

# Tidy Towns Competition 2005

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Scotstown**

Ref: **453**

County: **Monaghan**

Mark: **187**

Category: **B**

Date: **04/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	26	27
The Built Environment	40	22	22
Landscaping	40	28	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	24
Litter Control	40	26	25
Tidiness	20	12	12
Residential Areas	30	22	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	21	20
General Impression	10	6	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>185</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator noted that no relevant back-up documentation of any sort was provided with the entry form apart from a village map, and a general letter. No indication was given on the entry form of any works done for the 2005 Tidy Towns Competition. Each year at adjudication time additional marks are awarded for work carried out in the previous year that relates to the competition. The entry form would give the impression that little if any work had been done this year, but an inspection of the village revealed otherwise.

The adjudicator notes that a Tidy Towns Work Programme or Plan was not submitted with the entry documentation. 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 really successful Tidy Towns Committees are those that succeed in harnessing the goodwill, skills and experience of a number of different groups and Agencies that have something to contribute to the implementation of the 3-5 Year Tidy Towns Plan. These groups and Agencies include the following –

- GAA

- Local Development Association
- FAS
- County Council
- Local SuperValu outlet
- LEADER Company
- The CLAR Programme (if you are in a CLAR designated area)
- Local School or schools
- Urban & Village Renewal Grant Scheme

## **The Built Environment:**

The village of Scotstown is quite attractive and the mature trees add so much to the overall appearance. Here the cobble lock paving looked quite neat and contrasted attractively with the fine grassed areas in the centre of the village. At the garage area a little tidying up would make a good contribution to the Tidy Towns effort. The old pump was nicely painted and the surroundings attractively presented. The GAA property was also attractively presented and the area there was neat and tidy. The presentation of the Catholic Church was excellent with colourful landscaping, neat bollards, and well presented railings.

A few derelict buildings were noted that detract from the overall appearance of the built environment of your village. 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 two main grass areas in the village centre were superbly presented and were being cut on the day of adjudication. The flower tubs and the hanging basets provide additional colour to the village and these blend in well with the naturally occurring landscaping in the village.

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

A single sign at the Church to a Wildlife Park was noted but the area could not be located. If this area has been developed as a wildlife park then additional signs should be provided and perhaps a display map of the park area.

In many towns and villages this is an aspect of the Tidy Towns Competition where there can be significant potential for development. All towns and villages have the presence of wildlife to some degree. It is important that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine further the wildlife potential, and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly.

If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat Survey carried out of the wildlife in your area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following –

- Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
- Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds, lakes, canals, reed marsh, bogs
- Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
- Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The Survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to your area

This need not be an expensive Survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable person in one of your

Schools who might undertake this task for you. Basically the Survey would identify the animals, plants, birds, fish that inhabit your area and their associated habitats. It should be remembered that to carry out the Survey properly that it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different time of the year.

Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be do draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats in your area, and investigate the possibility of new ones. For example perhaps there is an old Pond in your area that is disused, but with a little work could be an important area for wildfowl.

It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many Schools there is probably a teacher who may have an interest in this area who would be willing to get involved.

As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof and vandal proof display panels, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland.

### **Litter Control:**

It is very important that your Committee would develop a litter control plan for your village though litter control on adjudication day was quite good. 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, clean up days and the role of your local schools.

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

Some litter was noted at the Bring Centre near the Church.

### **Tidiness:**

The village and surroundings was quite tidy apart from some back area in the village centre that need your early attention.

### **Residential Areas:**

The majority of 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. The provision of some planting or hanging baskets at private properties in the village centre might be considered for 2006.

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

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Some good well presented hedges sloping banks and stone walls were noted on some of the approach roads. It was obvious that work was being done on your approach roads. The overall

presentation of all approach roads is of critical importance. It is this that gives the first impression of your town or village. Attractive well presented approach roads give a great impression of a community that cares about how others see them.

Your verges have been cut but the cut grass has not been taken away in all instances. The result is an untidy appearance with new grass growth trying to grow through the dead cut grass. Can you make a rule for yourselves and your helpers that all cut grass must be taken away on the day that it is cut. Do remember also that verges and banks will need to be cut on quite a regular basis if you are to achieve a lush green well kept appearance of banks and roadside verges. A tractor and mower will not give the neat well kept appearance that can be achieved by a motor mower.

Do make sure that any old stone walls on approach roads are not in need of repair. Gaps due to collapse can look quite untidy. Fences should be kept in good repair and do cut long grass that may tend to grow up through the timber fencing. Hedging on approach roads needs trimming from time to time but do avoid bird nesting time of the year.

Field gates can become a feature of your approach roads. It may be possible for you to get agreement from the relevant landowners that all damaged gates will be replaced, and that all gates will be painted to a common colour scheme.

### **General Impression:**

Scotstown is a village with good Tidy Towns potential and do try and get the 3 -5 Year Action Plan drawn up. Your committee can put that Plan together and it will be of great help to your ongoing work.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**