

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ashbourne**

Ref: **307**

County: **Meath**

Mark: **199**

Category: **E**

Date: **05/06/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	34	36
The Built Environment	40	28	28
Landscaping	40	32	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	13	14
Litter Control	40	22	21
Tidiness	20	14	13
Residential Areas	30	25	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	24
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	199	197

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator was pleased to see that you have a large number of enthusiastic people on your tidy town's committee and that you receive a high level of support from the local Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, the Community Council, Meath Leader, Meath County Council and local schools. However, it was somewhat disappointing to note, that you still had not submitted a three to five year work programme. This document need only be two or three pages long, outlining your plans for the village's future development. Although your map was useful, it should be to a larger scale clearly indicating street names and areas of interest to the adjudicator in order to assist with the judging process.

The Built Environment:

On the Dublin side of the village, the Ashbourne House and Ashbourne Court Hotel looked extremely fresh with numerous hanging baskets. Hunters Moon Pub in mock Tudor was also admired. The traditional stone village church looked well with its modern extension. However, the adjacent Citizens Information Centre should be painted as should the boundary wall. The old village school adjacent to the church with its Latin motto above the door looked quite charming though somewhat neglected. Weeds to the Liscannor flag paving to the front and litter in the planted bed created a bad impression. Do discourage the practice of using curved canopies and plastic projecting signs. These should be replaced with traditional fabric awnings and timber traditional signs. The Garda station looked fresh, but its railings appeared somewhat flaky, as was the barrier at the road

junction with the town centre/square. This modern development will form a large proportion of the village's urban fabric in the coming years and therefore is of great importance in terms of its impact on the character of Ashbourne. The very modern Civic Offices looked well, although litter to the plaza area to the front created a bad impression. This is an interesting new street which has been created parallel to the main street. However, the adjudicator could not help but wonder, from a town planning point of view, whether there should not be more access points and through routes from here back to the main street?

Landscaping:

The adjudicator looks forward to your future development of the town park at the Broad Water River and field. The attractive open space to the north of the town opposite the Health Board and Credit Union was very well maintained, with its well used seating area and well cared for telephone boxes. The trees at the square formed by the new town centre looked well, although weeds at the base created a bad impression. The riverside walk with its stone gabions, acting as a retaining wall is an attractive feature and the adjudicator looks forward to seeing this as it develops further along the banks of the river. This area appeared somewhat overgrown and rough at the bridge to the rear of the new square. New housing estates and apartments contribute well to this category of the competition. St. Mary's National School grounds were extremely well maintained apart from a broken fence and rusty gate at the entrance.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The adjudicator was disappointed to note that you had not elaborated further on your plans for Broad Meadow River as commented by last year's adjudicator in their report. This adjudicator would like to reiterate those comments made by last year's judge - you should consult with local experts, get information from ENFO and involve the local school children in drawing up plans of the local habitats within their area. Good advice is also to be gleaned from the Tidy Towns Handbook in this regard.

Litter Control:

It was encouraging to note your active participation in the local litter league. The receipt of the special achievement award for the large town is to be commended, as is your provision of 20 additional litter bins. On first impression the town looked reasonably good from a litter point of view but closer inspection revealed trouble spots as indicated elsewhere in this report, a light scattering along the main streets and along the grassy banks to the north of the town particularly in the vicinity of the bus stop.

Tidiness:

Your provision of a clean up rota with Meath County Council is a highly commendable idea. The adjudicator noted your problem area mentioned in your application - the open space with derelict buildings to the north of the town. Do ensure that you pay attention to rear areas such as alleyways leading to car parking areas off the main street.

Residential Areas:

Your active encouragement of local residents to clean up the open spaces in their housing estates is to be commended, as is the encouragement of developers to plant trees in new housing estates. This is evidently paying off as there are a number of new developments which show great effort in relation to their landscaping. Of particular note is Alderbrook Estate with its attractive landscaped areas. Do ensure that dead grass is removed following cutting of green spaces. Hunts Grove and Tudor Grove are two of the more mature estates which are also well cared for. The new developments to the north of the town such as Rath Lodge will hopefully continue to contribute strongly to this aspect of the competition.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The provision of the stone wall and railing contribute well to this category of the competition. The main roads were reasonably well maintained on the day, considering the large scale activity taking place in relation to the drainage scheme.

General Impression:

Ashbourne is a small traditional Irish town which has expanded rapidly in the last number of years. Do ensure that you continue to closely monitor future developments both commercial and residential within the village to ensure that it maintains its unique character.