day. Thank you also for your media cuttings and the poster for the biodiversity workshop.

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

This adjudicator on returning to Drumlish after 8 years absence is delighted to say that you took our 2007 advice to heart! That was - "The buildings in the village are small in scale and traditional in character, and for the most part have been conserved in that form. You should endeavour to ensure that this stays the same, that no unsuitable insertions are added in the streetscape." Apart from the Credit Union building - and of which we said at the time - "it is a pity that the Credit Union building is designed to have its gable to the street." - this remains so. Well done to the local authority and your good selves!

The new footpaths on Main Street were noted although there is more work to do on further footpath improvement in this street. We admired the bilingual street nameplates. They looked well and made it easy to identify project locations and also to reference projects and areas in this report. We liked the simplicity of the signs without fuss or sponsorship details, and we liked the script very much. Some buildings we admired were the cream-coloured building with red doors on Mary Street where you have painted the grocery/curtains window - with the 'closed' sign.

This is very attractive and we are delighted to see the traditional timber sash windows in this building retained and looked after. A cream-coloured building on the opposite side of the road had three redundant hanging basket brackets which should be removed. The mushroom coloured house on the corner of Mary and Main St. looked very well. Mitchell Meats was well presented. We loved the bright yellow colour of the doors on the corner property between Hill Street and Mary Street. This is in a strategic part of your village streetscape and looked extremely well. The house between this and the Library were also well presented. The library looked well but perhaps its window posters/signage could be rationalised to a notice board, as window clutter can detract visually from a streetscape. The pavement trees, the pavements themselves and in the picnic table all contribute to a very pleasant inner village environment. The Post Office on Main Street/ Kane's looked very well. We felt that there were far too many signs /baskets/lights etc. on Cassidy's/Golden Dragon/Village Inn. The Credit Union building could be improved with a fresh coat of paint and window sign removal. The church was very well presented. The community Centre was painted on adjudication day and was gleaming. Well done on this! We wish you luck with the negotiations re the vacant site. Well done also on the painting of boundary walls and street furniture throughout the village. The Mill project straddles this and the Landscaping categories. Well done taking professional advice on this project and in seeking funding from the Heritage Council (as we read in your media news copy). The Hill Road project and the power washing of the pavements is a Tidiness project, and the construction of the wooden planters is a Landscaping project, and we credit these under their appropriate headings. Although you mention it under Landscaping - well done on the painting of the roof of the whitewashed shed near the rockery. The Emo petrol station looked well. Costcutter is cluttered around its front forecourt. A small machine looked abandoned/default. Centra looked bright with its yellow door. The Health Centre would benefit from repainting before next year's competition, as would a shed on adjacent property. 'Davis' part of lettering opposite needs renewal. Well done on your use of Irish in street name signs and housing estate names.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

The remedial and pre landscaping works at the Mill was a very large undertaking. You have also planted some lovely mature trees and had other trees in the area looked after. The complex is really a lovely amenity visually – and will be even more so as a recreational area too when completed. It is also a good introduction to the village on this approach. The rockery at Arvagh Road has been enhanced. Well done on the construction of the large square wood planters. You have strimmed, mowed, planted, and pruned around the village. It is showing the benefits! It appeared to us that the public playground sign was only visible inside the estate road. It needs to be flagged by directional sign from the main road.

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

You have continued to maintain and monitor the existing habitats such as the bird sanctuary and the insect hotel, the poly tunnel area frog habitat and the riverbanks. You have provided a bird table and planted hawthorn hedging to attract wildlife. We are sure that the visit of your volunteers to the woodland reserves brings lots of new expertise back to your group. We are glad that you are continuing the tradition established now of a biodiversity day/workshop. Do look at the Tidy Towns Handbook which is a most helpful publication to guide you in developing projects under this category heading. The Heritage Council's 'Wildlife in Towns and Villages' booklet is also a very useful resource and painting it will involve the schoolchildren. You are located in rich countryside and we are sure that your County heritage Officer would be able to advise you as to how to progress further with new initiatives which you could eventually present to the public.

We observed some hedge cutting on the approach roads. Remember that it is permissible to trim hedging along cultivated ground (e.g. gardens) throughout the year. However with regard to hedge trimming bordering non cultivated land - you are reminded that it is an offence under the Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2006 to cut vegetation in a hedge or ditch on lands not cultivated between 1st March and 31st August annually - this is for the protection of nesting birds. Before considering trimming any such hedges please consult with your local authority who will deal with this issue if there is a safety aspect involved. Marks can be deducted for out of season hedge trimming.

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

Recycling of cattle feed and coal bags are ongoing. Recycling of plants, car boot sales. businesses baling their cardboard, and using the bottle bank all contribute to good recycling, but it is important to remember that recycling is lower down on the waste pyramid than the prevention or reduction of waste at source. It is important that some simple records be kept to assess progress being made in resource management. The reinstatement of a bus service and car pooling have all been undertaken, which is good - but have you any idea of the numbers of people or the mileage/fuel saved? Water harvesting at the poly tunnel from the adjacent shed was undertaken. Water from this source was used for the rockery and planters throughout the village, as well as for power washing of the pavements. The school is involved in water conservation projects. Have you any idea of the number of litres of water saved? Have you looked at the Tidy Towns publication in relation to Sustainable Waste and Resource management - the updated version sent to you as updated handbook extract. We suggest that you choose some simple starting point from the project examples involving simple auditing given in that publication. You could- for example - get some of the community to survey how much food they waste in a week! Check out the 'Food Waste Challenge' on [www.foodwaste.ie](http://www.foodwaste.ie) for guidance. Promoting waste prevention ideas and initiatives is a big part of the Tidy Towns Groups' role in this category. Can you tell us how you communicate good practice to the broader community? Well done to the school on their Green Flags, but on adjudication day there were four empty flagpoles at the site of the school.

