

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Westport**

Ref: **124**

County: **Mayo**

Mark: **274**

Category: **E**

Date: **31/07/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	48	47
The Built Environment	40	37	37
Landscaping	40	38	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	27	26
Litter Control	40	33	31
Tidiness	20	18	18
Residential Areas	30	27	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	37	37
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	300	274	269

Overall Developmental Approach:

Unlike many other Irish towns of similar size, Westport has a very carefully planned structure that devolves from it's development in the 18th century as a planned estate town. All planning for the town must start from that point and recognize it's importance in architectural terms. Thankfully the Westport Town Council, the Tidy Towns Committee and the many helpers obviously understand this fully. Thank you for the very comprehensive Tidy Towns application form and the other documentation received through the Town Council. The adjudicator would like to congratulate Westport for being chosen as one of the two Irish Entente Florale representatives for 2004.

The Tidy Towns News is a great initiative as is the Poster competition for schools. The adjudicator has studied the Town Council 5 Year Plan for Westport and it appears to be a most logical response to the future likely needs of Westport in environmental terms.

The Built Environment:

The work at Altamont Street in limestone looks very effective and greatly enhances what was an informal parking area. Another excellent and worthwhile project was the bridge restoration at Westport House. The Cineplex is a very modern building that sits well on it's chosen site. It is most encouraging to see the introduction of modern buildings into the design fabric of Westport. Some of these buildings fit very well indeed and some good examples are Jack Dylan's and Oliver P. Monohan and Son. Some good traditional shop fronts survive that include P.J.Kelly & Son. Try and discourage

the development of projecting signs on premises. In the adjudicator's view projecting signs on buildings are generally unnecessary and detract from otherwise interesting facades. Good use of strong colours is made in the town centre and this is visually effective. The old building beyond Westport Sea Angling Club appears to be in dangerous condition according to the warning signs and hopefully there can be some progress on the future of this structure. The developments along the Quay area are strongly welcomed and this general area has improved greatly in recent years. The adjudicator has noted the skillful use of cobble-lock paving on footpaths that is extended as necessary to indicate pedestrian crossing places. This appears to be highly successful and gives the impression that vehicles do not dominate pedestrians totally in the centre of Westport!

Landscaping:

The planting of new trees at West Road and Altamont Street among a number of locations, is most attractive. Good landscaping was noted in many places in Westport and on the various approach roads. In the Pier road area, the Pond with the superbly maintained grass areas and colourful planting creates a very strong positive impression. It was encouraging to see wildlife on the Pond also.

The upgrading of the roundabout on the Ballinasloe Road looks well. Good mature landscaping looks well across the road from the Teagasc Centre. On Bridge Street especially the trees, baskets and other landscaping, combined with the regularised parking arrangements join together in a most successful way. The Octagon is the key civic area in Westport. In the adjudicator's view the planting here appeared to be somewhat low-key in nature for such an important area. This is not to detract from the good work that has been done here however.

There are a number of sculpture pieces on display at various locations in Westport set in excellent landscaping. This is a positive development.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The river flowing through the centre of the town with the great stone bridges, is a fine feature and is well maintained. Hopefully the ducklings will become permanent residents. The wildlife here adds another feature of interest. The restocking of the Carrowbeg River is a worth while project. The Pond on the Pier road was superbly presented.

Litter Control:

You have done very well under the Green School Green Award Scheme, and congratulations to all the schools involved. The EMAS programme also appears to have important potential for you. Your Committee has put major emphasis on regular clean ups and litter control. Litter control was good on adjudication day and the centre of Westport looked well from this point of view.

Tidiness:

Your involvement in the Race Against Waste programme is a sensible development, as is your involvement with FAS who have done so much excellent work around the town. The displaying of retail goods on the footpath was noted. This must be discouraged. It can cause great difficulties for those in wheelchairs or those who have a sight disability.

Residential Areas:

The Residential Areas Competition appears to work well for you. The estates visited all looked well and demonstrated community commitment to presentation. The residential areas on Quay Road looked especially well on adjudication day.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

All major approach roads looked well, especially the Castlebar approach road. Some fine landscaping and presentation of grassed verges was noted here. On the Ballinrobe approach road the Failte sign and landscaped area also caught the eye. Fine stone walls are a key feature on the Louisburgh and Newport approach roads. The landscaped area opposite Portwest Ltd on the Castlebar approach is especially eye catching. Obviously great effort has gone into the maintenance of all major approach roads.

General Impression:

It was a pleasure to adjudicate Westport on a fine warm June afternoon, when the town looked so well. The environmental and land-use future of Westport is obviously in very safe and dedicated hands. Congratulations to all involved.

Second Round Adjudication:

The wide green expansive verges with colorful planting created an impressive welcome on the Castlebar approach. On the other hand the maintained rural ambience of other approaches such as the Ballinrobe Road were admired. Advertising hoardings should not be permitted, especially within the town centre. Generally road surfaces were much better than in previous years although some bumpy lengths persist. On a busy bank holiday morning it was most pleasing to note the general absence of litter. Traffic congestion was somewhat of a problem however. The Mall with its shading trees and cool water was refreshing. Although the Quay area has been improving in recent times the Quay itself still varied somewhat in terms of standard. The view from Tober Hill was most impressive - bright paint colors work most effectively in strong sunlight. Take care in the design of new residential areas so that they are properly integrated to the townscape - the new development at Boffin Street is highly commended in this regard. We look forward to returning next year.