

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Doohamlet** Ref: **2191**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **200**
Category: **B** Date(s): **07/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	30
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	24
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	23
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	24
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	4
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	45
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	25
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	25
TOTAL MARK	450	200

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

We are delighted to welcome Doohamlet to the 2015 tidy towns competition and we hope that this is the beginning of a very successful journey for your tidy towns group and village. We note from your entry form that your tidy towns group is comprised of a number of committees that joined together with five active members. This is considered to be a very practical first step and it is already proving successful as your group has managed to complete a tidy towns action plan, undertake a number of relevant projects and enter the competition. Why not go on a recruitment drive for 2016 in order to increase the number of volunteers in your village? Schools, sports clubs (e.g. local GAA and soccer clubs) or social groups (active retirement associations, residents associations) are normally good sources for new members. Or perhaps some of the 12 volunteers who helped out with your community litter pick would like to get involved on a continuous basis? We are pleased to see that you have formed good links with Monaghan County Council and the Community Employment Scheme. Consider also speaking to the County leader company about advice, funding and assistance for your projects. Your communication strategy is good and we are pleased to see that includes both traditional and digital methods of communication. Well done on engaging with the local teacher and we urge you to consider involving the school children in some of your projects. Thank you for your very comprehensive and informative entry form and map as both were helpful during adjudication. Your draft three-year plan was also read with interest and it is considered to be a very good document which contains many practical, worthwhile and ambitious projects.

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

The village generally looked well during adjudication and we admired the church, which is a lovely historical building that is presented to a good standard with well maintained grounds, mature trees and attractive natural stone boundary walls. The small well that is adjacent to the church and which comprises an information sign on the district of Doohamlet, was also observed and the pump is a lovely feature of interest. However, its appearance could be further enhanced by removing the small number of weeds at its base and by providing some landscaping. The Golden Jubilee Hall opposite is an excellent facility for the village to have and it is great to see that there are plans to extend and further improve it. The lovely natural stone bridge and the majestic mature trees located between the Community Hall and Church were admired and Connollys B&B is an impressive building which looked well. The work to improve 'Aggies Cottage' is also acknowledged and commended. Your entry form states that a number of projects have taken place in the recent past and they include the restoration of the mill race bridge, the construction of a new stone wall and the provision of a new Doohamlet village name sign. These are all excellent projects which have made a positive contribution to the built environment of your village. We are also pleased to see that a number of other exciting projects for the built environment are identified in your three-year plan and we look forward to seeing these being implemented in the years ahead.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

A number of attractive landscaping schemes were observed during our visit to Doohamlet. The half barrel planters on the approach road from Monaghan looked nice and they helped to enhance this important approach road. We also liked the colourful planted beds (and nice semi mature trees) that could be seen at the entrance to the Cois Locha estate. An attractive and well maintained landscaping bed could also be seen at the entrance to the Fana na hEaglaise estate. Colourful planters were observed at the boundaries of the forecourt of the village shop while the landscaped grounds of the Church impressed. We loved the mature tree at the entrance to the car park to Connollys B&B but it was noted that the flower bed at its base was a little weedy. The planters at the Community Hall provided colour but the parking area could also be improved by removing the debris and discarded items from the perimeter of the car park and by providing some low maintenance landscaping instead. Attractive landscaping could also be observed on the approach road from Ballybay. Your application form indicates that funding has been applied for to undertake further improvements under this category and it is hoped that these can be progressed in the years ahead.

