

# Tidy Towns Competition 2004

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tullamore**

Ref: **426**

County: **Offaly**

Mark: **248**

Category: **E**

Date: **27/07/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	45	44
The Built Environment	40	36	36
Landscaping	40	35	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	20
Litter Control	40	27	25
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	34	34
General Impression	10	9	9
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>242</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for an excellent submission, complete with details of your work programme. This adjudicator has not examined Tullamore for many years now and the progress that has taken place is indeed impressive. The town has developed in all directions, but most of all in the town centre. The infrastructure in the town's environs is of a very high quality and the attention to generous landscaping is praiseworthy. We commend your strategy in adhering to a phased plan and to your policy of involving all sections of the community and of course the various agencies. The town is endowed with a generous stretch of the Grand Canal, one seldom matched with any other town and your treatment of this fine water asset is commendable.

### The Built Environment:

Most impressive are the numerous fine buildings in both squares and the many fine public buildings in all parts of the town. Of particular interest were the following: Bank of Ireland, High St., The Bridge Centre is an excellent complex, complete with attractive water wheel inside, Post Office, Irish Nationwide, Town Council, Hoey and Denning, Garda Station, Aras and Chontae. You also have an attractive array of shopfronts: e.g., The Brewery Tap, G. and M. Hanlon, Patrick St., nominated for shopfront award, De Brúns Bar, Loughreys Guest House, P. J. Grennan, R. Sweeney, Motor Factor and many others. Scoil Bhríd is well presented but the railings now need painting. Commercial buildings are well presented and some have rich embellishment with window boxes and hanging baskets.

## **Landscaping:**

You have scored well in this section and much of previous year's work is coming to fruition. Of particular attraction are the many trees planted in the squares, but most commendable is the tree planting in the car parks, especially beside O'Connell St. Tree planting is now a feature of Tullamore and we urge appropriate maintenance. The building beside The Brewery Tap is quite untidy and now an eyesore. The seating at O'Connor Square: see plaque for Junior Chamber of 1980 is in need of attention. The slatted seating here is a litter trap, due to the design of the seats. The entrance to the town park is a little unfriendly (see signs) and needs improvement. Relevant to the rest of the town the Town Park is poor in presentation. Lots of potential here for improvement. Well done on the treatment of the many roundabouts, although the one at Harbour St., is poor. We liked the policy of identifying the tree species and this will prove educationally beneficial. The IDA complex on the Athlone road is one of the best landscaped sites in the region and has been nominated for a landscaping award.

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The canal and Tullamore river offer great possibilities for the promotion of wildlife. Well done on the development of a Butterfly Chase and the birds in the park survey. We commend you on your Ecological Town Plan: the first to appear before this adjudicator. As mentioned earlier the canal is superb and will grow in importance with the passing of time. O'Carroll Street is unique in its presentation of mature trees: a sight worthy of preservation.

## **Litter Control:**

It was a pleasure to walk all of the town's street and not encounter any litter problem. Indeed, this is an excellent achievement in view of the movement of so many people. It is obvious a litter control is in place and working. So well done to the local authorities and to the community. The two recycling collection points are well positioned, but the one near the canal bridge is being abused by offenders and this is detrimental to the area.

## **Tidiness:**

You have problems here that are caused by derelict and unoccupied premises and a good number of old mills not yet restored. Also, some open spaces are awaiting development: e.g., behind Store Street and in its current state quite untidy. We are sure development is imminent.

## **Residential Areas:**

Housing estates are excellent in presentation and many individuals have gone the extra mile in presenting their gardens to very high standard. Good too to witness some appropriate infill like the three terraced houses at Store Street. Emphasis should be placed on building within the town's core rather than ribbon development. Like almost every town in Ireland you are experiencing a house building boom and we urge developers to landscape estates in an appropriate manner. New housing estates also offer you opportunity for new recruits and we urge you try and motivate residents into action. We suggest you embark on a sculpture programme as some towns are now creating sculpture trails and with great success. You might consider starting with the canal and highlight its history and early usage. All approaches have well presented houses and the line of housing on the Daingean approach is typical of good planning, highly complemented with good tree planting. The most pleasing hidden treasure was the Roselawn housing estate in pristine presentation, and the treatment of the high wall along here also, with excellent landscaping.

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

The road structure, layout and street markings are first class. Signage is excellent and proved most

helpful on adjudication day. Well done also on the availability of an excellent street map, (free too), for visitors. Some lanes have been developed and some are not well presented: e.g., the use of storing barrels at Meath Lane is frowned on. Some housing estates are without any identity: the terraced housing estate near the Garda Stn., for example. The fenced in open space on the corner near the Bridge Car Park is now a dumping ground and needs a clean-out and proper presentation. The Bank of Ireland Corner building near at the Bridge Square needs painting. The excellent Town Council building might consider an appropriate free standing bilingual sign in the front lawn, as it is not identifiable from the road. Aras an Chontae, which probably looked challenging on the drawing board is now one of your best buildings, and all hotels are really well presented.

### **General Impression:**

A truly bright, well designed, well presented and well maintained provincial town of great quality, richly endowed with a beautiful canal, river and some superb buildings. It was a treat to visit Tullamore and witness first hand the wonderful work of recent years in particular. This adjudicator was highly impressed. You are now in a high league of the competition and your marks will be difficult to top up from now on. You now need to pay attention to detail and tackle some of the black spots. We wish you well in your endeavours.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

The second adjudicator concurs wholeheartedly with the comments above. It was most pleasing to see so many ongoing improvements to the overall standard of Tullamore. While development work is inherently untidy it did not impact significantly on exceptional effort in the vicinity in most cases. Stretches of the bypass route between roundabouts looked surprisingly poor however – there is great scope for tree planting along wide footpaths. A green on the Portlaoise approach created a good impression. Great pride was evident in most residential areas. In the town centre there was a great sense of vibrancy with many fine traditional premises coexisting with appropriate contemporary design. Back streets and car parks were for the most part commendably neat. Good reuse of old stone buildings was noted. Hoardings on gable walls should not be permitted as they neither enhance the building on which they are placed nor the streetscape in general. We look forward to returning next year!.