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

We are glad to know that you took part in Spring Clean Day. It is amazing the amount of rubbish that is found on such a large cleaning project. You have litter picks on a weekly and daily basis. What is the difference between the weekly litter pick and the daily litter pick? In any event they appear to be effective as the village was almost litter free. We did see a few pieces of litter at the playground. You keep your planters clean and you wash traffic signs. You also look after unnecessary signage removal and signs with missing letters. We did see one redundant traffic pole near the village cross-streets. The kerbs and footpaths are meticulously maintained. One of your big projects is tidying around the Mill. Fly posting on cable ties have been removed. Nonetheless we did spot one fly post (which was for a circus) on a pole near the school.

You monitor the litter bins and the bottle bank. However on adjudication day we noticed that there were empty poles at the bring banks and no signage. The receptacles themselves were quite dirty. Around the bins there were some few scraps of litter. The setting against the graveyard wall could do with brightening. The bins are located so tight to the cemetery wall that it is impossible to clean behind them, and as a result a few bits and pieces were located between the bins and the wall. A broken notice on the school boundary looked poorly. You report fly tipping and try to prevent dog fouling. Graffiti is dealt with immediately after it occurs and this is the correct procedure to deter the culprits. We credit the Hill Road project here rather than under Built environment. Also the power washing of the pavements contributes to the tidiness of the village. A headless pump was noted on Main Street, although it was otherwise well painted.

Some tidying of the outer end of Main St. would be beneficial - things like painting the corrugated 'red' roof, cleaning the fire assembly sign and tidying around it, weeding or grassing the area in front of the black fence. By comparison there has been a better effort in relation to the area in front of the white and black fences nearer the village centre on this street. As with all generic County Longford village information boards - your information board at the church is fading and needs renewal.

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

You have a large number of housing estates for a small village and we visited most of these. The houses in the village itself and on the approach roads were well presented. We admired a lovely ochre courtyard area to the side of a house on Main St. As already stated many of your estates are neither shown nor named on your map. Your map needs updating. So if any of our referencing is inaccurate in its naming this is the reason.

At Corrabaun Park the boundary wall facing incoming traffic has iron oxide staining and would benefit from power washing. We also noticed parking on the footpath on the estate frontage to Mohill road. This should be discouraged. Sliabh Rua entrance was neat, but the 'staff only beyond this point' sign needs tidying, and the sign was dirty and there was over growth inside the gate nearby. Croi Bothar would benefit from some tree planting. The Meadows is leafy but the boundary wall requires paint and road markings at the exit need renewal. On Hill Street the housing estate with no name has good road side fencing. Sliabh Coirbre was neat. Church View Drive had a good boulder name sign with planting, and we noticed it won the best estate award 2013. The gradient down to the older persons' dwellings opposite the church seemed particularly steep. The wall here on one side would benefit from plastering. The estate was neat with no weeds. The map does not show a number of estates on the approach to the Mill. One of these was Gleann Na hEasrach which has good road frontage treatment. Church Hill View is not shown on your map either, nor Mill Race Park - only Mill Oaks is shown in this area of your map. The retirement village seems to have 'fizzled out' and this area is still awaiting completion. An unfinished estate (Drumattin Construction - but no estate name) was neat but the galvanised fencing was poor. Additional trees are required in the Open Space. The 'stop' sign needs upgrading. Loughan Hill was well presented with good semi-mature tree planting. Some of the trees need staking.

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

Well done on your survey of the approach roads. You have come up with proposals for each. It is very important to convey a good first impression of the village and this is where it happens - on the approach roads. We would suggest that you paint all field gates on approach roads. This is important as an indication one is arriving at a village which is well looked after and tidy.

We noted some fairly recent hedge trimming on the Mohill Road. Please see our comments under Wildlife above. There was a weedy fenced site on the right-hand side with chippings, a rusty tank and another plastic tank/wire mesh fence. The final approach to the village is very neat with weed-free footpaths and well-kept properties. No field gates were painted along this approach and some were rusty.

On the Longford Road approach we admired the clean and weed free footpaths and the nice semi mature trees, but once again we noticed some hedge cutting of recent origin. Along the footpath the road edge badly needs resurfacing over a long stretch. There were high grasses around the blue village sign which looked untidy. A junction sign was overgrown, as was the Arvagh/Newtownforbes directional sign also. A large sign for the Breffni Province Challenge was swaying in the breeze over the footpath on a directional sign. This looked untidy. There are nice semi-mature trees on this approach, and we admired the boulder sign for the village with its gold lettering.

On the Newtownforbes Road we admired the young semi-mature trees. Gates need paint. We also admired some nice timber fencing at two houses. The village sign for Droim Lis is located on an unsurfaced setback. On the Hill Street approach the surfaces are rough. There is a housing estate with no name on the right-hand side

On the Ballinlalee approach Road/old school road the Drumlish blue sign was nicely placed on a green sward with excellent semi-mature trees. The nice long rockery area and boulder sign on the Cavan road looks extremely well.

**Concluding Remarks:**

It was nice to return to Drumlish after a long absence and to see the progress which you have made in the meantime. We will follow this progress eagerly. Keep up the good work and we wish you well. Go n-éirí libh!