

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Scotstown** Ref: **542**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **222**
Category: **B** Date(s): **13/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	27
The Built Environment	50	27
Landscaping	50	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27
Litter Control	50	33
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	13
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	222

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the completed application form outlining work done to date and what is planned for the future. The sketch map was very helpful to the adjudicator, who was not familiar with Geographics of the village. The inclusion of photos was very helpful in judging the some of the specific work that has been carried out. The committee has hit the mark with your comments in the application form summarising succinctly the value of a TidyTowns competition. As mentioned last year, a three year plan would be beneficial to give your team a measured focus for projects that may take more time. It is acknowledged that in these more stringent times people have pressing concerns, but hopefully there is a return to community spirit and you will garner more willing volunteers for the TidyTowns' effort. Good to note that you have an ongoing relationship with Monaghan County Council, this is important in terms of being able to seek advice, as well as the practical support that the Council can give. Also I would suggest that you engage more with the Monaghan TidyTowns Network Group to share ideas and get an insight on how to put together a simple 3 Year Plan for the Village.

The Built Environment:

The RC Church, which is in a cul de sac road, is a hidden gem complete with trees and tree names. It was very well maintained and presented, and credit is due to the personnel who are responsible for its up keep. The historical information board gives an insight into both the general and the ecclesiastical history of the parish. The National School was in excellent condition, painted in bright colours with boundary walls and the playground area extremely tidy, the map of Ireland stencilled into the ground is a nice idea. The GAA complex has a combination of fine facilities that are obviously consistently well looked after and it was a hive of activity on the day as a local under age derby match was taking place – no Monaghan/ Derry heated rivalry in this one just pure youthful exuberance! In the village square commercial premises such as House of Hair and the Spar shop were fresh in appearance. The village square is an attractive focal

crossroads point and the Green complete with bench and the village pump adds to its attractiveness

Sherry's Rossmore Furniture on the Tydavnet Road deserves mention for sustaining a very tidy frontage, with no clutter and some appropriate planting arrangements. Moynas deserves credit for its bright appearance on adjudication day. The Grotto, also on the Tydavnet Rd, looked a little jaded and is in need of a little revitalisation.

Henry's Bar was in a reasonably tidy condition, window has been replaced, although the plastic signage looks a little dated unless it is about to make a retro comeback! McCague's Bar is an old style premises that just needs to be brightened up a bit, it has a nice appeal and is in a prominent location in the village. The Sweet Afton sign is a link with a different era and it's just as well that it's well fixed to the wall, as these old type memorabilia have a tendency to disappear these days.

The work that has been carried out near Moyna's and the wall at lower end of the village is to be commended. The use of the Irish language for various shop fronts/pubs should also be encouraged. Some very fine town houses were noted on the day and a few have just been refurbished. Road surfaces were good and accessibility in and around the village was good, it helps that the village is not on a premier road route, that said it was quite busy for a weekend Saturday.

Landscaping:

The stretch of copper beech hedge, opposite the GAA grounds on the Tydavnet Road, was at its picturesque best and adds to this entrance in to the village. Sherry's, as mentioned in the previous section, has a nice planting arrangement complemented by creepers that have been well managed and not let get out of control. Consideration should be given to putting permanent flower holders on the foot bridge to add to what is already in place. The Green was well tidy with its stone flower tubs complementing the stone furniture and failte sign, the planted flowers will be in full bloom later on in the summer. Some excellent individual gardens were observed during the walkabout, one in particular on the Tydavnet Road near the National School. The three nicely restored houses on the lower main exiting to Monaghan contained fine flower pots outside each door, simple but effective. Overall, a very good standard with potential to do even better, this potential can be addressed as part of the suggested 3 Year Plan and by also seeking the advice of the County Horticulturist.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Millennium Garden is a fine natural amenity that the community in Scotstown has available to them and the key is to exploit its benefits to the fullest. Your plans to carry out a wildlife audit is a worthwhile exercise and you should give due consideration to involving the local school children through the principle. Young people bring both enthusiasm and ideas to such projects. Placing name tags as Gaeilge and As Bearla on the Irish Trees is a very worthwhile initiative, as it highlights the significance of native species to the area. The possible development of closer links with Hollywood Lake Park is a step in the right direction and one looks forward to the outcome of your deliberations. The Millennium Garden, Hollywood Park and the Village Green are natural habitats for wildlife preservation that other centres would very much envy, so the key for you the Committee is to further develop projects around these in the years ahead.

