

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Bawnboy**

Ref: **740**

County: **Cavan**

Mark: **208**

Category: **A**

Date: **28/06/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30	31
The Built Environment	40	26	26
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	12	12
Litter Control	40	36	36
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	26	26
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	208	209

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Bawnboy to the Tidy Towns Competition 2005. However, no map of any sort was provided with the entry form. It is very important that a map, even hand drawn by one of your committee, is supplied to assist the adjudicator focus on those areas the committee wish to highlight. We don't want to inadvertently miss any excellent work carried out over the last year. Similarly, the entry form could have been much more useful had more detail been included as it seems to indicate that the only categories under which work was done for the 2005 Tidy Towns Competition was under litter and tidiness, and no other work of any sort was undertaken. I'm sure further work was carried out in the town, so perhaps this would be added for next year so additional marks can be awarded under those categories.

As you may know, to make substantial progress in the competition all towns and villages need to prepare a simple straight forward 3 –5 Year Tidy Towns Plan for their area - no more than seven to ten pages long at most. The purpose of the Plan is to guide the work of your Tidy Towns Committee and others over the short to medium term. You will find that a planned approach to your village will bring many benefits as you can chart your progress each year. The really successful Tidy Towns Committees also succeed in harnessing the goodwill, skills and experience of a number of different groups and Agencies that have something to contribute to the preparation and implementation of the plan. These groups and Agencies include the following –

- GAA
- Local Development Association

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

If the above was worked on for next, Bawnboy could really start making substantial progress.

The Built Environment:

The buildings in the village are an interesting mix of older properties, some needing maintenance attention with more recent development. 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, of course, would need to be approached on a co-operative basis with shop owners. Projecting advertising signs were noted in a number of back lanes in the town centre and this needs attention. The issue is how many of these signs are really essential from a commercial point of view? A few derelict buildings were noted that detract from the overall appearance of the built environment. However there is a way in which perhaps you can make a feature 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. The long concrete wall at the National School is rather dull - have you considered having this painted a colour that would look well with the main colour of the School building? Again this year the Church with it's excellent and colourful landscaping stands out. The adjudicator is of the view that the Church building design suits the site perfectly; a low level building that blends with the surrounding countryside. Again this year, the Keeper's Arms caught the eye and is well presented.

Landscaping:

The Church landscaping referred to above is excellent. The landscaping in the grounds of St. Mogue's College is very eye catching and makes a valuable contribution to the appearance of the Swanlinbar approach road. On the road towards the Church and School several private properties have excellent displays of window boxes and hanging baskets which add much colour to that part of Bawnboy. The use of hanging baskets and flower tubs in carefully selected places adds an interesting splash of colour to any town or village. However do make sure that this is not overdone. You should be using hanging baskets and tubs to help bring out the character of your village.

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 of 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 will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different time. Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be do draft a straightforward Plan to preserve the identified habitats, and

investigate the possibility of creating 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 in many Schools there are teachers 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.

Litter Control:

Litter control was very good on adjudication day and you are continuing your good standard noted by the adjudicator in June 2004. A little litter was noted on the Swanlinbar approach road. Your policy of involving the school children in litter clean up activities is excellent, and do continue this most useful initiative.

Tidiness:

Bawnboy was reasonably tidy on adjudication day. On the Ballyconnell approach an untidy open space was noted on the left hand side at a low road boundary wall. Elsewhere some of the road boundary walls need to be painted. Do remember that these walls need to be painted far more frequently than the main properties behind these walls. Another untidy area with long grass was observed in the short 'bye-passed' section of the village. As well as cutting the grass the fencing here needs to be painted. A fenced off area was noted on the Swanlinbar approach and presumably this is for new housing development.

Residential Areas:

Private houses in general demonstrated the great pride the owners have in the presentation of their own properties. In many instances a high level of landscaping provided a colourful setting for these properties. Remember that the provision of hanging baskets and window boxes can be unintentionally overdone. Hopefully there are acceptable landscaping plans for The Lawn estate that is to be developed.

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. Attractive well presented approach roads give a great impression of a community that cares about how others see them. Good work has been done on all the approach roads to Bawnboy. You 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 and your helpers 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. On the Ballyconnell approach the verge from the Bring Centre inwards to the Speed Limit Sign needs attention and some timber poles are being stored here.

General Impression:

The adjudicator looks forward to your entry in the Tidy Towns Competition in 2006. Do remember always that the adjudicator has a role to help you, and to make sure that all your good work is recognised. It is difficult to do that without a map of the village, Action Plan or other detailed information. So while parts of the village were visited on adjudication day, this aspect should be focussed on as a priority for next year. Once these are put in place, the adjudicator is confident that not only will Bawnboy regain its mark under overall development, but will rise dramatically in marks over the coming years. Good luck to all of your future efforts and congratulations on what has been

achieved to date.