

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Scotstown** Ref: **542**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **210**
Category: **B** Date(s): **23/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	26
The Built Environment	50	24
Landscaping	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	26
Litter Control	50	31
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	12
Residential Areas	40	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	23
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	210

Overall Development Approach:

It was disappointing to read that you felt that you have little support from the local community. This is an issue that should be addressed in order to improve your standing in the competition. Scotstown is a village that should do extremely well as it has much potential but the adjudicator couldn't help but feel a certain level of apathy, given the lack of information supplied in your application - many sections had been left blank! It would be important at this stage in the competition to formulate a work programme. This would only need to be a document of 2 or 3 pages outlining your plans and objectives and setting a timeframe against their achievement. You could use your Tidy Towns Reports as a starting point.

The Built Environment:

The commercial premises of the village generally looked well cared for, such as the Pharmacy, Moyna's Bar (which sported attractive hanging baskets) and McCague's with its traditional shopfront. Do ensure that dated plastic signage is replaced by that of a more traditional timber variety. The public buildings were also well cared for. The magnificent avenue leading up to the Church with its mature trees and elegant lamp standards set the benchmark! It is maintained extremely well and, as commented by last year's adjudicator, is unusual and interesting in both its external and internal forms. The school and hall were also well maintained and the Garda Station was quite fresh, with roses growing around its door. The stepped gable garage of H. Cassidy and Sons was admired but would benefit from a repaint and its forecourt area was a little rough. The shop and butchers at the crossroads were both well maintained. The gable to the GAA building will need a fresh coat of paint before next year.

Landscaping:

The Village Green looked well with its well maintained expansive grass, village pump and overhanging mature trees. The landscaped area to the terrace of houses on the Monaghan Road, with its attractive mix of

permanent planting, grassy verges and floral displays looked well. The stone walling and galvanised fencing to the GAA grounds was admired. The boundary wall at the Tydavnet roadside to the graveyard needed painting.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Millennium Garden was admired. The grass had been cut as an edging around trees and planting and the rest allowed grow naturally, which works well. Unfortunately the cut dead grass had not been removed. The wildlife information board and other signage relating to the garden were fresh and well maintained. The adjudicator wondered if there might be a more attractive or direct means of accessing it, as passing through the recycling area and along the stained boundary of a field seems a little awkward and unappealing? It was disappointing to note that you had given no further information under this category. Have you considered getting the local schoolchildren to conduct a wildlife survey of habitats in their locality? Or perhaps to create a science garden at the school, which many other centres have found a useful project, or a project relating to the stream area?

Litter Control:

The standard in this category appeared to have dis-improved since last year's competition. Litter was evident on approach roads, at the village green and on open space by the terrace of house on the Monaghan Road. Quite a lot was evident on the Knockatallon Road. Even minor outbreaks are all too apparent in a village of Scotstown's size. A traditional yellow "bruscar" bin was looking a little grubby in the village centre.

Waste Minimisation:

It was disappointing to see that you had left this category of the application form blank. The recycling area was for the most part neat and no dumping of bottles or clothing was evident. A few weeds were noted, as mentioned elsewhere in this report. This category relates to how you as a committee promote the principles of waste management and recycling in your work and within the community in general - businesses, residents and schools. Do you compost your green waste from landscaping projects? Does the school participate in the Green Flag initiative? Consult the local Environment Officer in Monaghan County Council with regards to improving this category of the competition

Tidiness:

We note your problems regarding owners of derelict properties. There were still troublesome areas where there appear to have been last year. Weed control was a problem to kerbs on the Monaghan Road, and at the base of some buildings at the crossroads. It was weedy at the side area of the bottle banks - building materials appeared to have been abandoned in this location also. A messy yard area with an abandoned container on the Smithborough Road looked unfortunate. A derelict house on the Monaghan Road looked neglected and sad, as did a tin shed near McCague's on the Knockatallon Road. The pedestrian bridge on the Tydavnet Road needed a wash. Weeds were evident to the wall beside the phone box, more were apparent at the bridge.

Residential Areas:

Street houses in the village generally looked well cared for. We noted that work appeared to have taken place to the large prominent house mentioned in last year's report. You also mention the removal of render to a house to reveal stonework below. Care should be taken to get architectural advice before this is done as the removal of render can be incorrect from a conservation point of view and can lead to problems with water penetration. An attractive house with a rose garden was admired on the Smithsborough Road. A new stone entranceway was underway to a recently constructed house on the Monaghan Road. The terrace houses on the Monaghan Road were somewhat inconsistent in appearance. The signage on this road was a little grubby – especially the junction sign and litter had been revealed by hedge clipping. An attractive garden with dry stone boundary wall, red hot pokers, yellow roses and cart was admired on the Knockatallon Road. The garden of a house with a red tiled roof on the Tydavnet Road looked marvellous.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The roads were generally neatly presented on the day. This adjudicator's preference would be for the Tydavnet Road with its attractive hedging, grass verges and mature trees. The Smithborough Road was well maintained but its signage was a little faded and the road surface was in bad condition. The Yield sign on this road was also a little grubby. The car parking and delivery situation at the crossroads in the centre of the village is an issue that needs to be addressed. At the moment people appear to park diagonally across the roads blocking through traffic. The nameplate on the Knockatallon Road was obscured by overgrowth. Signage on the Tydavnet Road was grubby, including the children crossing sign and warning sign at bridge.

General Impression:

Scotstown is an attractive village which has great potential. We hope that you manage to get the help that you need from the community in general. Have you considered the suggestion of last year's adjudicator regarding erecting a plaque to give visitors a brief history of the village?