

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Monaghan** Ref: **611**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **292**
Category: **E** Date(s): **26/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	44
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	44
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	35
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	36
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	15
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	36
TOTAL MARK	450	292

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Monaghan is very welcome to the 2014 National Tidy Towns Competition, thank you for your submission. The maps provided did not have projects completed in the current year identified and linked to the application and so these were not suitable for adjudication, they were also difficult to read (street names etc. because of their scale). Your three year plan is acknowledged however in future years it would be best to submit a plan summary rather than your entire plan, we note also your Junior Tidy Towns plan and the same point applies here, thank you for this. We acknowledge also receipt of the Ulster Canal Biodiversity Project, the management plan for Tom Young's Wood, the Monaghan Town Draft Biodiversity Plan, the Monaghan Tidy Towns Development Plan (already noted), the Monaghan Junior Tidy Towns Plan (already noted) and an untitled document on the flora and fauna of Monaghan. A lot of paper work has been submitted with your application and your adjudicator feels that most of it was unnecessary as a summary sheet of all of these documents would suffice. We note your 25 strong committee together with a network of ancillary committees and sub-committees. Regular monthly committee meetings during winter months and fortnightly ones during the spring and summer are noted as are significant links forged with GIY, Mens Shed, the Allotment Group and a variety of others. We also note your field trips to other towns and villages in the interests of gaining a better picture of where Monaghan stands in terms of the town's performance in the competition. The list of statutory agencies and other bodies and businesses from whom you receive support is extensive, stretching as it does to 22. Your communication methods are varied and professional. Links with schools are fruitful ranging from Green Flag raising ceremonies to garden projects, litter picks and wildlife garden activities. Congratulations on your 18 year participation in Tidy Towns and also on the difference this had made to Monaghan town. Your plan to promote Monaghan as a Biodiversity Town is admirable. The town is well organised and it is very easy to navigate whether on foot or by car.

Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:

The core of the town with its beautiful street furniture, flower displays, absence of overhead wirescape and magnificent buildings is a pleasure to experience and has to be one of the best town centres nationally. Shopfronts are generally well presented and there is not a serious problem with signage although one or two unfortunate signs have been noted; there are still a few dated beer and Guinness signs. One of the letters in the fascia of Heaton's in Church Square is missing and some upper storeys of buildings need treatment. The Courthouse, Market House and St. Patrick's Cathedral are beautifully refurbished and presented. The Museum has an equally good presentation. As always the Dunnes Stores complex looks well and the leisure complex on the Clones road is impressive also. St. Louis Infant School is beautiful with roadside flower beds. Well done on work accomplished for the Diesele building and your Paint and Window Project. It is good to note too that the rear of a number of buildings facing Peter's Lake amenity area have been upgraded. The photographic project is delightful.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Both the Corlot and the Coolshannagh roundabouts are nicely landscaped as is a roundabout in the town centre. The hard landscaped area with seating at the Cathedral was admired also as was the hard landscaped open space in the diamond; many incidental hard surfaced seated amenity areas have been noted around the town all of course softened with container planting, flower displays and trees. A green space located across from the electricity sub-station on the Cootehill road could be landscaped. The Oak Ridge Housing Development has been well planted with trees and we note from your application the proposed continuation of tree planting within housing estates and car parks. 260 trees planted to date in housing developments is an impressive number. We further note the removal of trees in poor or a dangerous condition. The restoration of the Ulster Canal Walk is noted also in tandem with the installation of the Green Way. Well done on your project with Irish Wildlife Trust for the planting of 15,000 spring flowering bulbs. It is good to note the extension of flower planting to include perennial flowers and flowers for all seasons.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádúrtha:

