

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Monaghan Town**

Ref: **673**

County: **Monaghan**

Mark: **181**

Category: **E**

Date: **03/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30	29
The Built Environment	40	28	28
Landscaping	40	20	19
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	18	17
Litter Control	40	21	20
Tidiness	20	14	13
Residential Areas	30	20	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	23	22
General Impression	10	7	6
TOTAL MARK	300	181	173

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to thank you for the very comprehensive documentation received with your entry form. The map, if a little, was most useful on adjudication day though it was extremely difficult to read the street and road names. The document on your current work programme was extremely detailed and very comprehensive. The adjudicator notes that in 2004 /2005 you appeared to have concentrated on a relatively number of key objectives and this strategy is totally correct.

You appear to have received good financial support locally and your involvement with the Town Council and other agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce is critically important.

All towns and villages are required to have a simple straight forward 3 –5 Year Tidy Towns Plan for their area. This Plan is prepared by your Committee in consultation with the appropriate local organisations. It should be no more than seven to ten pages long. The purpose of the Plan is to guide the work of your Tidy Towns Committee and others over the short to medium term. Your Plan should detail year by year the work that you intend to do each year. It is recommended that you do not have too many objectives each year – perhaps 4/5 key projects.

The Built Environment:

The town of Monaghan in layout terms is attractive - larger open areas where streets and road meet linked by narrower shopping and business streets. The Courthouse was one of your two key projects

this year and the end result is very satisfactory; the material used for the forecourt paving is an excellent choice. However the adjudicator was of the view that something is lacking from this area and it may well be that additional colourful planting is required by way of flower tubs. This could be achieved by a slightly raised narrow flower bed that would run at the edge of the footpath, allowing of course for an entrance gap. This is not a criticism of what has been achieved, but rather a suggestion for further consideration. The overall presentation of The Diamond was excellent and this space did not appear to be dominated by car parking. The Government Offices building caught the eye and as a very well presented three storey building of character.

The work at the Cathedral is highly impressive and the landscaped and grassed areas set the building off. The beautifully presented railings here and the stone steps were much admired. Another building of note is the Market House and here the few window boxes added a little colour that worked well with the beautiful stone. Old Market Square, another well presented area in Monaghan town is a very attractive open space that provides a second focus for the town.

There are many other buildings in Monaghan that stand out including the Bank of Ireland property, and for different reasons An Poc Fada. The colour choice at this property in red and black works well. The adjudicator understand that a new Heritage Plan for the town is being prepared and the adjudicator looks forward to that document. An important point is that as well as preserving old buildings of historic interest new suitable and sustainable uses must be found for those buildings.

The blue and white street name signs and the smaller directional signs to places of interest looked very neat, clean and easy to read.

A few derelict buildings were noted that detract from the overall appearance of the built environment of your town. However there is a way in which perhaps you can make a feature of these buildings pending their removal or restoration. Try and get the owners to agree that they will blank out the window and door openings with heavy waterproof Marine plywood. This should then be painted matt black, and window bars and door panels painted in in white. This approach as a temporary measure can look quite effective.

Landscaping:

The Ulster Canal Park was another of your key projects for this year's competition. Why is this lovely area not sign-posted from Mill Road? The adjudicator drove down that road three times before finding it, and two local people were not aware of it's location either. However it was well worth locating. Obviously the grass had just recently been planted and the area will be a great amenity when the grass and landscaping matures. An information board here about the Canal would add great interest. St.Peter's lake is great town centre amenity that is being very well maintained. On adjudication day it appeared that the wildlife were taking priority over humans and that is great!"

The new landscaping on the Armagh road looked quite attractive and the landscaping had been completed at Killygoan. Also the upgrading of the appearance of Plantation Road looked well. The many hanging baskets and window boxes and flower tubs add so much to the overall appearance of Monaghan town. This large town can take quite a number of these without over doing the situation.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

St. Peters Lake was a haven for wildlife on adjudication day and it was great to have to walk around the ducks on the paths and green areas! The information panel here is very interesting and adds much to a visit to this area. The tarmacadam surface where it meets the viewing platform had started to subside and needs urgent remedial attention.

