

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Monivea**

Ref: **748**

County: **Galway**

Mark: **243**

Category: **A**

Date: **12/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	44	44
The Built Environment	40	34	34
Landscaping	40	36	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	24
Litter Control	40	24	24
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	34	33
General Impression	10	8	7
TOTAL MARK	300	243	240

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for your expanded application document which was very useful indeed, especially as you did not supply the required map of the village. It is sometimes difficult for the visitor to identify important features without the help of a map, and we hope we have not missed anything significant. (The information board at the playground proved helpful, as well as some local residents.) You mention that the proposed improvements listed will take place from 2005 to 2007 but you do not list specific projects for each separate year, so perhaps your preference is to tackle them all simultaneously, which will be a real challenge. As you will be aware, additional marks are very hard to come by in the top end of the competition, which you have now reached, and any increases may now be expected to be in ones and twos. It was very interesting to see a bleach green similar to those which were in use in Ulster within living memory, and very good to find this one so immaculately kept.

The Built Environment:

The most significant building is of course the remains of the old church tower, which is a landmark in the neighbourhood. You are right to be concerned for the safety of persons who may be in the vicinity should a collapse of masonry occur, and we hope that your representations as described in the documentation will prove successful. The McGivern building, seen from a distance, provides a striking termination to the perspective. The Garda station is a fine piece of neo-classical domestic

architecture, very well maintained.

The Mausoleum, with its remarkably crisp armorial sculpture, was in process of having its immediate environs improved on the date of adjudication. The business premisses were all well presented.

Landscaping:

Your mark here was the highest in the county. The spacious greens were exceptionally well kept, and at the time of adjudication two motor mowers were ensuring its best possible appearance. Some historical perfectionists would prefer such green spaces not to be broken up by flower beds and other planting, but, since bleaching is no longer an industry, and the spaces are now more in the nature of a public park, your discreet planting was hardly inappropriate. The stone-bordered shrub bed at Fordham's, with seating alongside, beds in other quarters, and the first rate planting on the Galway road, were all admired. A lovely Victorian garden seat was seen opposite Steeple View Studios. Cooke's shrubbery was well tended, and your further development of this area will be eagerly awaited. The children's play ground was well maintained except for some weed growth on the date of adjudication.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Trees are normally considered under this heading, but there is necessarily an overlap with Landscaping. Your tree-planting programme is impressive. Young oaks and beeches were doing well in the church grounds. Probably many of those who saw the village in the early years of its recent transformation would be surprised at how rapidly the young trees on the greens have approached maturity. Woodland and bogland are wonderful habitats, and you appeared to be keeping the pathways clear while not attempting to give them the urban neatness which would be unnecessary and inappropriate.

Litter Control:

The recycling area was not as tidy as one might wish. There was considerable litter at Steeple View and at the children's playground. This was most disappointing, especially as there were adults present who could within a couple of minutes have picked up whatever litter was present, and also prevented further littering. It is ultimately a matter for civic-minded people to see that their place of dwelling is not despoiled in such a thoughtless way.

Tidiness:

Apart from the litter, and some small outbreaks of weed where it should not be expected, Monivea was a distinctly tidy village in the second week of July. Congratulations.

Residential Areas:

The houses round the green were all presented with pride. One had its adjoining barn painted and looked very smart indeed. This is a rural village and such structures are quite appropriate. If there is to be further housing development, do consider infill in the spaces where earlier dwellings used to stand. This has been done with success elsewhere and is to be preferred to ribbon development or the creation of remote estates because it preserves the sense of community and is usually easier on the eye. Infill housing need not be a replica of buildings in former centuries but should simply match existing buildings in scale and materials. The estates which have already been created on the edge of Monivea were well kept, the grassed areas and planting enhancing the homes, and several had pleasant gardens. Promising new housing was seen on the Athenry road. One rather stained house was seen on the Galway road which will need freshening up.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Surfacing was good in the village centre, but, as mentioned last year, some of the side roads were fairly rough. The extensive work being done along the Athenry road appeared to be going well. New stone walls were excellent, very much in the tradition already created. Some of the peripheral areas were well looked after, such as the frontage of the GAA Park where creepers made the best of the boundary wall. The entrance to Loughnane's joinery was very tidy, and a superbly finished whitewashed wall was noted at the side of Moran's premisses.

General Impression:

Monivea is a unique village, neglected during the last century but now undergoing sympathetic redevelopment. It can never be the same as it was some 200 years ago, but clearly this should not be the aim, and the present policy of redevelopment seems to be working well especially as the essential central space has been the first element to be reinstated. Congratulations are due to the vision of the Community co-Operative, undoubtedly supported by the residents and business people with assistance from the official bodies.

Second Round Adjudication:

The standard of litter control appeared to be better on Second Adjudication Day. The limestone "welcome" signs with their colourful floral displays were admired on approach roads. These roads were generally well maintained. The large expanses of the Linen Greens were as well maintained as ever. The children's playground was a new addition to the town since this adjudicator last had the pleasure of visiting Monivea, and was being well used on the day! A few outbreaks of weeds were noted at the bases of stone walls on the Galway road, although the attractive planting near the crossroads was admired. Weed control was also a problem to some of the kerbsides on the Menlough road. In terms of the built environment, Horans Bar was quite fresh, as was the Post Office. The stone fronted An Sciobol was well presented also. The displays of farm machinery at the top of the Greens were admired and are of interest to the visitor. Some staining was apparent to a boundary wall on the Menlough road, although a new stone wall under construction was admired in this location. Monivea is an attractive town that never fails to appeal, and this year was no exception.