

# Tidy Towns Competition 2004

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Thurles**

Ref: **570**

County: **Tipperary North**

Mark: **216**

Category: **E**

Date: **18/06/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	35
The Built Environment	40	30	30
Landscaping	40	31	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	20	20
Litter Control	40	26	25
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	25	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	25
General Impression	10	8	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>211</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for the detailed entry form and copy of the Tidy Towns Approach Roads Initiative. The inclusion of a map of the town would have been a help to the adjudicator to identify streets and focal points of the Town.

It was noted that the Committee has increased threefold since last year.

This new committee should set about putting together a workable action plan for a 2/3year period. This should focus on issues that need immediate attention and that would require cooperation with the local Town Council and other relevant groups.

Thurles has not reached its full potential in the Competition and to achieve this much more commitment from the wider local community is needed, the Tidy Towns Committee can only do so much

It would be advisable to form sub committees that would take ownership of different tasks and initiatives

These sub committees would in turn report back to the main group on a bi monthly basis.

The relationships forged with both the local council and agencies such as FAS would deliver more benefits to the Town if the above approach was taken.

## **The Built Environment:**

The main problem with towns the size of Thurles is the level of dereliction that prevails so it is good to see that initiatives in the form of new developments are going some way to addressing the problem.

The biggest obstacle that this adjudicator encountered was identification of streets and side streets. I am aware that some progress has been made over the last year but is it possible that the Town Council could make provision in its estimates for next year to put visible street signs in place right around the Town.

Thurles has many fine shop fronts and the following were noted by this adjudicator as being the most noteworthy -P O Gormans Pub in Moyne Terrace a traditional shop front of rare quality,Graces Shop in Liberty Square which is very much in keeping with the original architecture of the town,Michael Hickey Bar and Paddy Doyle (Barber) a name synonymous with the great Thurles Sarsfield teams of the sixties, the newly refurbished Town House Deli on the Slievenamon Rd ,De Burca Liberty Square which has used the Irish language to good effect and Noel Ryans Hostelry on Parnell Street.

On the negative side there were still too many premises that were tardy and some that are still encumbered with the plague of the seventies-the plastic sign.

Addressing this issue is very sensitive but the Committee will have to try and encourage business owners to make sure that frontages are at the very least presentable.

Public buildings, Garda Station,Fire Station Cathedral and schools were all presented to an acceptable standard.

The car park of the Presentation School now seems to be a location for caravans, this has led to a degree of untidiness in that immediate area.

The Tipperary Institute is an impressive building with well maintained grounds.

The boundary walls of Semple Stadium could benefit from painting to brighten up the surrounds.

## **Landscaping:**

Quite a lot of work has gone into this section and indeed the fruits of this collective effort was seen at entrances to the town,in the core and at outlying areas.

Commercial businesses and homeowners have contributed by providing hanging baskets,shrub and flower boxes and individual gardens of high quality.

It would unfair to highlight all of these but suffice to say that there was a marked improvement in this category since this adjudicator visited Thurles in an official capacity some years back.

It is not recommended to put bedding plants at the base of new saplings and maturing trees.

One negative in this section was the condition of the Riverside Walk which is an extension of the Park.

This will be commented upon in the following sections.

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

Pheasant Island wildlife sanctuary,which is situated in a focal point of the town, has been upgraded and looks very well.

Reference was made in the entry form to the River Suir being cleaned,unfortunately this adjudicator could not see the evidence of such work.

The River was in a disgraceful condition, choked with weeds and the embankment in an unacceptable state.

If I am not mistaken this a premier river for trout angling and was featured some years back in a number of prestigious angling publications.

The Committee should liaise with the Town Council to try and have this river bank and the River itself

made good as a natural habitat for both fish life and other forms of wildlife.

### **Litter Control:**

There has been a good effort made to improve the litter situation, bins have been provided and situated in prime positions within the town and its surrounds.

The centre of the town had very little litter but there was some evident on Mitchell Street where ironically two local residents were cleaning up outside their respective homes.

The previously mentioned riverside walk comes in for criticism here as it was littered with cans, bottles, wrappers and other unmentionables.

I would concur with last year's adjudicator's sentiments that more frequent collections and clean ups should take place.

### **Tidiness:**

The previously mentioned Presentation School Car Park was very untidy and caravan owners should be prevailed upon to tidy up their act.

A number of signs were obscured in the town and a few building skips were somewhat messy.

On the positive side there was very little fly posting and similarly a reduction in window advertising since this adjudicator last visited.

The Committee deserve credit for encouraging townspeople to keep immediate areas to their properties free from weed growth.

The entrances to the town were in an acceptable state and a big effort has been made in this category to create good first impressions of Thurles.

### **Residential Areas:**

Thurles has a large number of old established estates, relatively recent developments and very recent developments.

Trying to find all of them is taxing and time consuming but this adjudicator succeeded in getting round.

An immense amount of good work is being undertaken by ad hoc residents groups and this has been reflected in the standard of presentation of most of the estates evaluated.

The interaction between the Committee and the Town Council has been good as the Council has contributed by maintaining communal areas within these estates.

The residents of these estates will benefit from the sub-committee structure advocated in an earlier section of the report.

The following estates and housing developments have been identified as worthy of special mention, Ard Na Crioise, Clonbanna Terrace an old established terrace of single storey cottages extremely well presented, Ard Carrig and Beechwood Gardens and Lawn.

The new estate on the Littleton Road, known locally as the Glebe, has been well appointed with well kept green areas and attractive boundary walls.

Older estates such as Oscar Terrace, Geraldine Terrace and Emer Terrace were also well maintained with most properties painted and some with nice gardens.

Innisfallen Avenue Kennedy and Collins park and others adjacent to Semple Stadium have vastly improved since this adjudicator last visited the area, these areas are now very well presented with some exceptional front gardens and well kept back areas.

This section has seen good improvement over the years but as in every town or village there are those that buck the trend.

It is up to the Committee to ask residents association representatives to encourage these to come into line.

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

The entrances to the Town were in acceptable and there seems to have been a marked improvement

in the standard of presentation of back areas.

The Nenagh entrance is enhanced by the Tipperary Institute Building and grounds.

The Two Mile Borris Road in good condition except for some weed growth at kerbsides.

The Moyne entrance was a little mixed like a curates egg good in parts.

The Littelton Road has been improved some what by the addition of new footpaths on the outskirts. Simple new additional features create good impressions.

The Templemore approach has some nice maturing trees that will further develop over the years

Internal link roads were again quite good but with room for improvement

### **General Impression:**

Thurles has so much potential to improve its standing in the Competition and it is good to see that a bigger and more effective Committee is now in place.

It is hoped that, in conjunction with the Council and other agencies, a work plan will be put in place for the 2/3 years. A town of its standing, synonymous with some many aspects of Irish culture, deserves this.

Contentious issues such as the condition of the River and its bank need to be tackled and improved upon.

Keep up the good work.