

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Doon** Ref: **717**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **235**
Category: **B** Date(s): **08/07/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	32
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
Litter Control	50	26
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	235

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Doon to the 2009 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your completed entry form with sketch map on behalf of your village of less than 1,000 people. The map could have been more helpful if it contained a footnote explaining what some of the names or references actually mean. For example, I followed the sign for the Fort, but if I reached it I had no way of knowing. I reached a building, but it had no name. Well done to your committee of twelve on your monthly meetings. It's also positive that your committee has received support from Fás, Limerick County Council and Ballyhoura Development. Your engagement with the primary and secondary schools during term time is also encouraging and the benefits of these initiatives will prove of longer term to the pupils and indeed to their families. Good to hear that you regard the competition as excellent at all levels and that there is room for every level of entrant. Best of luck with your planned event for the October Bank Holiday weekend.

You did not mention how you communicate with the community, but the use of public meetings, internet, Mass announcements, and local notes in the county and local papers are all of benefit to Tidy Towns committees. The occasional survey of the local residents on activities of Tidy Towns would also be of benefit, the more feedback you receive from the community the better.

As was suggested in the 2008 report, it is recommended that you start work on a plan which could cover the three years, 2010-2012. It wouldn't need to be prepared by a professional, it can be prepared by your own committee, but views should be sought from the local community. Any plan should take into account existing plans for the area such as a County Council Local Area Plan. Ideally, your plan should clearly explain what you are trying to achieve each year, the approach planned and indicative costs for each project, any supporting agencies and an indication of the lead partner. All of this planning will help in discussions for funding with existing and potential partners, both public and private sectors. It will also serve as a guide in the achievement of short and medium targets and will also result in Doon getting greater marks in next year's

competition in this category. We note in your entry form the letter from Ballyhoura Development Ltd to commission a plan for 2010.

The Built Environment:

Doon is a typical rural town with many buildings common to other towns of similar size; including the church, the bank, the public houses, the shops (grocery and hardware), the local garage, the schools, the Community Centre, and the GAA grounds. In Doon, many of the buildings on this list are in very good or excellent condition and are well presented by the owners.

The Parish Church was an impressive sight in its well maintained grounds. The fine entrance gates, lighting on the piers and stepped approach all created a very good sense of welcome. Didn't notice a wheelchair access? Both the Calvary on one side and the Grotto on the other side, serve to balance the overall image. The lovely poignant memorial to the people of Dun Bleisce who perished in the great Famine of 1845-1849 is a fitting tribute to the people of those terrible times. How we quickly forget! The presbytery house next door would benefit from a coat of paint to remove the rather stark image. Some ongoing road works at the entrance to the approach to the church are a distraction.

Doon is blessed with some fine schools and all were well presented on the day. The Sunflowers Montessori Community Pre-School, with its colourful sign on the front, is impressive.

Many attractive business premises were to be seen by the visitor and these included; N Rainsford Grocer, McNamara's Hardware and General Store, R Martin's general grocer with its petrol pump, the white painted shop with the three hanging baskets contrasted with the darker residence next door and the coat of arms overhead. Another fine presentation is Treacy's Victuallers with its three animal murals overhead of sheep, cattle and pig. Ann's Newsagents and Grocer is well decorated in red and white and presents an inviting image. The red flowers in the three window boxes upstairs were attractive. Doon Pharmacy also looked well. The AIB Bank was an imposing building from another era. The Library/Leabharlann building was rather bland and a coat of paint on the windows would assist the image. The public houses in the village were all very well presented. These included: The Local, with its predominant red colours, Kellys for Craic, Ceol agus OI. The immaculately presented Moore's pub set out mainly in white, with its lovely window display, appropriate signage, light fittings, flowerboxes and well maintained yard. The closed up premises next door was in stark contrast. Whelan's presented a sporting image with the crossed hurleys and the greyhound overhead. Lysaghts also was well presented. The little Post Office in the ivy covered building and pink colours was appealing and White's funeral undertaker's premises was well painted. It was good to see that the Topaz garage, painted yellow and blue, was operating within a very tidy forecourt. The Community Centre and Sports Complex was located in nicely landscaped grounds. Doon GAA club complex looked very well. The Old Church Restaurant was a fine use for the renovated church and it was set in attractive grounds with good signage and lovely rose beds. The Hibernian House and J. O'Dwyer were reminders of premises of other times. Another poignant reminder of times and skills past was the lovely Forge with the red doors and white seat outside, located on the outskirts of the village on the Cappawhite road. Simply, a lovely feature. Many individual houses and housing estates were in excellent condition and credit to their owners.

