

Category

Runner Up

DROMISKIN



General Cleanliness

Your meticulous approach to litter management is delivering results with Dromiskin presented in a litter free manner on adjudication day. Kerbside weed control was also superb. The presentation of your litter bins has been transformed by clever use of heritage themed decals to refresh and upgrade them – an ingenious idea that makes such a difference! Your Bring Bank site was perfectly maintained – the units washed, excellent signage panels, battery collection unit in place, revamped Outdoor Library and not a scrap of packaging waste or litter to be seen. The fact that two of the three derelict sites in the village are currently the subject of residential development works is a major plus for you and we really look forward to seeing the completed works next year.

Landscaping Works and Floral Displays

An almost overwhelming array of high quality landscaping schemes were greatly admired and enjoyed – all meticulously maintained and many new since last year. The new Animal Sculptures are a fine addition to your beautifully marked sculpture trail that also contains such outstanding examples as the Viking Boat and the Bird's Eye View sculptures. They are a triumph in design and craftsmanship and it is almost

unbelievable to note that they were designed and constructed by one of your own committee members **BUT** knowing Seamus McArdle's previous work why are we surprised? Dromiskin's uniqueness is, of course, its heritage and you have really developed your work programme around this asset. The Monastic Site is undoubtedly the historic heart of the village and has been the catalyst for your wonderful work in adding to and promoting the heritage value of your community. Your recently developed Heritage Park enjoys an elegant simplicity – not overcrowded or fussy but with plenty of interesting features to engage the curiosity of visitors. Giving people a sense of what the community was



like in the past is very important and you have done this brilliantly with your various interpretative panels. The new stylish Heritage banners framing the entrance are a magnificent introduction to the park highlighting it for visitors and locals alike. The new wildflower bed to the left of the entrance was in full bloom with cosmos, comfrey, pot marigold and poppies delivering charming impact which is further enhanced by the thriving trees along the fence that forms the boundary of the park. It is lovely to see your Railway Heritage being recalled through signage and the most impressive railway artifacts donated by



Irish Rail. One of the most intriguing interpretations we have seen anywhere is your "Book" sign detailing the trees planted in the park and linking each one to a heritage fun fact to capture the interest of adults and children alike. The blend of fragrant roses and lavender in the raised stone beds works a treat and looked spectacular and very much in keeping with the overall dignified presentation of the site. The newly installed arbour, Nicholas Callan sculpture and various interpretative panels of different styles and sizes complete the pretty picture in this gem of an amenity. All of your distinctive historic buildings and structures are superbly captured and illustrated on your beautifully designed Heritage Trail. The series of small parks and gardens dotted around the village are mesmerising in quantity and quality with many featuring stone wall construction and attractive interesting pieces of public art. The Credit Union garden looked simply spectacular with irresistible colour emanating from a variety of mature perennials in this pesticide free zone. The wildflower swathe was sensational with vivacious colour emanating from

cornflowers, poppies, comfrey, pot marigold and verbena – a joy to behold! The Medieval Garden on the green at the Graveyard entrance is another example of innovation in landscaping with the willow surround beds well maintained and thriving herbs and perennials in plentiful supply. The serene green space that is Lawlor's Garden is presented in a subtle and effective manner befitting of its location beside the monastic site – all planting is thriving and well maintained and we must compliment you on the new Insect Hotel which had to be constructed to replace the one vandalised last year. The pollinator friendly beds on the Co-Op Field have developed well in the last year with a wonderful splash of colour from achillea, spirea and verbena – all plants loved by the bees! This was the only landscaped area that we detected weeds but they weren't significant enough to prevent strong visual impact and the buzzing bees didn't seem to mind. We have always admired the cross roads bed and this year is no exception with day lilies, lavender, agapanthus, bistort and heuchera delivering great visual appeal. The work of Men's Sheds throughout the country has enhanced the landscape in so many towns and villages and none more so than in Dromiskin where their masterful craftsmanship in the creation of a beautiful tiered planter was the inspiration for a couple of similarly gifted parents in the local school to create further masterpieces that combined to produce the wonderful new herb garden in the Centra complex. Indeed your excellent partnership with the staff, pupils and parents of Dromiskin N.S. is delivering mutually beneficial results and is evident in a multiplicity of projects including the Dreamtime Garden which has received a major facelift this year





and has been completely replanted with pollinator friendly plants while keeping its original celtic cross shape. With the fabulous display of sunflowers along the fence and the beautiful (recently repaired) wooden seats it lived

