

*"Caring for our environment"*

Centre : **MULLINGAR**  
County : **WESTMEATH**  
Category : **F**

**Results**

Date of Adjudication : 09-07-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15
Landscaping	40	24
The Built Environment	40	25
Litter Control	40	19
Tidiness	20	10
Residential Areas	30	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	19
General Impression	10	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>167</b>

## **Adjudicator's Comments**

### **OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

Mullingar has reached a high standard in the competition. This is particularly due to the standard of presentation of most of the housing schemes and individual properties throughout the town and to the quality of presentation of the business and other public buildings in the central area. This indicates a high level of individual effort and community participation particularly in the housing estates; however your objective must be to try to extend the same level of community effort to the other parts of the town, to the approach roads and other public areas which are not adjoining housing estates, etc. Resident Associations have been particularly influential in Mullingar in landscaping and maintaining public areas in housing estates and if more Resident Associations could be formed in other areas especially along the approach roads this could be an effective way of upping standards. A Plan which would set out objectives for various parts of the town and how these could be achieved should be a first step in generating greater public support.

### **WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES**

This is a new section in the Competition and greater emphasis is now being placed on the provision and maintenance of wildlife habitats. Mullingar is fortunate in that it has many attractive habitats - these include the Canal, The River Brosna, the mature and recently planted trees, hedgerows, gardens etc. For the future it is important that you maximise these resources. You should seek advice and the involvement of local environmental experts as to the best approach. There is also scope to involve the schools in this programme.

### **LANDSCAPING**

The town has many attractive landscaping features. The town park is the flagship project with its pond, large well maintained grassed trees and shrubberies. Other attractive features in the town include well planted roundabouts especially at the roundabout in Dominick Street and the car park area at the greyhound track. Other shrubberies include the roundabouts on the bye-pass road and at Mullingar Hospital; however these are not up to the same standard as Dominick Street. The mature trees and the maintained grass along the canal on the Green road are attractive features. The canal walk especially between the Green Bridge and the Dublin Bridge is a wonderful amenity. The extensive canal banks at the speed limit signs at the Athlone road has considerable potential for further development, as has been mentioned in previous reports trees could be planted to great effect and the boundary concrete fencing needs repair and long weeds removed. The colourful hanging baskets and window boxes in many parts of the town are most attractive especially in Dominick Street. The trees in the new pavement areas as they mature will become more influential in the streetscape. The extensive tree planting on the by-pass and its approaches is now beginning to come into its own and as the trees mature they will greatly add to the character of the by-pass. There are many other parts of the town where additional trees could be planted, e.g. the Industrial Estate.

### **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

As has been highlighted in several recent reports one of the glories of Mullingar has been the huge improvements to shop fronts and signage in the town centre and this work continues. It would be invidious to single out specific premises. Unsuitable frontages are now the exception and hopefully these will also be upgraded in the next few years. There has been some improvements to frontages in Patrick Street but there is still a lot to be done here as there are many unsuitable plastic signs and frontages particularly in the vicinity of the bridge and several premises also need painting. The building on the opposite side of road to the Newbury Hotel stands out and is badly in need of renovation. Most of the public buildings schools, churches, banks etc. are very well presented and the recently restored County Council buildings are most attractive. The older hospital buildings have been painted to great effect, hopefully the boundary wall will also be similarly treated. There are several attractively landscaped industrial premises in the Industrial Estate area, however many security fences are unsightly.

The quality of the landscaping at the security fence at Mullingar Hardware sets the standard.

#### LITTER CONTROL

Litter remains a major problem throughout Mullingar especially on the approach roads and side streets and on-going efforts are required to contain litter. Litter was particularly noted in the vicinity of the railway station, the Tullamore road, Athlone road, stretches of Clonmore, and in the vicinity of St. Lomans Hospital. For some reason litter does not seem to be as prevalent on the by-pass as in other approaches. A higher standard of litter control seems to exist in the town centre but even here litter was visible on the day of inspection. The stone harbour is a fine feature but litter on the bed of the harbour and floating and trapped litter was also unsightly in the canal.

#### TIDINESS

The overall impression of Mullingar is patchy. The central area with its many quality buildings and shop fronts looks well. Most of the private houses and housing schemes are also neat and well cared for. The by-pass with its trees looks well. Other approaches are untidy with lengthy stretches of unsightly fences and untended grass verges.

#### RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Many of the housing estates throughout Mullingar are of an exceptional high standard of presentation with closely cut and collected grass, attractive plantings, litter free etc. Some of these areas would include Hillside Drive, Bellview, Glenview, Auburn Village, Oaklawns, etc. There are also a great number of attractive individual houses and gardens throughout the town. Several maintain grassed areas and gravelled margins in front of boundary walls, however, others need to weed gravelled margins and several boundary walls need painting.

#### ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

In general the standard of presentation is patchy with some well maintained grass and other stretches untended. Comments on this aspect of the town were detailed in last years report and regrettably there appears to be little improvement since then. Grass verges need much more regular attention on all approach roads to look their best and lengthy stretches of unsightly open and gap areas need fencing or screening, e.g. on the Kilbeggan road and at the canal on the Athlone road, etc. The by-pass road is the exception to this as the landscaping work is now beginning to mature and this is having an increasing impact on the standard of presentation. Improvements can also be undertaken on minor roads and side streets, e.g. the Clonmore road - the area opposite the housing is untended and screening plants would hide some unsightly industrial sites. There are however a number of attractive touches - the iron railing on the pedestrian bridge at the Railway Station is attractively painted; however the metal work on the bridge should be painted in a matching colour.

#### GENERAL IMPRESSION

Mullingar has the potential to do much better in the Competition. Your objective must be to bring all areas up to the standard of the housing estates or the town centre. You have to get greater community support and concentrate on the weaker areas, e.g. approach roads and litter control. It is also important that you work as closely as possible with the Local Authority and other agencies such as FAS.