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

We strongly agree with the assessment put forward in your application form that your village is in an excellent position to identify and undertake projects under this category due to its location on the rich and diverse habitats to be found along the river, in Tonyscallon Lake and in the native trees and woodlands both inside and adjacent to Doohamlet. We are amazed to read that a total of 10 insect hotels have been located throughout the village and we wondered if you considered carrying out a survey to see what insects could be found in the large one in the Community garden? Perhaps the school could get involved with this project? Unfortunately, we could only find 2 during adjudication (in the community garden and at the village pump) and we wondered if the locations for the others could be included on the map in 2016? The information board was also admired and we were delighted to read that Doohamlet are taking part in a streamscapes water awareness workshop and it is hoped that this will enable you to enable lots of other exciting new projects under this category. While the idea of a lake walk is included in your plan, we wondered if the idea of a history and heritage walk could be explored? This could take in all natural heritage elements (such as the garden, the river, the lake and woodlands) as well as the historical elements of the village (the old railway line, the Church, the natural stone bridge). A heritage walk is also likely to be of interest to both visitors and residents alike.

Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramháiola Inbhuanaithe:

This is a tidy towns category that has increased in importance in recent years with a total of 50 marks now allocated to it. Therefore, it presents an excellent opportunity for your village to improve its performance in the competition. We note that most of your actions under this category are at proposal stage and we look forward to seeing them progress in the years ahead. We are pleased to see that you intend to liaise and support the school in their efforts to minimise and eliminate waste. Well done also on seeking the assistance of the Environmental Awareness Officer in Monaghan County Council in identifying projects. But don't forget that your tidy towns group can work to reduce and eliminate waste when carrying out your own projects. This can be easily achieved by making your own compost for your landscaping schemes (by composting grass cuttings and plant trimmings), harvesting rain water for watering plants, growing your own plants (rather than buying them) and using recycled materials (such as waste timber or paint) for your planters. Other ideas for projects under this category can be found in the tidy towns handbook.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

We were most impressed with the standard of litter control on view in Doohamlet during adjudication. Aside from a small number of isolated locations (such as the playground in Cois Cill, the approach from Monaghan, the approach road from Ballybay and the car park of the community centre), the village was virtually litter free. This is an excellent achievement for a first time entrant and it demonstrates that your determined approach to litter control is working. The standard of tidiness was also good with the vast majority of public areas appearing to be free from weeds and neat and tidy looking. Nonetheless, some areas of improvement can be identified. For example, a number of signs were spotted that were in need of maintenance (such as the speed limit signs on the Lough Egish road, the black and white sign for Tonyscallon Lake and the keep village free from litter sign outside the Community Centre). Why not undertake a signage survey? This involves surveying all signs in the village and taking note of which ones need to be washed, repaired or replaced. Improvements are also possible at the school where the front boundary wall is a little untidy looking and the area between the basket ball court and the front wall is a little weedy and overgrown.

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

The standard of presentation of the housing areas in the village was reasonably good. We liked the Cois Locha estate with its attractive entrance landscaping, semi mature trees and well maintained green areas. The Fana na hEaglaise estate also looked very well with its neatly trimmed grass and colourful planted beds. Cois Cill and Cois Carrig were generally good but they did not quite manage to achieve the standard set by Cois Locha and we are delighted to read that your group (with the assistance of Monaghan County Council) are encouraging the residents to set up a residents association. Would a best presented estate competition for Doohamlet provide an incentive? Perhaps Monaghan County Council (or a local business or employer) would sponsor a prize?

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

The approach road into the village from Monaghan achieves a good standard. The verges are very neatly trimmed and the planted barrels are colourful and varied. The new name stone (set on a natural wall) looks well and it helps

to create a positive impression and enhance this approach. The quality of the road surfacing is also high. The approach from Ballybay achieves a similar standard with an attractive name sign, planters with colourful summer bedding plants, very neat verges and semi mature trees. We also liked the hedgerow that lines this entrance road as it provides a lovely natural boundary. The entrance road from Lough Egish is less impressive with overgrown verges and untidy speed limit signage. Perhaps this approach can be improved in the years ahead in order to achieve a uniformly good standard on all approach roads into your village.

Concluding Remarks:

Well done Doohamlet on an excellent first entry to the tidy town competition. Be sure to take the adjudicators comments into account for 2016 and we look forward to seeing you next year.