up to its name and exhibited a dreamy quality to delight the senses. The adjacent Outdoor Classroom framed by pollinator friendly planting also looked great as did your At One With Nature trio of mini sculptures where the Green Flag was flying high. Another area to live up to its name was the Incredible Edible Garden – it really is an incredible space with a beautifully designed sign at the entrance, to the backdrop of a lovely laurel hedge, and bees buzzing happily on thriving oregano as well as a myriad of other plants. Rowan trees framing the boundary on one side produced a wonderful harvest of berries for the birds and a visual treat for all visitors while thriving fruit trees and bushes added to the beneficial use of this space. The composting area with its tumbler composter, wormery and information signs adds further to the sustainability of the site and well done on reproducing the information in leaflet form for ease of reference by local residents. The upcycling of hubcaps to create floral images that are displayed along the boundary fence is a great initiative that together with the butterfly, bee and ladybird outdoor art features, bring added colour to the presentation. The Biblical Garden is another unique piece of landscaping that has received a noted facelift since last year with the new decorative gravel added to the pathways beautifully showcasing the intricate design of this timeless piece of landscaping. The 1916 Harp Sculpture continues to look very well but might benefit from a touch up and a refreshing of paint. The school building itself, with its newly completed extension, doesn't let the side down with exquisite landscaping framing the entrance, dazzling floral displays and wildlife imagery on the external walls. The Church is a dominant and regal building in the village where the grounds are richly landscaped and together with the extravagant pollinator friendly flower towers at the entrance creates a delightful spectacle at this location. One of your many new projects this year was the upgrading of the lengthy linear bed to

the rear of the Church/School Car Park and what a transformation has taken place! The removal of overgrown shrubs and ivy and the replanting of a combination of grasses, catmint, white hydrangea and jewel coloured lilies is a stunning combination already creating impact but its dramatic appearance will increase even further as the planting develops – maintenance will be high until the planting develops fully but we believe will be more than worth the effort. The concentration of colour in “Hot Spot” areas such as the crossroads, the AOH Garden and the Church entrance ensures that the vibrant summer colour is still very much the highlight of your presentation despite your very obvious preference for perennials in your landscaping programme. What a transformation has taken place at the Linencare site! Three trellised planting arrangements on one boundary wall and the most beautiful delicately painted floral mural on the other really transforms a formerly drab site into an eye-catching feature. Planting along the natural stone wall on Chapel Road is an attractive feature and well done on the removal of the dead tree on the green at Chapel Cross – this small green space with its mini dolmen and container planting looks really well. We really love your six new Bee Positive gardens which we understand is part of a phased project to develop a pollinator friendly corridor to the Animal Compound. The lavender, catmint, shasta daisies and lupins were already vying for attention to the elegant backdrop of panels of cream Elite Form fencing ensuring that an aesthetically pleasing impact is also achieved. The AOH Garden is, as always, a delight with its statement tree, medicinal herb garden, Ring-a-Rosy sculpture and wonderful container planting.

Appearance of Approach Roads

All approach roads to the village are nicely presented with hand carved wooden signage providing a coordinated sense of arrival. The new footpath along the Commons Road is a tremendous project worthy



of the highest praise. Some roadside boundary walls along this road would benefit from power washing/painting and we're wondering if the residents could be encouraged or incentivised in some way to carry out these minimal improvement works? Jack's Hill is a particularly lovely entrance to the village where colourful planting arrangements and your Dromiskin flags provide the warmest of welcomes.

Individual Contributions – Residential/ Business

There are a number of very well presented housing estates in the village as well as a few with scope for improvement. Church View is, as always, presented to a very high standard but the real surprise this year was Innis Linn where care and attention was the order of the day and an increasing number of superb individual presentations noted. Individual residences on approach roads contribute well to the ever improving environmental presentation of Dromiskin with some stunning gardens stopping us in our tracks. A house at Chapel Cross, newly painted in a delicate pink colour scheme and adorned with stylish floral displays stole the show this year – sublime presentation! The St. John of God community house on the Commons Road must also be singled out for its presentation – wonderful wooden planters brimming with summer colour demanding attention! The garden of a bungalow on Main Street has received a major facelift and looked splendid as did its glossily painted red gate which complemented the stone boundary wall to perfection. Tig Hig looked great once again this year opting for the same

twinkling pink petunia in its floral displays that are on view in the village "Hot Spots" of colour. The Take-Away looked terrific and how lovely that the shutters were raised sufficiently to showcase the delightful window box displays – you really appear to be enjoying great support from local businesses. The busy forecourt of Centra Supermarket/Petrol Station was spic and span on adjudication day with hanging baskets on the building and radiant summer colour emanating from strategically placed ground level containers. Mulligan's Supermarket and Post Office looked better this year with last years recommendation to touch up the paintwork implemented. The Credit Union building appears to have been power washed, the shutters painted and with two tubs of seasonal colour at the entrance looked really well this year.

Overall Impact

We have come to expect a high standard from Dromiskin over the last few years but we have to say that you have exceeded our expectations in terms of the exemplary maintenance of existing projects and the quantity and quality of new projects this year. The fact that you have people with the professional skills to develop your landscaping programme is immediately evident as is the vision and commitment of your committee and volunteers. Little did we know that when you were awarded Most Improved in Louth Looking Good a few short years ago that we were creating "a monster we couldn't control"!!! Your brilliance, energy and innovation shines through – there doesn't appear to be any way of stopping you and indeed we don't want to!

