

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Longford Town**

Ref: **272**

County: **Longford**

Mark: **192**

Category: **E**

Date: **05/07/2004**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2004 | Mark Awarded 2003 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Overall Developmental Approach | 50 | 35 | 32 |
| The Built Environment | 40 | 28 | 26 |
| Landscaping | 40 | 26 | 24 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 30 | 20 | 16 |
| Litter Control | 40 | 23 | 17 |
| Tidiness | 20 | 12 | 11 |
| Residential Areas | 30 | 20 | 20 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 40 | 22 | 18 |
| General Impression | 10 | 6 | 5 |
| TOTAL MARK | 300 | 192 | 169 |

Overall Developmental Approach:

Longford Town is welcome to the 2004 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your most comprehensive submission with supporting documentation and photographs. The most useful part of your application was the summary map together with supporting maps. Congratulations on the support you received from the entire community and their involvement in the Tidy Towns initiative. Your SWOT analysis makes for interesting reading, and it is good to note that you are aware of your strengths and weaknesses not to mention opportunities. Longford is a fine town with many handsome features and amenities, the Main Street however appears to be quite congested in terms of on-street carparking; perhaps consideration might be given to developing a greater pedestrian focus and reducing on-street carparking.

The Built Environment:

The majority of buildings both old and new in Longford Town look well and some have retained their sash windows, for example "Woods Newsagents" and the upper storeys of "Dunne's Stores". The "E. Kenny Outfitters" shop front is beautifully presented. The "Providers" premises is an important focal point in the town-scape and is quite a large corner building, hopefully some consideration will be given to the redesign of its facade. Inappropriate signage continues to decrease and we look forward to the removal of a protruding sign at "Woods Newsagents", "Halls Auto Spares" and the sign on the "Motor Factor's" which is illegible on one side. New developments along Battery road are to a high standard. Boundary walls on the Killashee road could be improved in the environs of the Audi

premises. Further work on premises has been noted on the latter road. The redevelopment at the swimming pool together with the landscaping here is excellent. Some improvement are necessary to commercial premises and curtilage areas on the Strokestown/Westport road. The Temperance Hall has been admired and is being considered for the architectural award together with the Medical Centre on New street which is being considered for an award also. Both Hotels on Main Street are beautifully presented and is a pleasure to note that sash windows on the "Annaly Hotel" have been retained.

Landscaping:

The newly landscaped roundabout at the Newtownforbes/Drumlish junction will make an important contribution to the town as the plants mature, at the time of adjudication they were quite juvenile. The landscaped roundabout at the Dublin end of the town looks well, however some weed growth was noted. The bypass road enjoys excellent maintenance with neat verges and mature hedgerow and trees. Young trees on the Killashee are establishing themselves well and the industrial area on this road has been admired for its landscaping. (Mastertec Business Park and others.) No doubt the same treatment is planned for the Townspark Industrial Estate. The policy of Longford Town Council vis a vie new developments and landscaping is obviously bearing fruit. All green areas are being nicely maintained and amenity areas enjoy good linkages to the town. It is good to note your level of awareness regarding native tree and hedge species. No doubt these will be used extensively in the greening of your town.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The photographs included in your submission under this heading are charming, well done! It is good to note that your important amenities are accessible by disabled persons and fishing facilities for wheelchair users have been put in place at The Mall. We note with interest reference to habitat surveys at The Mall and the canal and are due to make this information available to us for next years competition. Wildfowl, birds, bats and fish together with small animals at the Golf Club and its environs appear to be the main wildlife interest in Longford. We applaud your plan to feature information on these on your website sometime in the years 2005-2006.

Litter Control:

Litter control was very good overall at the time of our adjudication. There were some lapses, however but these were incidental in terms of the overall litter free status of the town. Weak spots included litter along a kerb on the Moydow entrance to the town and along kerbs in the town centre, however this was not a serious problem. Congratulations on achieving this level of litter control and moving from the second worst littered town in Ireland in 2002 to the third overall in 2003, that is a fine achievement by any standards. Your list of litter control initiatives and activities for 2003 is impressive ranging from equipping volunteers to education and awareness and social involvement. Well done on the removal of graffiti by Tidy Towns volunteers over a five month period and congratulations to the supermarkets regarding their electronic system to prevent removal of trolleys. Your current litter programme is as impressive also. Congratulations on a handsome increase in marks under this heading. We hope you can sustain this standard.

Tidiness:

We wish you every success with the establishment of a Civic Amenity Centre in the environs of the town. Outsized advertisement hoardings should be eliminated from the town centre, some were noted in the environs of the Cinema and the Chinese Gourmet Restaurant. You are aware of the location and state of undeveloped sites and derelict properties and are assertive in minimizing these. The freight yard is unusually tidy. A railings on the Newtownforbes/Drumlish entrance from the roundabout which appears to be forged iron may be worth refurbishment. An ugly high fence and wall on the entrance to the town from the Moydow road should be rehabilitated.

Residential Areas:

St. Marys Terrace (near Lidl) is drab in appearance, a coordinated colour scheme might be considered here or perhaps a simple cleaning to facades would be sufficient. St. Patricks Terrace and a terrace across from the cathedral was in the process of redevelopment; hopefully sash windows and other architectural features will be retained. The Sandy Lane apartment development was a work in progress at the time of our visit and looks set to be an attractive feature of the town. St. Bridgets Terrace is both neat and colourful and semi-mature trees at Butterfield are admired. Your analysis of residential areas is excellent and no doubt will inform future developments under this heading.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The wirescape on the Main Street looks quite bad, particularly in the area around the traffic island at the junction with Dublin Street. While many lampstandards in the centre have been refurbished there are still some in need of improvement and a particular service pole at the corner of Richmond Street and Main Street and another at the corner of Bridge Street look really dreadful. Congratulations on street nameplate and indeed on your handsome new town nameplates. Roadsigns throughout the town and on approach roads were good generally as were sponsorship plaques. Litter bins are nicely presented also and we admire your initiative in colour coordinating litter bins with railings. Of approach roads to Longford Town the Strokestown/Westport road was the least well presented as its roadside verges had been roughly cut. The outer limits of the entrance from the Moydow road looks very well. It is good to note that the town council are working with the county council placing new footpaths, lighting and the under grounding of service cables as streets are being upgraded. Your policy of reducing on-street carparking and the provision of off-street carparks will hopefully result in the main streets of the town achieving a more pedestrian friendly focus. Congratulations also on the cycling lane initiative as well as access for disabled.

General Impression:

It is a pleasure to chart Longford Town's progress in the competition especially as the town is going from strength to strength. Congratulations are offered to all who are involved in the tidy towns initiative.