

Tidy Towns Competition 2011

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Monaghan** Ref: **611**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **248**
Category: **E** Date(s): **08/06/2011**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2010	Mark Awarded 2011
Overall Development Approach	50	42	42
The Built Environment	50	35	40
Landscaping	50	28	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20	22
Litter Control	50	25	25
Waste Minimisation	20	10	11
Tidiness	30	15	15
Residential Areas	40	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30	30
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	239	248

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the 2011 National TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your completed application form and accompanying details, including: the Three Year Plan, Litter Management Plan, Habitat Survey and other comprehensive supporting documentation - all professional in appearance and content. The level of voluntary commitment is excellent in Monaghan Town. You are fortunate to have a dedicated committee of twenty and also the ancillary and subcommittees offering support. We are pleased to hear that you have established a Junior TidyTowns Group, primarily comprising children from the Cuil Lorcaín Estate. This adjudicator has seen at first hand where this has worked extremely well in other centres; they deserve praise and hopefully with continued encouragement will continue with their TidyTowns endeavours over the next few decades. The adjudicator was very impressed with your Monaghan TidyTowns website; this is a good tool in communicating with the public.

The Built Environment:

Macartans Cathedral is a very prominent and impressive building in the townscape. The adjudicator picked up the Monaghan Town Trail leaflet at the County Museum and enjoyed the walk allowing appreciation of the rich architectural heritage. The redevelopment of the Diamond, Dublin Street and Old Cross Square is a great success and has facilitated in raising your marks in this category this year. The Courthouse and St Patricks Church of Ireland in the environs of Church Square are also impressive. The view from Aviemore House down Mill Street gave the adjudicator a good idea of the amount of work carried out in relation to undergrounding of cables, Mill Street would still benefit from undergrounding of cables but this is not one of the main vistas in the town centre. Your Painting Project is a novel solution for vacant and abandoned buildings. The adjudicator had noted this on a vacant house near the Coolshannagh roundabout prior to the adjudication when passing through the Monaghan on business; the result brought a smile to my face. On closer inspection on adjudication day, the number of vacant properties either painted or given the graphic design treatment was

substantive and the finished result is very professional and a great improvement. You are to be commended for your hard work and perseverance when dealing with this problem of derelict and vacant properties. Your Window Project located at the birthplace of Sir Charles Gavin Duffy is very apt and is an example of a successful heritage project that informs passers-by with some local history information.

Landscaping:

The planters sponsored by the various businesses spotted all over town on adjudication day are a nice touch. The planter sponsored by the Hillgrove Hotel in front of Macatans Cathedral was looking very colourful, however some weeds on the bottom tier of the planter sponsored by The Squealing Pig in the town centre detracts from the overall look. We note that you have been planting trees in car parks around the town centre. In relation to tree planting - the difference between McNally's car park and the shopping centre car park is extremely evident from the junction of Broad Road and Dawson Street etc. facing New Road; but we note in your application that McNally's car park is not in public ownership and tree planting is not possible here, that is a shame. The boat had not yet been planted-out at Peters Lake, however the soil had been prepared. The adjudicator saw the lovely photo in the Monaghan Community Forum Calendar and we have no doubt that the boat will be a delight to passers-by in a few weeks time. The Rotary Club garden at the Coolshannagh Roundabout was visited on adjudication day. The signs are very informative about the work of the Rotary Club and the finish is good.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You have now embraced this category well and your Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Plan will provide useful information to help you progress further in this category. In particular the adjudicator liked the suggestion to create a self guided wildlife trail highlighting some of the sites of natural and wildlife interest. You already have established links with a graphic designer for your Painting Project, and with some professional input, high standard wildlife signs and an accompanying leaflet could be produced. The adjudicator viewed Peter's Lake and Canal Walk. There are a variety of good quality information boards at Peter's Lake. We are glad you have spoken to a horticulturalist in relation to the control of Japanese knotweed in the town. Japanese knotweed is not an easy plant to control; the extensive underground rhizome system sustains the plant even when top growth is removed. The aim of any control programme should be to target the rhizomes. We wish you well with this. Ensure the willow structure at Oriel Way Skateboard Park is properly maintained as it could be a target for vandals.

Litter Control:

Your 'Litter Vigilantes' are doing a sterling job and we were once again surprised with the high standard of litter control in the town considering how busy the town was on adjudication day – well done. Please note that the base of the trees in the redeveloped Diamond area becoming a litter trap for cigarette butts. Consider adding more gravel here to raise the levels and to discourage littering. We visited three sets of bring banks on adjudication day, the banks at McNallys car park and the banks located at Spar on the Ballybay Road were both clean and tidy. Beer cans had been left at the bring banks at the Family Resource centre.

Waste Minimisation:

A few areas worth bringing to the attention of those concerned include: a broken "b" on the Monaghan Town Library sign which detracts from the building. The butcher advertising signs and the beer kegs take away from the good presentation of An Poc Fada. The exterior of Dunnes Stores is showing a lot of flaking paint and would benefit from attention, especially considering its substantial street view. On a positive note the Diamond has benefited from new traffic management and less clutter.

Tidiness:

It is obvious that you have taken on board last years comments and included details this year on waste minimisation projects that have been completed in the town. The extent of your involvement in relation to the projects is somewhat unknown so do tell us more about what you, as a Tidy Towns Group, are doing to encourage residents and businesses to move further up the waste management hierarchy in your application next year. The adjudicator is aware of the excellent "Calling Time on Waste" publication produced in 2009 through the National Waste Prevention Programme, and indeed has recommended it to other centres in the past. Your work proposal in relation to the Taste of Monaghan Food Festival is an excellent idea and is the type of project adjudicators like to see. www.stopfoodwaste.ie is a website that you may also find helpful in this initiative. Furthermore we suggest you check out www.greenhome.ie. You can register Monaghan Tidy Towns with the Green Home initiative if you have not already done so and then encourage householders in the town to join the group on the Green Home site. We note that the three primary schools have all achieved Green Flag status and it was good to see the Green Flag flying at the school on Park Road on adjudication day.

Residential Areas:

We like how you seek to foster and develop communications with the residents associations in the town and how some of the committee members originated from various residents associations. We gather from your submission and newspaper cut outs that the residents' associations are very involved in the litter collections and National Spring Clean. Consider further increasing their involvement in the competition by encouraging them to promote wildlife and native planting in and around their residential areas. On adjudication day we liked the Tully Estate with its well maintained green. Furthermore, Drumbear Wood on the Cootehill approach was admired particularly for the tree planting here.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Your proposals to conduct a photographic survey and needs analysis of all the alleyways should focus your efforts in this regard. The Ballybay and Cootehill approach road were well presented and once again we need to comment on the Oriel Service Station on the approach from Dublin which is in need of attention.

General Impression:

We thoroughly enjoyed our adjudication of Monaghan Town. Your efforts over the past few years are coming to fruition and your impressive workload in a number of categories this year, particularly in relation to improving your built environment and wildlife and natural amenities has facilitated a significant increase in marks this year. We congratulate all involved for their efforts and we hope you can continue the momentum for the year ahead. Well done!