

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Drum** Ref: **608**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **282**
Category: **A** Date(s): **16/07/2015**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2014 | Mark Awarded 2015 |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Community Involvement & Planning | 60 | 43 | 45 |
| Built Environment and Streetscape | 50 | 30 | 32 |
| Landscaping and Open Spaces | 50 | 32 | 34 |
| Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities | 50 | 35 | 36 |
| Sustainable Waste and Resource Management | 50 | 16 | 18 |
| Tidiness and Litter Control | 90 | 56 | 58 |
| Residential Streets & Housing Areas | 50 | 26 | 28 |
| Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes | 50 | 29 | 31 |
| TOTAL MARK | 450 | 267 | 282 |

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

We would like to welcome the village of Drum to the 2015 tidy towns competition and your participation is appreciated. We are amazed by amount of work that your committee of 7 members manages to get done on an annual basis and it certainly demonstrates your commitment and dedication to your village. We note that your village has no new residents and this no doubt proves a challenge when trying to grow your membership. Are there any sports or social clubs that could be a source of new members? Why not try and delegate some of your projects to the school or interested sports or social clubs as a means of reducing your work load and boosting community involvement. We are pleased to read that you have established very good links with a number of agencies, bodies and businesses in Monaghan including the County Council, the Municipal District of Ballybay – Clones, and the Rural Social Scheme. Are there any local businesses or employers that could be approached for sponsorship? You are commended on your very comprehensive communication strategy and we are pleased to see that you have an online presence – as this should help you to attract new members. We are pleased to see that the school get involved in your activities including your weekly cleanups and that teenagers also participate. Why not delegate responsibility for a landscaping, wildlife or waste minimisation project to them? This would not only help you to lessen your workload but it should also foster a sense of ownership of tidy towns projects among young people. Thank you for your comprehensive entry documentation which included your Drum 2020 plan, photos, completed application form and hand drawn map. Your plan was read with interest and this is certainly a very comprehensive and ambitious document and we wish you every success with it.

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

This is the first time the adjudicator had visited the village of Drum and it has certainly has much to commend it. There are a range of attractive historical buildings to be seen and they included the lovely Church of Ireland Building with its natural stone finish and attractive lead windows. The work of the committee in maintaining this structure is commended as it represents a job very well done. We also liked Stewarts shop, which is an attractive traditional style building maintained in good condition. The 'Wee Drummers' building opposite also looked very well and the play area has benefited from its recent improvements. The village accommodates a mix of both modern and traditional style buildings and all appear to be maintained to a good standard. The National School Building and the Presbyterian Church (on the Rockcorry Road) also looked well. The dispensary stone plaque (which appears to be beside the manse) was also observed with interest and we wondered if a short heritage trail had been considered for your village? The agricultural machinery that is positioned around the village generally looked quite well and reminds the visitor of the close association of drum and the surrounding area with farming. However, some of the machinery will need to be repainted cleaned in time for 2016 – particularly those on the site of school number two on the Newbliss road junction. The derelict sites and buildings clearly present a challenge for the committee and we were disappointed to hear that some owners have not cooperated with improvement efforts. Please note that

Monaghan County Council has powers under the Derelict Sites Act to compel owners to take appropriate action and we would encourage you to seek the assistance of the Council in dealing with this matter. The committee is commended on its excellent work to Drum Lough which includes providing the rules and regulations for fishing in the gazebo and installing steps down to the Lough. Your work repairing the wooden seats and providing new ones, maintaining all local churches in good repair, improving the wee drummers play area and maintaining lampposts, signs and name stones is also acknowledged and appreciated.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The committee is commended on its hard work in the landscaping and open-space category as a number of high quality schemes can be seen on adjudication day. We liked the simple black planters which are located at the base of the lamp stands along the main road in the village and colourful planting schemes were also observed in front of the timber seat. The seasonal planting around the name stone for the Augheragh road looked bright and fresh while timber planters at the junction of the Drum Lough and the main road looked well. A highlight for the adjudicator was the attractive and diverse planting on view in the amenity area by Drum Lough. The combination here of semimature trees, summer flowering plants, roses in full bloom and perennial planting was most attractive and it provided for a very pleasant space. The picnic tables (one complete with chessboard), gazebo and decorative seat (made from an old pony trap – another example of your up cycling) enhanced this area further. The colourful yet simple planting at the recently painted pump (adjacent to the wildlife area) was also admired. The wildlife area itself (with the see saw) appears to function as a habitat and play area and it looked very well during adjudication. The many mature trees can be found throughout the village were also admired. The Committee is also commended on the projects undertaken for this year and which included; planting at the welcome signs and in the village tubs, spring planting of tulips and daffodils, trimming in shaping the willow tunnel in the wildlife garden, maintaining tables and seats and all farm equipment throughout the village, maintaining the replanted flower beds at the pump and making a new flower beds at Stewart stores. It is noted that the junior tidy towns have been engaged in vegetable planting and litter picking.

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

We were very interested to read about the rich biodiversity of the Lake in your entry form. It certainly appears to be a very rich habitat with a good diversity of fish and extensive amounts of wild birds. Don't forget that it is possible to record sightings of many birds on the bird watch Ireland website. We note that the survey was carried out a few years ago and we were pleased to see that a new survey is planned in your action plan. This is considered to be a very worthwhile project as it will enable you to ascertain if any old residents have left (such as the otter) and if any new residents have arrived? In the interim, perhaps the national school would be interested in undertaking a survey as a school project? Has any further consideration been given to the suggestion of the adjudicator in 2014 to providing a panel on the wildlife specific to Drum Lough? This would be very useful in raising awareness of biodiversity at a local level. We are pleased to see that the Japanese knotweed eradication programme is ongoing and we agree that this important project should be prioritised. We note the many fine projects that have been identified under this category in your plan and we wish you every success in completing these projects in the years ahead.

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

We are delighted to see that the tidy towns committee has taken waste minimisation and elimination and sustainable resource use to heart and that you are engaging in many worthwhile projects to achieve these important aims. No doubt the committee is well aware that this category has increased in priority in recent years and it has been allocated a total of 50 marks – which is the same number as the built environment, landscaping and wildlife categories. We applaud your initiative of using an old petrol tanker for water harvesting as this avoids the need for buying new rainwater barrels. Well done also on making compost from village waste and using this in your landscaping schemes. We are pleased to see that waste minimisation is a theme for all your events – including your fundraising barbecue and walking treasure hunt. Perhaps you can advise what actions are undertaken at these events to minimise waste in your submission next year? You are highly commended on up cycling old items for use in your projects such as old chicken feeders for floral displays, tables and seats from disused electrical reels and old telephone poles. As the committee considered undertaking a survey of residents in the village to see if waste minimisation and elimination is understood by everyone? If you should need them, more ideas for projects under this category can be found in the tidy towns handbook.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

The committee and residents of Drum will be pleased (but not surprised) to hear that your village was litter free during adjudication and that this is a most impressive performance for a second successive year. Clearly, your comprehensive and diligent approach to litter control is paying off as your litter free status is becoming a habit for you. Thank you for all of the details that you supplied on your litter control strategy as we were most interested to hear about how you achieve such excellent results in this category. The standard of tidiness is also very high and well done on your weed removal, verge maintenance and other tasks that contribute to it. A small number of improvements are possible however. While the standard of presentation of signage was generally good, a small number were observed to need attention. The yield sign beside the wildlife garden is in poor condition and looked untidy and a second yield sign and pole at the Augheragh road would benefit from maintenance. Despite the best efforts of your committee, some grass was starting to appear through the surfacing in the amenity area and the green gates to the water treatment plants beside the wildlife area would benefit from paint in time for 2016. The front roadside boundary wall of the school may need attention before next year and the corner of the set down area is rather weedy and mossy looking while the planter also needs attention.

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

The standard of individual houses and gardens in Drum was considered to be very high during adjudication day. This not only reflects the determination of the residents in the village to present the properties in the best light but is also demonstrates that they fully support the efforts of the committee. Well done and keep up the good work!

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

The standard of approach roads into Drum was generally very good and we applaud your approach to verge maintenance. In virtually all cases, the roadside boundaries were comprised of natural elements such as hedgerows or grass banks and this gave your village a distinctive rural character. Your approach to verge maintenance must also be complemented as maintaining a short strip allows you to achieve a tidy appearance as well as facilitating wildlife. A small number of improvements are possible. The speed limit signage on the Rockcorry road is facing the wrong direction on one side and an untidy black and yellow children about sign was also spotted here. On the approach road from Drum Lough, the verges adjacent to the 50 kmph signs were a little untidy and in need of maintenance. It is further noted that footpath in the Manse garden has been repaired and that it is planned to resurface the Newbliss Road.

Concluding Remarks:

We would like to congratulate Drum on another excellent performance in the tidy towns competition and we look forward to seeing you again in 2016.