Litter Control:

The idea of the local primary school carrying out a litter audit is a novel idea and an effective way of building up links with local school children to impress upon them the need to promote the message of Anti-Litter. Apart from the odd small piece of wrapper or the odd ubiquitous plastic bottle, the village was relatively free of litter on adjudication day. Your ongoing work is bearing fruit and the community as a whole has supported you by ensuring that areas around individual premises are litter free.

Waste Minimisation:

There is a comprehensive bottle bank in Scotstown and it would be worth building upon this by looking into additional waste minimisation initiatives, such as group composting and methods of reusing of recyclable materials. Additionally, home composting by individual residents could also be promoted. The Race Against Waste booklet, available from the TidyTowns Section, and the website of the same name have further ideas that might be useful to the committee. For next year's competition, it would be worthwhile to include a special project under this category, for as well as gaining additional marks it would also serve to get the community fully engaged with the concept of waste minimisation.

Tidiness:

In general, Scotstown is a very tidy village, neat in appearance with a very well maintained central area that includes the excellent village green. The few commercial premises in the village have tidy frontages and with very little unsightly fly posting. There are a few exceptions: The Bothar Na Mullai housing development on the Smithborough road is still not fully completed, hopefully it won't be in that state for too long. The immediate area around Cassidy&Sons is quite untidy and not in keeping with the rest of the village, maybe the committee can engage with the owners to see if some improvement can be made in due course. Also the bottle bank area was a little untidy and ongoing monitoring of this is needed to ensure that people do not leave bags of rubbish around just because the containers are full.

Residential Areas:

The standard of presentation of both the established and newer private residences in Scotstown was very good. The Village is quite compact and does not have large complement of group housing developments that one encounters in similar sized places that are satellite villages to large centres of population. Quite a number of houses were complemented by some excellent and colourful gardens, where flowers seem to bloom in abundance. The newer housing developments, such as the Ferns, will blend into the Village in time, the older established estate on the Monaghan Road was well presented with one or two residents tending to individual properties on the day. One or two homes on the Smithborough road could benefit from a general tidying and boundary walls/gates to be given a coat of paint. As already mentioned under the Built Environment section, the newly refurbished town houses have retained the old style look and the added touch of individual flower pots is very welcoming.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entrance from Knockatallon was visibly very neat, with verges/hedgerows cut back suitably and signage clearly visible and clean. Some weeding needed in sections. This was also the case upon entering from the Smithborough approach with verges and hedgerows looking tidy and well maintained, as stated elsewhere in the report, it is hoped that the housing development area will be tidied up in the very near future.

The copper beech hedging on the Tydavnet Road provided a very pleasant introduction into the village from that approach.

A suggestion might be to pick a uniform village sign for all approaches, as well as deciding on the village name in gaeilge, as there seems to be a number of different variations, ie An Bot or An Bhoth. In an overall context, the standard in this category was quite good.

General Impression:

Scotstown was very much alive with activity and bright with colour on adjudication day. There are genuine grounds for optimism for the future, as Scotstown has the potential to achieve a higher standing in the competition in the years ahead. The cosy setting of the small village green and close proximity of main pubs/commercial premises provide a charming image. Combine this with natural resources such as the river, Millennium Garden and possibly Hollywood Park and Scotstown has a firm foundation from which to build upon. Keep up the good work and you are wished well in the future.