

Tidy Towns Competition 2010

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Scotstown** Ref: **542**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **223**
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/06/2010**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009	Mark Awarded 2010
Overall Development Approach	50	27	27
The Built Environment	50	27	27
Landscaping	50	31	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27	27
Litter Control	50	33	33
Waste Minimisation	20	7	7
Tidiness	30	13	14
Residential Areas	40	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25	25
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	222	223

Overall Development Approach:

Scotstown is very welcome to the 2010 National TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for the completed entry form and detailed map. Your before and after photographs were also most helpful as on adjudication thankfully we only admire the after scenario and sometimes do not appreciate the improvements that have been made by villages. Your overall approach to the competition is good and it is obvious that the committee has dedicated members who receive good support to keep up the high level of care witnessed on adjudication day. Unfortunately you have yet to do a plan for the village. A simple 3 or 5 year plan can be a great tool to help you set out and achieve goals for your committee. A simple list can be turned into time bound targets which can then show people in your community how you hope to proceed and can even help you gain sponsorship. The plan is in effect the groups work programme and it should reflect the objectives and capabilities of the group. This will in turn help you gain additional marks in this category.

The Built Environment:

We note your intention to erect information boards at the cemetery. Get good advice from the council on this as they must be designed so as not to detract from the historic setting. Use muted colours and simple forms. Look at other successful design in the county for inspiration. Generally the commercial premises in your town seem to be doing their bit to uphold standards with a nice new sign at the Montessori admired as was the well kept boundary and frontage of the Furniture Factory.

Landscaping:

The hanging baskets at Moyras pub brought a dash of colour to the façade. The green plastic planters at the village square looked a little out of place. If finances allow they should be replaced with timber or a more muted container. The tree planting you have carried out in recent years is really beginning to make a strong

landscape structure for the village and the line of copper beech and horse chestnuts on the road to the bridge were particularly admired. Indeed the use of copper beech is a bit of a theme in the village with the inspiration no doubt from the magnificent tree at the church. However the hidden gem in your village is the millennium garden. This was a delight to find. The long term impact of the tree planting here will be appreciated by future generations and I particularly liked the fact that paths were mown through the grass as a low impact way to provide a circulation route. The plants to the wall of the opposite sports ground were buzzing with bees and perhaps more wall climbers could be established to really create a green wall. How have the class of 2010 been maintaining their presented trees. Make sure they are well watered in the first few years of establishing to add another 42 trees to the overall total in the village.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The habitat creation as a result of the planting in the millennium was in evidence by the number and variety of birds and plants observed in your field trip in May. Perhaps you could expand on the success of this with some night time bat walks or an ever earlier dawn chorus walk. These are low impact ways of adding to the knowledge in the community. As a result of your walk did the Bird Watch Ireland member give any advice on how to improve habitats? Would you consider placing bird or bat boxes, locating them with his advice for maximum benefit?

Litter Control:

There was no litter present in the core village area. However there were some litter butts outside of the Chunky Chips. Ask the owner to ensure the areas outside the premises are swept the morning after a busy nights trading. Some litter was also thrown over the stone wall along the Tydavnet Road and was lying to the base of the trees here. Ensure this area is covered in your litter patrols.

Waste Minimisation:

The bottle bank at the rear of the church was well used on adjudication day. There was some litter thrown behind the bins so make sure this area is covered in your regular litter patrols. You included very little in your submission in this category. This is an area where you could really gain additional marks with a little effort. Do you know if there are many residents actively composting? How do you deal with the arisings from verge cutting? Are they composted? As you are aware waste minimisation is about more than the control of litter it involves the prevention of litter in the first place. Consider organising or attending a waste minimisation workshop with your local authority. Look at simple ways you can start to address this issue. Have any bring sales been held in the community as a way of recycling items. Does the committee or the local residents take part in the Earth Hour? These initiatives can all be included in this category.

Tidiness:

Once again Scotstown presented a very tidy appearance. The works you have taken to liaise with local owners is to be commended. The fresh coat of paint on many of the building really lifts the town. Well done on the success in getting the empty white house painted as this has made a big difference and also on your efforts at Cassidy and sons garage. Your proactive approach and obvious results has gained you more marks in this category. Some centres have begun using printed window and door boards to great effect to fool the eye into thinking premises are occupied. This has successfully been done in Monaghan Town so perhaps you could contact the TidyTown group there to get details on this? Good luck with your plans to improve the wall at the cemetery.

Residential Areas:

It is good to see a high standard of new builds in the area and we look forward to the fine stone entrance being completed next year at Kiln House. The majority of houses were very well presented with particular mention of the floral display at the cottage along side the shop. In addition the lovely old bungalow on the approach to the Blackwater bridge caught the eye. Have you considered setting up a best garden competition or something similar to engage with some of the newer residents? This can be an effective way to focus attention on the upkeep of garden areas and can be a means of promoting your activities too.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

It was good to see that kerbs were being cleaned of weeds on adjudication day by a local resident. It makes the job so much easier if residents can be encouraged to clear the area directly outside their homes. The light standard at the pedestrian bridge over the Blackwater has been somewhat sloppily finished. Some extra bags of soil are required here to cover the hardcore and finished with a handful of grass seed to finish off this area. Generally approach roads were well maintained with speed signage clearly visible. However you should talk to the County Engineer about upgrading some of the town signs.

General Impression:

As a result of your sterling works and correspondence with local landowners we were delighted to see the progress that had been made in some of your problem areas. The links you have made with the committee at Ardagh and the resident of the neighbouring competitor at Ballinode are very encouraging. The best way to learn is to learn from the experiences of other. Good luck in all your efforts for the coming year.