

# Tidy Towns Competition 2005

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Loch Gowna**

Ref: **344**

County: **Cavan**

Mark: **238**

Category: **A**

Date: **04/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	38	39
The Built Environment	40	30	30
Landscaping	40	33	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	24
Litter Control	40	34	35
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	30
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>239</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Lough Gowna to the 2005 Tidy Towns Competition. Unfortunately it was difficult to find out from the application form what works had been undertaken specifically for the 2005 competition and no Action Plan was provided. 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
- LEADER Company
- The CLAR Programme (if you are in a CLAR designated area)
- Local School or schools
- Urban & Village Renewal Grant Scheme

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 Built Environment:**

The Playground and Tennis Courts area were well presented and are key facilities within your village. The gate to the playground might be painted a strong colour - red or blue. The landscaping here stood out and added some attractive colour to that part of your village. Across the road the gates to the Aeroboard property might also be painted a strong colour to match or contrast with that suggested for the Playground entrance area.

The nearby All Hire property would benefit from repainting in the near future if possible. 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. The side of the Fitzpatrick's property would benefit from painting also.

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 School was very neatly presented and the mature landscaping here is quite effective. Nearby at the Church one of the flag poles needs to be straightened. The Community Centre rebuilt some years ago has a very attractive rough finish that looks really well. The standard of maintenance here appears also to be quite high.

## **Landscaping:**

The landscaping at the Fair Green has been referred to above. On the Longford approach a very attractive post and chain area was noted with good grass presentation and colourful landscaping. It is not obvious whether this is private or public property. Well done however to those involved. On this road the stone shrub containers were quite colourful and the verge here was attractively presented. The hanging baskets and flower tubs associated with properties in the village all added to a colourful appearance to Lough Gowna on adjudication day.

## **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 in one of your Schools who might undertake this task for you. Basically the Survey would identify the animals, plants, birds, fish that inhabit your area and their associated habitats. It should be remembered that to carry out the Survey properly that it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different time of the year.

Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be to draft a straight forward Plan to

preserve the identified habitats in your area, 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 in many Schools there is probably a teacher who may have an 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.

It is pity that there does not appear to be any obvious public access to Swan lake.

### **Litter Control:**

The general level of litter was quite good. Some litter was noted opposite the Aerobord property and a bin holder near here did not have a litter bin. It is very important that your Committee would develop a litter control plan for your town / village. The issue of litter control is not an issue just for the Local Authority. All citizens and especially your Tidy Towns Committee have a key role to play. Your plan should include such issues as surveying the litter bins that you have in your community and their adequacy, clean up days and the role of your local schools.

An area where quantities of litter was noted was in the large car park on the Longford road just beyond the road junction. Some litter was also evident on the Lough Gowna road.

It is most important that litter bins are placed in close proximity to the largest generators of litter. The regular emptying of litter bins is of course essential.

### **Tidiness:**

The small pile of gravel at the corner of the Church road boundary wall area should be removed, and the corrugated iron gates opposite the School could be painted also. On the Lough Gowna road a house with a high white wall was painted and this will need to be painted if possible for the 2006 competition.

At the Estuary property on the Lough Gowna road the appearance of the area would be improved if the boundary area between this property and the roadway could be tidied up.

Otherwise the village was quite tidy on adjudication day.

### **Residential Areas:**

A number of properties caught the eye that included the large house near the Church with attractively landscaped grounds and "Village House" on the Lough Gowna road. At this property the hanging baskets and the window boxes were quite a colourful feature of that part of the village. Some other attractive landscaped gardens were noted on the lake approach road.

At the developing estate on the Lough Gowna road no public landscaping has yet been planted, and hopefully this is part of the developer's plans.

A lot of new development is taking place at the moment and it does not appear as yet to be overpowering the village. Getting the right development into the right location built to the right standard is a good formula for future development.

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

The best of the approach roads was that from Longford and here some additional bank and hedge cutting is desirable. This road just recently been resurfaced. 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.

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.

Little work appears to have been done recently on the Lough Gowna and the Arva road.

### **General Impression:**

Lough Gowna is a village with further potential in the competition. The preparation of your Tidy Towns Action Plan is very important, and then work to the Plan year by year making any changes each year as you consider appropriate.

Well done to all those involved in the Tidy Towns effort!

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Loch Gowna looked well on the day of second adjudication with bright sunshine on the recently whitewashed walls at the crossroads in the village centre. the old church with the Fas sign is charming, well done on its presentation; the newer church and graveyard together with the school and St. Brigids Hall were all beautifully presented also. Has the future of the old national school been decided upon? A section of the premises next to All hire could be improved as could walls and an outbuilding located across from the new infill residential development on the main street.

Litter control was not as good as in previous years; there was an overflow from a bin at the fenced green area at the cross roads and Fitzpatrick's car park was lightly littered also. Service poles and the associated service cables at the cross roads look poor.

Grassed verges, ditches and field boundaries of approach roads were all neatly presented.

Hopefully your new residents will get into the spirit of Tidy Towns.