

# Tidy Towns Competition 2012

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dromcollogher** Ref: **932**  
County: **Limerick** Mark: **202**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **18/06/2012**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	0	34
The Built Environment	50	0	26
Landscaping	50	0	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	0	12
Litter Control	50	0	28
Tidiness	30	0	18
Waste Minimisation	20	0	5
Residential Areas	40	0	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	0	20
General Impression	10	0	5
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>202</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Drumcollagher is most welcome to the 2012 TidyTowns competition. Many thanks for your clearly typed application form and three-year plan. You previously entered the competition in 2001 but as this was not done with community support perhaps it is better to start with a clean slate. This adjudicator sensed an eagerness to take control of Drumcollagher's destiny and a desire to get things done. This is clearly the case if you really do have 50+ on your committee. This is a phenomenal number and when you have this level of dedicated support you really can set about making real and lasting changes.

Firstly you have made an excellent start, even producing a three-year plan at this early stage. Well done, it is clear and contains specific goals with deadlines. You have also made contact with the range of outside agencies and this is vital in order to attract support or potential funding. Your communications strategy would be vital in maintaining popular support so you will need a variety of tools. Have you considered setting up a Facebook page? You already have a Flickr site but do note that the adjudicator may not have web access while adjudicating so it is recommended that you include selected photos directly in your application form. You have already made contact with your school and this is essential. Your map did not turn up unfortunately (unless it was the Google print out). If someone on your committee has an artistic bent, why not hand draw the town map. Include all your major landmarks. Copies can be used in subsequent years to mark the location of projects completed. This is an essential part of the application process. Finally comments made in this report are intended to provide constructive criticism and should be considered for action by your group.

### The Built Environment:

This category concerns the presentation of the built environment and the use of Irish. Have you identified buildings of heritage value in the town or features of conservation importance? What makes Drumcollagher

unique? How is your heritage communicated to visitors and locals? This could involve the use of panels or the development of a heritage trail. Perhaps there is a local historian who could help out.

Derelict buildings also come under this heading and you have correctly identified that problem areas need to be listed and tackled individually. Do engage with Limerick county council on this as they can advise on how to deal with difficult situations.

The church is a beautiful old heritage building with modern editions and was beautifully presented. The car park was of a lower standard however with litter and extensive weeds. The Garda station is well presented except for a tatty flag and poor yield sign. The library is an interesting building architecturally and marks a tragic event. Its presentation is poor however, badly needing a coat of paint and some landscaping attention. Country Fresh and Nunans bar have attractive traditional shopfronts. Businesses should be encouraged to preserve traditional signage at eye level. Centra was tidy but with some quite intrusive signage. The Percy French plaque is a quirky point of interest but perhaps too high up to be noticed.

Well done to the artists who displayed their works in the window of O'Connors butchers and elsewhere! The community hall would be enlivened with a mural. The old Irish Street nameplates are unique and worthy of conservation. O'Kelly's antiques is a wonderful feature and is full of character. The new pharmacy nearby is attractive but has no name. The lovely stone buildings of Henry's cafe and 'All About You' and the Co-op Museum were admired as were the beautiful flower displays here.

The old Scoil Mhuire is in need of urgent attention.

### **Landscaping:**

You have identified the need for a holistic approach to this category. Always try to be forward thinking and imagine the impact and levels of maintenance that will be needed in years to come. Drumcollagher already has excellent landscaping features in the form of hedges and tall trees. They should be enhanced where possible. Displays of annual flowers have their place but generally only to enhance points of interest or individual premises. Elsewhere they can be too small for any real impact and require a lot of resources to maintain. Stone walls and hard features (statues etc) can be very complementary to planted areas. The church grounds are beautifully maintained with a range of trees and shrubs. A seat at the graveyard needs to be cleaned however. The screening of the gas tank is very good. The old graveyard across the road is in a prominent location and adds great character to the area. The stone boundary wall is magnificent although a wooden panel with ads lets it down somewhat. The graveyard itself is very sensitively maintained.

