

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Summerhill**

Ref: **389**

County: **Meath**

Mark: **191**

Category: **C**

Date: **17/06/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	28	27
The Built Environment	40	30	28
Landscaping	40	32	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	5	5
Litter Control	40	27	25
Tidiness	20	14	13
Residential Areas	30	21	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	26
General Impression	10	7	6
TOTAL MARK	300	191	180

Overall Developmental Approach:

The Committee is thanked for their entry into this year's Tidy Towns Competition which included a well completed Entry Form, a three to five-year Development Programme and a Town Map. It was noted that there are only four committee members. It should be one of the main aims for the coming year to greatly increase this number. The three to five-year Development Plan is of great help to the Adjudicator in judging the work being done and is also of considerable benefit to the Committee in monitoring their yearly progress. The Adjudicator was pleased with the liaison with the County Council, FÁS and the local community. It is very important that this continues as these groups will give invaluable assistance and advice to the Committee. One group not mentioned, but possibly involved, is the local school children. They are a most important group. Not only do they do great work if directed properly, such as litter collecting or tree planting, but the entire exercise gives them a pride in their locality.

The Built Environment:

Summerhill is a most remarkable village. It is laid out with an extended tree-lined central landscaped mall, flanked on each side by public roads and attractive terraced housing. It is a very good example of "improving" on the original plan. This tree-lined mall leads to what was the principal avenue of Lord Longford's mansion, Summerhill House. This mansion is gone now, except for the two monumental flanking gateways and the gates. Gone also are the radiating avenues of trees. On the green mall, there is a monument, a richly carved shaft of a Lynch memorial cross.

The houses and shops enclosing the mall are generally in good condition, except for two four-storey buildings which form part of the terrace on the east side. These are in very poor condition and tend to detract from the fine character of this central feature of the village. Possibly the Committee could push for their reconditioning rather than demolition. The areas behind the two flanking walls to the Summerhill House avenue seem to be used as a dump for excess spoil and soil. Possibly the Committee, again, could see to the levelling out of this dumping. Today the village is expanding in a series of small and large fine housing estates and it would be expected that the existing retail services will expand to meet this new demand. The Committee will have to take account of this in future planning.

Landscaping:

The central mall is a delightful feature of the village. It is beautifully maintained with very fine trees, flowering shrubs, stone paving to the central and perimeter paths and water features at each end. The Committee are to be highly commended for their work on this outstanding feature. The Garda Station grounds are well maintained and should be commended. Possibly flower baskets could be developed as a feature on the houses and shops around the Mall. Besides enhancing the central area it could also get more people involved and perhaps join the Committee. A tree planting programme could be initiated within the housing areas, the Church and school grounds. These trees must be indigenous to the area and be berried or other forms of fruit bearing trees. Appropriate tree species would be oak, ash, rowan, beech, chestnut, lime or thorn. It is suggested also that the Committee consider the creation of a mulch bank for grass cuttings and leaves, etc. The mulch could then be used in various locations throughout the village in planting beds and planters. This activity could also be used to encourage more members to join the Committee. There was a rather sad pine tree on the lawn of the central mall. This could be replaced by a large living pine that would be a central feature to the mall at Christmas. Possibly Coillte or other groups could donate such a tree and plant it.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There is a reluctance by the Adjudicator to recommend the creation of a wildlife area with bird feeder etc. until more important actions, such as a tree planting programme is well on the way. The central green is a large bird sanctuary, much better to develop this with some more berried trees. Many species of birds were seen there by the Adjudicator on the day of adjudication.

Litter Control:

No litter was seen on the day of adjudication and the Committee is to be congratulated on this achievement. Though no recycling unit was seen by the Adjudicator, perhaps there was one. The Committee should approach the County Council for such a five bin unit, if none exists. They are issued free. Possibly a few additional litter bins could also be sited in strategic sites around the village.

Tidiness:

The village was very tidy on the day of adjudication. There is a general tendency, during the school summer holidays, to neglect the school grounds. It is important that the Committee along with pupils from the school keep the grass cut and pick up any windblown litter while keeping the adjoining verges, kerbings and bases to walls free of weeds.

Residential Areas:

There are some very attractive gardens, both within the village and on the approach roads leading into the village. They give a feeling of care and welcome to all and are to be complimented. There are also many fine gardens within existing and new housing groups. It is suggested that the Committee should create a Gardens Competition to bring up the standard of all gardens. Again, this

Competition could be used to entice potential members. Though many of the open green spaces within these housing groups are maintained to a very high standard, tree planting is badly needed.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The roads into the village are winding, tree-enclosed, with cut and wild grass verges in places and some excellent front gardens; overall very attractive. Rathmoylon village has encouraged the land owners adjoining the public entry roads to maintain the hedgerows and verges adjoining their properties; maybe that idea should be investigated by Summerhill.

General Impression:

A delightful village with a unique central treed mall; its maintenance is a credit to all.