

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mullingar**

Ref: **205**

County: **Westmeath**

Mark: **218**

Category: **F**

Date: **08/07/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	35
The Built Environment	40	31	31
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	23
Litter Control	40	29	29
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	24	24
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	218	216

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your very succinct Mullingar Towns Plan 2004. The objectives outlined are commendable and, when combined, form a comprehensive year's work programme. Mullingar is an affluent town which is expanding rapidly particularly reflected in the number of new housing estates which have mushroomed over the past number of years. The developmental approach for the town prepared in conjunction with Westmeath County Council is well thought-out and places a strong emphasis on the upkeep of existing infrastructure, car parks, footpaths and street lights.

The Built Environment:

Mullingar has an impressive collection of public buildings and each plays a pivotal role in the town's built environment. The twin spires of the Cathedral dominate the sky and the building itself a strong edifice set in surrounding grounds with neat car park and trimmed grass areas. The centrally situated Market House is a delightful stone faced building which now houses the tourist information office. It was dressed with flower boxes and its curtilage is furnished with appropriate lamp standards and bollards. At the bottom of Mount Street the Courthouse, the County Council offices and the Art Centre play as important a role today as when first built in the 19th century. Both looked well and were dressed with colourful flower tubs and window boxes. St. Marys Church at the bottom of Church avenue is set in mature lawns and trees. Mullingar is a commercial town and many of its shop fronts along its main streets reflect a thriving economy. Traditional shop fronts of note included Canton Caseys, Ulysses, Gallery 29, Swarbriggs and Shaws Hardware. There were many

colourful displays and those to catch the eye included Cons, Druids Chair and Days Bazaar. The grounds of Mullingar Community School look well with mature trees, shrubs and lawns. Concern is expressed about the sheer size of the apartment blocks being built behind Patrick Street.

Landscaping:

The town park is a fine amenity and it is somewhat of a pity it is hidden from the main street. It contains a wealth of shrubberies, lawns, a lake, and band stand, which was being repainted. The town swimming pool is in this park and features a nice run of shrubs along its front wall. The public toilet at the Pearse street entrance is most unattractive and ill-suited to its surroundings. The hanging baskets along Mount Street and Dominick Street add a wonderful element of colour which enhances the streetscape. It was noted that street furnishings, lamp standards and bollards were in good condition and that the railing had been erected at the taxi rank. The roundabout at the junction of Dominick St. and Oliver Plunkett St. is colourfully displayed with flowers, although the tree at its centre seems more suited to a coastal location. Apart from Dominick Street, where some tree planting has taken place, most other streets of the town need the introduction of trees.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Royal Canal which virtually encircles the town has become a linear water park and is a wonderful town amenity. Its banks and hedgerows form a very valuable habitat for a variety of wildlife and interpretative information plaques would be a welcome addition. Lamp standards and general presentation are very attractive indeed. There is a partly dilapidated wall near the Longford road bridge which has been badly vandalised with graffiti.

Litter Control:

The towns litter programme is working well with little show of litter and the committee and the County Council are commended for their commitment in this regard. There was only one serious problem in this category and this was at the greyhound track. There was a good supply of litter bins throughout the town. Some litter show in Patrick Street.

Tidiness:

There is a certain amount of dereliction around the town. Unfortunately, there are two premises opposite the Greville Arms Hotel in Pearse Street which have fallen into a state of dilapidation and on Mount Street there is a green fronted building and a closed shop which have fallen into considerable disrepair. By and large wirescape is not a problem. The road surface along the front of the Allied Irish Bank is damaged. Beer kegs in front of pub in Market Square should be removed. There was a skip with some plastic bags lying against it at the harbour close to the Longford Bridge. The old Tailtean Textiles factory on the left has fallen into a serious state of dilapidation and its grounds completely overgrown. Unfortunately, the remains of the old ballroom and its curtilage detracts from the entrance to the town on the Roscommon road.

Residential Areas:

The standard of residential housing is high on all approach roads. The housing estates around the town are very well presented and the newer estates are starting to settle-in nicely. The new Pettitswood Manor housing estate is well presented, particularly where care has been taken to preserve some old trees and the shrub areas at its entrance with grass verges both left and right. This is still a building site which is still affected by construction works. Willow brook has nice plants and grass areas at its entrance and the estate itself is tidily presented.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach from the Dublin Road past the Park Hotel has cut verges on the left well maintained.

On the right is a well presented guest house and terrace of new houses. There is broken frontage opposite van Nelle, and van Nelle itself looks well, lawns nicely trimmed, although the railings may require some paint work. The Daiwoo Garage on the main road could undertake some screening work. From the welcome to Mullingar sign towards the town there are some fine stone wall and well trimmed frontages to private dwellings. Road surfaces are not in good condition along parts of this stretch. The Longford approach has a number of broken areas. From the Railway bridge there are attractive growths of screening trees both right and left. The back of the hospital on the right however could do with some screening. The park along both sides of the canal is well maintained along the Green Road, and the mature housing in the Green Road area generally well presented. The approach from the Roscommon road starting with the roundabout at the industrial estate junction looks quite well. There are some nice growths of tree plantations on the canal side while on the right, verges in front of houses and entrances to estates are well maintained. In particular, the verge and floral displays in front of the Valley Bungalows looks very well indeed. The approach from the Tullamore side starting at the Rochfordsbridge turn is quite well maintained along its housing frontages on the right but generally badly maintained on the left where its commercial fronts are generally disappointing.

General Impression:

The overall impression is that the Mullingar Tidy Towns Committee have got the balance right. Its relations with the local authority has encouraged a strong commitment to Mullingar and the various competitions have drawn a large number of business and private elements into contributing to the better presentation of the town. The rapid expansion being experienced by Mullingar, as reflected in the number of new housing and apartment developments, will bring its own challenges and opportunities.