Landscaping:

Landscaping on the approaches to the village was fairly well presented, with neatly cut grass and little walled flower displays at the white bilingual signs. The red Dun Bleisce sign nearby added an extra touch of colour. The Grotto, with its pebble stone wall, neat railing and flowerboxes, was appealing. The planted barrels outside the Church walls brightened the approach. The elevated green area at Assumption Terrace was enhanced by bench seating and appropriate tree planting and shrubs, but we would suggest that the little retaining wall receives a fresh coat of paint. The plaque to Team Rwanda for the Special Olympics World Games in June 2003 is a lovely reminder of a wonderful time in the lives of special people from Ireland and many foreign countries. The litter bin nearby was noticed.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

As was stated in last year's report, your plan to develop a Nature Walk from Kilmoylan. It should make a very worthwhile project and as part of the preparations we suggest that you seek advice from a wildlife expert or knowledgeable enthusiast who should be able to help you organise a wildlife survey of the proposed route to identify the various species inhabiting the area. The results of the survey could then be used to prepare information panels for display along the route. Through your contact with the local schools, you might be able to get the pupils involved in this project. It's positive to note that the three mile walk has been surveyed by Ballyhoura Development. This adjudicator failed to find the signs for the entrance to the proposed walk area. We look forward to the development of the walk in 2010.

Litter Control:

Your litter collections three times a week by FAS is a positive development. Your weekly clean up by the County Council worker and daily collection at the schools by their pupils, and the weekly collections by committee volunteers seem to be working fairly well. Litter bins at business premises and on the streets were generally coping well within their capacity.

Waste Minimisation:

The recycling facilities at the car park and within the schools are a very positive feature in Doon. As stated in 2008, it is important that the facility at the car park is carefully monitored to ensure problems do not escalate. The Car Park area did not appear to be a problem, well done to all. We commend your schools for attaining their Green Flags, congratulations to all involved. It was good to see the Green Flags flying at the CBS school during our visit.

The demonstration with the schools in segregating litter is all positive.

Other initiatives which you might consider to boost endeavours in this sector include the encouragement of individual households to start composting, circulation of waste minimisation brochures to residents in the area or organising a waste minimisation workshop in co-operation with the County Council. Everyone has a part to play in the Race Against Waste.

Tidiness:

One of the main issues regarding untidiness, which affects many towns, and Doon is no different, is the issue of overhead cables and the removal of these underground. Not an easy one to resolve, but it's a project that should be addressed in the context of TidyTowns. Many overhead cables in the streets are unsightly and this could be an action item in your three year plan to be prepared by 2010. The removal of cables will be a longer term project for Doon.

In general, the streets looked tidy during our visit and the red and white bunting looked very well. In the interest of the town's further tidiness, as you are aware the longer the bunting remains hanging, it tends to look ragged. Of course, the longer the colours are flying the longer the club remains in the championship. Something to keep an eye on.

The bilingual signs, in black and white, for Doon at the approach roads were tidy and well presented. The new red ones for Welcome to Dun Bleisce – Keep Doon Tidy, also looked very well. The signs for the schools were in excellent condition. The School warning signs and signs for housing estates were all in very good condition, as was the warning sign for Caution - Blind Person Walking.

Residential Areas:

In Doon, there are some very attractive developments and good individual properties throughout the village. Assumption Terrace looked well. The little crescent of impeccably maintained cottages, Glasha Talann, built in 1995 by Doon Community Housing Ltd, was admired. Some attractive detached properties are constructed just beyond the CBS schools and the housing estate at Hillview Grove across the road was well presented, with a neat green area and some good tree planting. The development beside the Sunflowers pre-school had some pretty floral displays at some houses. There are some lovely residences in on the outskirts of the village. Overall, Doon looks very well from a residential viewpoint.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The roads around Doon were in fairly good condition, grass margins were generally well maintained and your new red Dun Bleisce signs were very welcoming. It was good to see the Keep Doon Tidy and Scoop the Poop signs. Most signs were in reasonable condition.

General Impression:

Well done to all involved in TidyTowns activities for Doon. We enjoyed our visit to your lovely town. We congratulate your community on the hard work which has been completed to date. We wish you well for the future, particularly with your plans for the development of the Nature Walk, which we look forward to hearing about in 2010. Keep up the good work.