The Ulster Canal Park will also become an important area for wildlife in the years ahead and the provision of an information plaque is an obvious future development. It is unusual for a town to have two wildlife amenity areas within it's boundary and the provision of a booklet on the wildlife of the two areas might be considered by your Committee as a future medium term project.

Litter Control:

Congratulations on doing so well in the IBAL competition. For a town of its size you have achieved a commendable degree of litter control. This adjudication took place at a weekend and despite that the centre of the town was relatively litter free. Some litter was noted at St. Peter's Lake, just beyond the Hospital and on the approach to the Graveyard just before the car parking area.

It is very important that your Committee would develop a litter control plan for your town. The issue of litter control is not an issue just for the Local Authority. All citizens and especially your Tidy Towns Committee have a key role to play. Your plan should include such issues as surveying the litter bins that you have in your community and their adequacy. The schools presumably already have a role in your existing litter activities.

It is most important that litter bins are placed in close proximity to the largest generators of litter. The regular emptying of a litter bin is of course essential.

Tidiness:

The Spring and Autumn clean-ups are welcomed and obviously help to keep the litter and tidiness issues under control. The concept of the shop window posters and the car stickers is sound and hopefully you will get those projects off the ground for 2006. Areas off Dublin Street again this year needed attention. A number of small casual open spaces were noted in your town. In some cases these are potential sites for housing purposes. However pending development these open spaces can become quite untidy with long grass and weed growth. If possible these sites should be screened pending development.

The Bring Centre near Pound Hill was a little untidy on adjudication day.

Residential Areas:

Your strong focus and that of the Town Council on upgrading housing estates is welcomed. On Canal Street / Mill Street an interesting combination of business units and houses was noted and the combination appeared to be working well, and many of the private houses here were very well presented. Opposite the entrance to St. Peter's Lake a really beautiful property was noted - cut stone, brick, and a lovely fanlight and the door painted blue - a beautiful Georgian property. The work at Killygoan and Pound Hill areas was noted, and the Home Improvement Scheme is a welcome support measure. Weeds were still a problem at Tully especially at the kerbs and at some boundary walls. At nearby Oakridge the naturally occurring trees here were really beautiful and the grass areas well maintained. At the Corrans the landscaping at the entrance area was really colourful and maintained to a high standard.

Generally many of the private properties were well presented and a number were obviously freshly painted recently. Some attractive gardens were also noted, and the landscaping work by property owners contributes in an important way to the overall character of your village. If you have not already done so, your Tidy Towns Committee might consider asking the housing estates to organise their own 'Best Kept Estate' Competition. In this way they will make a meaningful contribution to your overall

It is important that your committee would discuss with the Local Authority to issue of an acceptable level of landscaping for all new housing estate developments in your town. This can probably best be handled through Planning Permission Conditions.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

On the Clones approach road some further verge cutting was required. The grass areas maintained (probably) by Century Homes looked really well and set a standard for this approach road. The redeveloped Clones Roundabout is a great improvement and the degree of planting carried out here was just right. On the approach road beyond the hospital weed growth at walls and kerbs was noted

and little work had been done on banks and roadside verges. The Derry approach road looked quite impressive with the wide grass margin on the right hand side. Little recent work was evident on the Dublin road. A timber fence on the left hand side before the church needed to be repaired and painted. The Cootehill road had an attractive combination of natural and artificial landscaping that combined to make this approach road quite attractive.

In the town centre the wide corners at junctions were an unusual feature that helped to blend the streets into the several open spaces such as The Diamond.

General Impression:

The overall impression that Monaghan gives is of a town that cares deeply about it's image and presentation. Much good work has been done since the 2004 ad judication visit.

Well done to all concerned!

Second Round Adjudication: