

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Monaghan** Ref: **611**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **215**
Category: **E** Date(s): **24/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	31
Landscaping	50	25
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	19
Litter Control	50	23
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	12
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	215

Overall Development Approach:

Your Making the Next Step plan seems a sensible and far reaching one – it is a most comprehensive document. Do ensure that you avoid analysing your Tidy Towns marking on a percentage basis as this can be deceptive, particularly when the available marks in a category increase! The redevelopment of the Church Square in front of the courthouse will make a fine centrepiece to town, something that is badly needed – we look forward to seeing your water feature in years to come. We also look forward to the Heritage Trail in the area around the Old Railway Station. The achievement of all bar two of your targets for the year must be very rewarding! The adjudicator did not receive your map and so used a Town Guide map picked up on the day. The increase in business sponsorship must be of great benefit to you. You would appear to have a good working relationship with the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Monaghan County Council and local businesses. It was wondered whether you could forge a stronger link with schools-possibly get one of the teachers on your committee and become involved in Green Flag Programme?relationship with the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Monaghan County Council and local businesses. It was wondered whether you could forge a stronger link with schools-possibly get one of the teachers on your committee and become involved in Green Flag Programme?

The Built Environment:

Dunnes Stores looked well in stone and plaster at its prominent location. The Hibernian and Gunnes building looked somewhat flaky on the day. Shopfronts on Dublin Street could have been to a higher standard. Those on Glaslough Street were better. Dinkins Rooftop Bistro, Floral Style, Inka and Panache were admired. Wilson Brothers is an attractive traditional shopfront on Market Street. The various churches of the town were well presented, including the Methodist, First Monaghan Presbyterian, gracious Church of Ireland on Church Square and the large and elegant St Mc Cartan's Cathedral. The grotto at this location was admired, as were the tubs and floral displays at the steps. Work was taking place to the Market House on the day, and it was

surrounded in scaffolding. The Bank of Ireland looked well in stone, with wonderful hanging baskets. The obelisk at the Diamond was clean and dramatic. An Poc Fada looked well, but still displayed Christmas lights, as did a number of properties throughout the town. The modern library was freshly painted. This adjudicator would be in agreement with the comments made by last year's judge regarding the old Railway Station. This is a fine and very unusual building and its restoration is most important. The unusual stone Mc Ardle, Cassidy and Mc Quaid building with its square lantern on the roof is another gem. The Westenra Hotel looked well in brick and stone, but still sported Christmas lights.

Landscaping:

Monaghan 4 Home Superstores looked well with attractive banked planting. Perhaps additional landscaping could be considered at the Kingspan Century premises opposite. Landscaping at the Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool looked very well - to the banked area in front and to the car parking. Landscaping at the Shopping Centre is quite effective. Attractive tree planting and floral displays were noted at the Derry road. The graveyard on this road was greatly admired. The landscaping to the Four Seasons Hotel looked very well. The hard landscaped Courthouse Square was admired with its modern sculpture and paving. Further plans for the area to the front of the Cathedral are also looked forward to. Are there any other plans for Old Cross Square since the fire, as this is in another well used area of the town and would be a great asset to the area in question? At the moment the new trees look well but it would be improved greatly by further development in its landscaping. The development of the Ulster Canal Park at the Cootehill road was admired. Although the mural looked well it could be freshened up a little. The grass had been cut in this location but the dead grass not removed. Peter's Lake is a lovely area to have so close to the centre of the town, and was well used on the day. The pavements in Dublin Street were in bad order, although a planning notice was seen on Glaslough Street which seemed to indicate improvements on the way in this regard!

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Phase 2 of the Ulster Canal Park is underway and the adjudicator admired signage in the park on the day. The Aqua Plan and Wildlife Boxes are good initiatives.

Litter Control:

A litter management plan is a good idea. Have you considered getting the local schoolchildren involved in a litter survey? Some towns have found this beneficial. Quite a lot of litter was noted on the Clones road, and on the Derry/Armagh road. The car park area at the courthouse was also quite littered. Weekly litter pick ups are a good idea – possibly they should be more frequent? Litter was noted at Peter's Lake Park and Ulster Canal Park.

Waste Minimisation:

The recycling area by the car park at Peter's Lake Park was in good order. That at the Spar car park near Ulster Canal Park had some evidence of dumping.

Tidiness:

Weed control was a problem in some areas on the day. Some weeds were evident to the paved area in front of the Cathedral, more were noted at the junction of the Clones and Newbliss roads. The canopy to Emo Oil on the Clones Road was somewhat damaged and should be replaced. The Statoil Station on the relief road appeared to have been abandoned. A very tatty property in the centre section of Dublin Street looked unfortunate and would benefit from a refurbishment-it was for sale on the day. Don't forget alleyways and rear areas when considering overall presentation. A laneway at Ulster Canal Park sported graffiti.

Residential Areas:

Brosna House B & B opposite the Cathedral contributes well to this category of the competition, as does Hillview B & B on Canal Street, with its lupins, nasturtiums, poppies, snapdragons and pansies. The housing stock on the Clones road was rather inconsistent in its presentation. Old Park Court Estate looked well. St Patrick's Terrace was quite fresh with well-maintained open space, although it was felt that it would benefit from additional planting and landscaping. An attractive garden and house opposite with hanging baskets was admired. The large construction site on the relief road was noted and it is to be hoped that this will be well landscaped in order to ensure that the houses, when complete, will not give the appearance of a sea of roofs. Your Tidy Towns award scheme is a good idea, as is the new signage to estates. Drumbear woods have some attractive landscaping including silver birches and grassy banks. Killygoan and Tully were also admired.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The roundabouts on the approach roads and along the relief road were rather inconsistent in appearance on the day. That on the Clones road looked very colourful and well maintained with floral displays, while that at the Armagh approach had been cut but dead grass has not been removed and it appeared to have materials

dumped on it. Approach roads could have been better. On the Clones Road, the verges had been roughly cut but tree planting was admired. The banked area with monument closer to the towns centre was also overgrown. The Derry/Armagh road had some attractive stone walling. The banks of the relief road appeared quite wild and overgrown-could they be seeded with wild flowers, or could a sculptural piece be put here or tree planting considered? At the moment it appears rather bare. On this road, the verges had been cut but dead grass not removed and the grass cutting had revealed old litter. Presumably this was from passing cars, as this road is unlikely to be used for walking? New planting and signage as proposed in your development plan are looked forward to. In terms of street furniture, this was mostly fresh but the post box at the Diamond will need painting before next year's competition. Manor Wood is a well-maintained estate. The Belfast /Armagh road was quite overgrown and quite littered, with weeds at kerbsides.

General Impression:

It was a pleasure to visit Monaghan for the first time. It is a town which has undergone great expansion in the last number of years. Good luck with your future work.