The central square is a major asset and focal point for Drumcollagher. It holds great potential. It is currently well maintained and the trees are attractive. The phone boxes are now redundant but are in good order. Landscaping however is muted and Peripheral Street in particular are devoid of attraction. Hopefully this can be addressed in your holistic plan. The Marian shrine needs some attention as it is weedy.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The aim of this category is to raise awareness of natural heritage among the town's people. Start by looking at what you have. Tall trees, hedges, streams etc are all examples of habitats that are of high local value. Non-native trees like beech, sycamore and lime have their place but are not as good as native species, while most evergreens (all except yew and Scots pine) should be avoided. Cherry laurel is an alien invasive species and is particularly pernicious. You have correctly identified Japanese knotweed and chosen to leave it be. Ultimately it should be treated in an appropriate manner. The planned wildlife audit sounds great and we look forward to seeing the fruits of this. Do try to organise some events around this such as wildlife walks and talks. Getting the school involved has great potential.

The river is a fantastic habitat, consult Inland Fisheries Ireland to find out its fisheries value. There was some dumping including an old Christmas tree at the church.

### **Litter Control:**

This category is marked as much on how you approach litter management as on conditions during adjudication. Consider participating in the national spring clean run by An Taisce. It's a great event to kick-start the year and get people out. How often are litter patrols carried out? Do try to get high viz vests with the Tidy Towns logo to make sure you promote yourselves while doing this.

Litter control on adjudication day was quite good with only a small number of items found throughout. Slightly more attention to regular patrols would see you retain the high standard required in this category.

### **Tidiness:**

The town centre is generally quite tidy. Overhead wires clutter the skyline and it would be worthwhile to contact the ESB to request they be put underground. Street furniture e.g. bins are okay but an audit should be carried out as some need to be painted or even replaced. Gates on the Newcastle West Road could be enhanced with some paint. Poles on the Charleville road also need refurbishment. An entrance beside Walls could be enhanced with permanent gates. Generally however it is considered that these are relatively minor points that could be easily addressed through your action plan and the town has a tidy aspect overall.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

This can be a difficult area for many centres to tackle. A good start would be to arrange for a waste minimisation seminar with Limerick county council. This would help you identify the problem and how it can be tackled in a systematic way. Following this you could conduct a waste audit to find out:- how much waste is generated by Drumcollagher, where it goes and what it is made up of. Answering these questions would allow you to target actions in an informed way. A repeat audit in, say three years, would allow you to gauge how successful you have been.

Your school is involved in the green flag program and should be discussed here. The first flag is for waste minimisation and so they have learnt much that could be applied across the community.

While recycling is low on the waste pyramid it remains an important component and facilities should be available for Drumcollagher residents.

### **Residential Areas:**

Your efforts to establish residents associations in each of the nine estates in Drumcollagher are excellent. Do report back on your progress here. It's important that everyone be involved to the extent to which they can. Best garden competitions can be good but frequently it is the same people winning repeatedly so you must watch out for this.

Residential areas were looking well on adjudication day. Plunkett Place was particularly attractive with its extensive greenery and natural stone boundary. The community Playschool is a wonderful use of an old building while Hazel Avenue could be enhanced by treatment of its boundary wall. A new estate beside the school has no name. Its houses are lovely but common areas are neglected while a wire fence further detracts from its appearance. The primary school is very well presented and flying its green flag!

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

You have decided to attend to approach roads on a phased basis and this is reasonable. The adjudicator entered from Broadford, not one of the targeted entrances this year, so we'll hold fire until next year! The approach from Charleville could be enhanced by dealing with some of the abandoned vehicles and machinery here. Road and footpath surfacing is poor in many areas and perhaps you could enter discussions with Limerick county council on addressing this. The Newcastle West approach was inspected but no welcome signs or project works were noted here.

### **General Impression:**

We are delighted that Drumcollagher has joined the TidyTowns and it is hoped that it will be a long and fruitful relationship. You have made a great start and this has already seen you well on your way to success in this contest. Well done!