The continued development of Peter's Lake amenity area makes a wonderful contribution to both the environment of Monaghan and the quality of life for the community. Of particular note were the signs installed with information on Monaghan's Habitat Wildlife on one side and the flora and fauna specific to Peter's Lake on the other side. The fishing stand and information on fishing is excellent also. The lake is a sensory pleasure to experience in the middle of a busy town. Congratulations also on the Greenway Project. Walkway / Cycleway across the town from the Clones road and along the route of the Ulster Canal featuring a Biodiversity Trail en route with leaflets, worksheets and outdoor classroom material. We note that funding for half of this project with signage or QR codes has been provided by Tidy Towns. Congratulations also on the Biodiversity Trail with QR codes, the biodiversity website, the outdoor classroom, the wildlife infrastructure i.e. bat boxes and bird boxes, the biodiversity workshops and Eco camps and the monitoring of wildlife hedge. We further note the three year programme for control of evasive species. It is good to note that a biodiversity kit is available through the Tidy Towns network for schools and groups. The management plan for Tom Young's Wood is favourably acknowledged.

Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:

It is a pleasure to note that the five primary schools in Monaghan town are successfully working on the Green Schools program and well done also to St. Louis Secondary School who participated in the ECO UNESCO Young Environmentalist Competition. We note also the Junior Tidy Towns group at work on both the Stop Food Waste and their own recycling initiative. It is good to see also that waste was segregated by them. The tree built from old cans collected in litter picks sounds interesting and we note that this is being entered in the Can It competition, thank you for the photograph; the Mullaghmat Food Digester is favourably noted also. All recycling points around the town were found to be quite neat at the time of adjudication and we note the regular power hosing of recycling bins. The STEM project is noted and we would like to hear of the results after the two year period for which it runs. For more ideas of prevention of waste at source log on to the following website - <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/> - and of course don't forget the Tidy Towns Handbook.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Litter control is excellent in the town on the day of adjudication with very little noted, some was trapped in the long grass along both sides of the Clones road but it was not a serious problem, perhaps tidiness is the major issue under this heading. Five signs on the grass verge after the nameplate on the entrance from the Dublin road were noted and this constitutes visual clutter. On another verge six signs were counted. Underdeveloped sites represent another problem, one was noted on the Clones road looking down the Newbliss road, another site across from the Four Seasons Hotel presents a problem also. The pathway leading down to the entrance for the Ulster Canal Way also features a number of undeveloped, untidy looking sites and road edges. The footpath to here is both a walkway and a cycleway and car parking spaces are delineated however the rear of premises which can be viewed from here look untidy together with an undeveloped site. Traffic islands and street furniture out the Clones road look a little weather-worn and could be smartened and traffic islands on other roads featured unwelcome weed growth. A large vacant building in Church Square will hopefully be redeveloped and refurbished. The photographic audit of road and other signs is noted as is the treatment of graffiti as it arises and the emphasis on dog waste together with other excellent initiatives.

Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:

We acknowledge the important contribution of the Junior Tidy Towns initiative in estates and residential areas and applaud the establishment of a fourth. Well done also on the Best Estate Entrance category to your annual awards in addition to the best presentation / front garden within each estate. We note also the continuing clean-up and painting of vacant houses. The support given by Tidy Towns to residents committees is laudable and the list is extensive in your application. At the time of adjudication estates which were admired include Corann for its magnificent swathes of grassed areas, Drumbear Wood for its namestone and well presented green areas, Tully for its green areas as well as Killygoan. Boundary walls are an issue and a challenge for the committee as in most centres, a few in need of treatment were noted in the Tully development and more along the Market Road. Some boundary walls to Monaghan United FC are in need of attention also together with others. The nameplate at Rooskey Vale needs to be cleaned.

Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:

Street furniture is excellent and your information panels with their QR codes are particularly useful. On-street car parking is orderly and of course your car parks are easily accessible. Most lanes and side areas are to a good standard with the exception of one on Dublin Street which was weedy. Road and footpath surfaces throughout are to a generally good standard except for the chewing gum. Some of the black and gold bollards in the centre of the town need refurbishment and we note the clever use of advertisement hoardings by Supervalu encasing these bollards. A few signs on the Cootehill road are in need of cleaning and an old Fáilte sign to Monaghan is almost hidden here with growth. Verges of approach roads look well and the bus station is reasonably well presented, however to a lesser standard than other parts of the town.