

# Tidy Towns Competition 2003

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Slane**

Ref: **451**

County: **Meath**

Mark: **227**

Category: **B**

Date: **02/08/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	36
The Built Environment	40	34	34
Landscaping	40	35	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	17	19
Litter Control	40	27	27
Tidiness	20	15	16
Residential Areas	30	25	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	32	32
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>231</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The committee is thanked for their entry into this year's Tidy Towns Competition which contained a well completed Entry Form. The village plan was not, however, as good as it could be. You really need a three-year development programme and that will be one of the documents that will be looked for in next year's submission. There was also very little information about your links with the local community or the pupils of the schools. It is very important that the committee has continuous liaison with statutory bodies, whether it is the county council, FÁS, the NRA, ESB or Eircom and with other groups mentioned above as they can give invaluable help and advice to the committee.

### The Built Environment:

Slane is a very fine model estate village, developed originally around a crossroads on the N2 and the R51. The village plan is arranged around a central octagon with four very fine stone buildings arranged at right angles to the crossroads. Through-traffic of heavy trucks and cars has practically destroyed this area around the crossroads. At times, this must have made it difficult for the committee to develop a coherent plan of action. The building of the visitor centre at Newgrange added to this traffic. However, this is now changing, and thankfully this heavy stream of through-traffic has now moved to the M1 motorway by-pass. The drop in heavy traffic is noticeable and the village and hopefully the committee can proceed with their programme of work over the next five years without the constant noise, pollution and traffic dangers both at the crossroads and at Slane bridge.

## **Landscaping:**

The existing landscape of Slane Castle estate is a dominant feature on both the N2 starting at Slane bridge and the R51 to Navan. There are some very fine gardens on the roads leading into the village and these give an air of welcome and care. The owners deserve acknowledgement for this contribution. It is suggested to the committee that they should organise a Gardens Competition especially aimed at new gardens associated with the many new houses now developing around Slane to the north. This final section of the N2 entry road needs much attention by defining the carriageway edges, tree planting and contributions from the garden fronts and filling stations and other commercial development.

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

There was no information in the Entry Form on the committee's approach to wildlife conservation. With both the River Boyne and the canal and the wonderful tree cover in Slane Castle estate, unrivalled habitats for both flora and fauna exist. The adjudicator will look with interest to next year's submission on this subject.

## **Litter Control:**

No litter was seen in Slane on the day of adjudication and the committee is to be congratulated on this achievement. With less traffic flow, there should be a further lessening of possible litter. Though no recycling unit was seen in the village, there may have been one. If not, the committee should apply for one from Meath County Council, possibly sited discretely in the recessed area across from the hotel where there is ample short duration car parking.

## **Tidiness:**

The adjudicator found it difficult to understand the entry under "Tidiness" in the Entry Form. The picnic area and pocket park on the Dublin side of the Slane bridge needs attention and the committee must be vigilant that the litter bins never become filled to overflowing, especially during the summer holiday period. Though it may not happen in Slane, it is worth mentioning that there is a tendency during the summer school holidays to neglect the school grounds. It is important that the pupils should be organised to keep the grass cut and to pick up windblown litter and also to keep the adjoining verges, the kerbing and the bases of walls free from weeds.

## **Residential Areas:**

There are some delightful single home gardens, both in the village and on the approach roads to the village, and this has been referred to. The committee should now, in conjunction with the Gardens Competition already referred to, organise a residential areas competition. It is very important that members of these new housing areas should be on the committee. There is much work to be done in improving the general landscaping and gardens in Slane.

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

The entry road in from Navan is very pleasant, with well kept verges, well kept adjoining housing and the stone wall of Slane Castle estate on the far side. The canopy of trees here completes a very welcoming entry. The entry in from the Dublin side needs much improvement. The viewing area on the side of the N2 is badly defined with no proper division line between the public carriage and the gravelled viewing area. There should be an illustrated board indicating the points of interest as seen from this point. The very pleasant picnic area behind the stone wall adjoining the canal was not maintained on the day of adjudication and looked untidy. A walk-way along the canal should be developed to view the most interesting features on this short length of the canal - the tunnel and the double lock.

## **General Impression:**

Slane is basically a very pleasant village, but much input is needed in tidiness, general maintenance and exploiting the considerable charm of the village. Verge maintenance and definition on the Collon entry point is badly needed.

## **Second Round Adjudication:**

Please give a more complete map, marking all the sites which are essential to be visited. It is unlikely that we will miss any unlikely locations, but one needs to be sure. Perhaps it would be helpful to increase the size of your committee to include more newly arrived residents and spread the load. The list of forthcoming projects is most impressive, but you do not say if yours is a 3-year or a 5-year Plan - it can hardly be both! Each project should show a proposed completion year. You have successfully completed two projects in the current year: congratulations. In early August, weeds had grown up unhindered on the short road up to the Abbey and opposite and adjacent to the Emo garage. The seating at the splendid viewing point on the N2 was badly in need of painting, and there was considerable litter here. There was also conspicuous litter at the Abbey, and all the roadside signs here were disfigured or illegible. These are matters for the official bodies in charge, but visitors to this important site would not be aware of that and simply assume that the people of Slane are not concerned about their environment or heritage, which of course is not the case. The most effective Tidy Towns Committees are those which take a very firm line with public bodies and ensure that proper and continuing maintenance is undertaken.