

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Portumna** Ref: **320**
County: **Galway** Mark: **280**
Category: **C** Date(s): **14/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	37	37
The Built Environment	50	34	35
Landscaping	50	41	43
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30	30
Litter Control	50	34	35
Tidiness	30	17	17
Waste Minimisation	20	12	11
Residential Areas	40	30	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34	34
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	277	280

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to TidyTowns 2012. Thank you for the completed entry form and for the very detailed 3 year development programme 2012-2015. The succession of photographs, before and after, was worthwhile. No doubt the working through of the Portumna Workhouse Complex will take at least 3 years but it is wonderful to see a significant start on this imaginative and long term project. The introduction of the zoned anti-litter plan dividing the community into 6 areas is a splendid initiative which will no doubt draw heavily on the well-known Irish competitive nature to the overall benefit of the community. The entry form makes clear the very large number of people and organisations with whom you liaise during your years work. Thank you for the splendid, stylised map you provided. You have reached the stage in your development where there continues to be a huge annual maintenance task which you are fulfilling very well. It was difficult to identify new items that were done between June 1st 2011 and the end of May 2012 which is what we are required to adjudicate particularly.

We admired the delightful way in which the 'Portumna 2000' sign has been maintained and further embellished by the planting nearby. In common with many locations you have the spectre of unfinished estates. The fire at the hotel was certainly disastrous and one can but hope that the coming year will achieve some sort of solution to this serious difficulty. Portumna is a well settled community and features a number of interesting buildings and vistas. We admired the Courthouse with its somewhat austere vista. The splendid ironwork at Hayes Butchery was admired. The main streets contain a number of very fine premises some in need of appropriate present day use. It is hoped that over time these valuable and agreeable structures can be brought back into gainful use. There is a tendency for weeds to be permitted at the base of front facing walls and perhaps large concerns would undertake responsibility for maintaining their frontage to optimum degrees, for example Tracy's Tyres and nearby Quicmann.

The Built Environment:

The very fine church in its central location was admired as was the smaller Church of Ireland opposite which is very visually significant as it closes the view on the approach from St. Brendan's Road. The many schools which seem to have all been collected along St. Bridget's Road were well presented. We admired the Sign Out Youth Café which was bright with windows gleaming. Some weeds outside the verge inside its yard detracted somewhat. An Gáirdín, the Organic and Ecology area looked very well. Perhaps the white railing which is now in bad repair would be either removed or refurbished. Utility buildings, the Garda Station, Fire Station, the Health Service Day Care and Library were all well presented. The Bank of Ireland was brightly painted and Hayes & Hayes Pharmacy caught the eye. The Busy Body Play Centre was bright and welcoming, as was the High Jinx's clothing shop. The former Hibernian Bank building was imposing while the Waterways Ireland's two premises were neat and orderly. O'Meara's Supervalu premises was very well presented and we admired the flowers in the car park in addition to the recycling units located there. The large scale Al Hayes Motors Ltd was very well presented with grass to the foreground and we admired the black and white poles protecting the grass.

Landscaping:

Pride of place necessarily goes to the superb castle grounds which are being kept and presented in an exemplary fashion. The splendid heavy, wrought iron gates at the castle grounds entrance do need attention as the one on the right has become dislodged. The Portumna Town Football Club looked well and we admired the flowerbed at the junction of Tynagh Road. Planting was continued along this road to the 80kph sign. The picnic and parking area on the Galway approach road was very well presented and a most agreeable facility. The children's play area in Castle Avenue was very colourful and we admired the mural in this area too. Wonderful work has been done on the former Catholic Church, the splendid wrought iron gates have been rescued and look greatly improved. A little additional work is required to hang them correctly so they align successfully with their gate jams.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Lough Derg Water Recreation Park is a delight; we admired especially the detailed description of the bird and sea life in the area. The grounds of the castle too are a delight. There is a growing concern about the flood lighting of ancient buildings which are likely to attract bats. Bats find the high level of illumination distressing and especially during July and August, this might be given some attention at the abbey. The extent of ivy infestation on the trees particularly along Shannon Road gives rise to concern. While there are (at least) two schools of thought in connection with ivy on buildings, informed opinion universally agrees that ivy is very detrimental to tree growth and accelerates the rotting at trunk level. A programme of eradication is called for in this location and elsewhere.

Litter Control:

While St. Bridget's Road and the town generally were mercifully largely free of litter we were very disappointed to see the extent of litter at Portumna Priory in the castle grounds. Litter bins were noted throughout the centre and these seemed to be respected and used for their intended purpose. Well done on the amount and visibility of your 'Keep Portumna Tidy' signs. The staging of your weekly cleanup continues to have a beneficial effect while your 'May Spring Cleanup' involving the community at large, is also a splendid undertaking.

Tidiness:

The enhanced presentation of the former church on St. Bridget's Road is a delight. Perhaps the door and windows might now be painted, black with white detailing is suggested for best effect. The grass cutting of the cemetery adds greatly to the overall presentation. We admired the hoarding and the red/green cut outs on it opposite the Catholic Church. There was damage to the kerb surrounds leading from the Water Recreation Park which is unfortunate in this high amenity area. The newly painted fence was looking in pristine fashion and the houses along Dunkellin Street were as usual impeccably presented. The Eircom building was well maintained and skillful work was done on the large house now unoccupied on Bridge Street. The much smaller house in green and cream opposite the old church would benefit if the door and windows could be repainted before next year's competition. The fine sign for the castle on the Galway Road has either slipped down along its supporting poles or alternatively those poles were far too tall for the job they are being asked to do.

Waste Minimisation:

Well merited congratulations to St. Brendan's National School on their achievement of 4 Green Flags to date. The election of a 'Green School Committee' is a splendid initiative in insuring that the pupils themselves take ownership of the programme. A delightful and much appreciated service was the recycling of unwanted toys as part of your Car Boot Sale. We noted the solar panelled equipped house on St. Joseph's Road. Well done on sourcing a now obsolete milk tank for use for your flower watering programme. All these initiatives

underscore how creative imagination can be used to such good effect to reuse items. The recycling facilities at O'Meara's Supervalu and behind the Library were being respected and well used.

Residential Areas:

Many of the housing estates have been very well presented. We admired the planting along the Poor Law Union House wall at Cedars Avenue. Oakwood View featured around a dozen houses which were neat and orderly around a delightful well presented communal grassed area. Cois Na hAbhann had some houses still awaiting occupiers. We admired the fine nameplate. The well established Shannon Park featured many individual excellent gardens. Forest Glade looked well with pleasant stone features and good planting. An Baile Glas and Fisherman's Wharf were both well presented as was Castle Court off Abbey Street. Bruach an Chaladh is a new development maturing pleasantly. At Cnoc na Sí only some completed houses are occupied while work has ceased and a number of houses are as yet not completed.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Road surfaces generally are more than adequate while signage and road markings were easily read. A quick survey of your road signage, particularly speed limit signage, would reveal a number would benefit from simply washing. The sign for the River Shannon at the main bridge has come loose and is now hanging askew. The road surface immediately outside the picnic parking area on Killimor Road has broken up very badly and is now in urgent need of remedial action.

General Impression:

Portumna is a historic town which is fortunate to have retained many of the splendid buildings, vistas and locations from earlier centuries. All are being presented in a delightful way and it was a pleasure to visit this town again after a number of year's absence. Well done to all involved on your various projects, from the enormously ambitious restoration of the Poor Law Union building to the smallest flowerbed. All have played a significant part in the enhanced presentation of this interesting location. Well done to all involved.