

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Arvagh**

Ref: **635**

County: **Cavan**

Mark: **201**

Category: **B**

Date: **28/06/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	35
The Built Environment	40	33	33
Landscaping	40	27	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	17	17
Litter Control	40	28	30
Tidiness	20	9	10
Residential Areas	30	20	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	27	27
General Impression	10	6	7
TOTAL MARK	300	201	206

Overall Developmental Approach:

Your adjudicator would like to welcome you to the 2005 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for the map that accompanied your entry form. Unfortunately, the scale of this map was too small to indicate the areas where you had carried out work for this year's competition. Perhaps a larger hand drawn map could be provided next year on which you can mark the areas of the town where work has been carried out in late 2005 / 2006.

The adjudicator notes that a Tidy Towns Work Programme or Plan was not submitted with the entry documentation. All towns and villages are required to have a simple straight forward 3 –5 Year Tidy Towns Plan for their area. This Plan is prepared by your Committee in consultation with the appropriate local organisations. It should be no more than seven to ten pages long. The purpose of the Plan is to guide the work of your Tidy Towns Committee and others over the short to medium term. The single sheet document did not provide details of the work to be carried out each year over the period 2005 - 2007.

The really successful Tidy Towns Committees are those that succeed in harnessing the goodwill, skills and experience of a number of different groups and agencies that have something to contribute to the implementation of the 3-5 Year Tidy Towns Plan. These groups and Agencies include the following –

- GAA
- Local Development Association

- FAS
- County Council
- Local SuperValu outlet
- LEADER Company
- The CLAR Programme (if you are in a CLAR designated area)
- Local School or schools
- Urban & Village Renewal Grant Scheme

The Built Environment:

The development of the old Market House has been a good initiative in this attractive part of Arvagh. Have you considered painting the buildings on either side to highlight the cut stone syle of the house and highlight it as one of the key buildings in the town? On the approach to Arvagh the Health Centre is in need of painting. The fine stone walls were admired at the Catholic Church/GAA grounds area. Some buildings need maintenance work on damaged window frames, and a number of premises need to be re-painted. The old Hall opposite Corn Hill House is in need of urgent painting and the large roof area that is a prominent feature needs urgent painting also. Have you considered replacing some of the shop front signs in the town with signs that use more traditional materials such as timber and hand-painted lettering? This could be approached on a co-operative basis. Projecting advertising signs were noted on a number of premises in the village centre and this needs attention. The issue is how many of these signs are really essential from a commercial point of view? The adjudicator is not in favour of the display of retail goods on the pavement as was noted here. Apart from looking rather untidy such displays can cause major difficulties for people in wheelchairs or the visually disabled. The Bring Centre site is not the most suitable as access is not really easy for people with cars. The area here was very poorly presented. A few derelict buildings were noted that detract from the overall appearance of the built environment of your town. However there is a way in which a feature could be made of these buildings pending their removal or restoration. Try and get the owners to agree that they will blank out the window and door openings with heavy waterproof Marine plywood. This should then be painted matt black, and window bars and door panels painted in white. This approach as a temporary measure can look quite effective.

Landscaping:

Some attractive landscaping caught the eye in various locations. The flower tubs at the National School and the Church of Ireland Church looked quite colourful. At Brady's the extensive landscaping needs a little trimming here and there, and the attractive mature trees at the Catholic Church are a strong feature of this part of the town.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

In many towns and villages this is an aspect of the Tidy Towns Competition where there can be significant potential for development. All towns and villages have the presence of wildlife to some degree. It is important that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine the wildlife potential, and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly. If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat survey carried out on the wildlife in your area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following–

- Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
- Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds, lakes, canals, reed marsh, bogs
- Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
- Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The Survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to your area. This need not be an expensive survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable person locally who might undertake this task for you. It should be remembered that to carry out the Survey properly, it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different times. Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be do draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats and investigate the possibility of new ones. For example perhaps there is an old Pond in your area

that is disused, but with a little work could be an important area for wildfowl. It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and there may even be a teacher with interest in this area who would be willing to get involved. As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof and vandal proof display panels, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland. For example, the lake near your town has excellent potential to become a really important natural amenity.

Litter Control:

Unfortunately litter control is one of the weakest aspect of Arvagh, at least as experienced on adjudication day. Quantities of litter were found in a number of places so the problem is not an isolated one. Areas where litter was noted included the car park opposite the Church, the Square especially beside the litter bin (very bad), the Longford road, at the Bring Centre (very bad), Main Street, the road out by the Playground and at the short access road to the lake beside the Playground.

Tidiness:

The area of the Bring Centre was extremely poorly presented and consideration should be given to finding a more suitable site for this important facility. Car access and exit is difficult. Very bad grass and weed growth was noted here. A very large untidy open site was noted beside Maxol and perhaps the property can be screened from view pending development. At the junction to Lough Gowna the blue railings here are in need of painting. All poles should be painted and this is something that you might discuss with your Local Authority Engineer. The short access road to the lake beside the Playground was very untidy. Piles of stones and sand, road kerbing and other materials were found here.

Residential Areas:

At the housing estate off the Aghnacliff road some landscaping is recommended. That would add some colour and tree planting should be included also. A number of good private house presentations with associated landscaping caught the eye, but the painting of road boundary walls is necessary on a frequent basis.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The overall presentation of all approach roads is of critical importance. It is this that gives the first impression of your town or village. Attractive well presented approach roads give a great impression of a community that cares about how others see them. Your verges have been cut but the cut grass has not been taken away. The result is an untidy appearance with new grass growth trying to grow through the dead cut grass. Can you make a rule for yourselves, helpers and council staff etc. that all cut grass must be taken away on the day that it is cut. Do remember also that verges will need to be cut on quite a regular basis if you are to achieve a lush green well kept appearance of banks and roadside verges. A tractor and mower will not give the neat well kept appearance that can be achieved by a motor mower.

General Impression:

Well done for the efforts that have been made to date to improve your town. Your adjudicator recommends the following priority action areas for late 2005 / 2006 -

- Litter Control
- Wildlife and natural amenities
- Approach roads

Good luck with the work.

