

# Tidy Towns Competition 2005

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Maynooth**

Ref: **419**

County: **Kildare**

Mark: **225**

Category: **F**

Date: **11/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	43	42
The Built Environment	40	31	31
Landscaping	40	29	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	23	23
Litter Control	40	24	23
Tidiness	20	16	15
Residential Areas	30	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	26	24
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>218</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The presentation of materials with the entry form gave a very good account of the activities of the tidy towns committee and proved that their efforts are bearing good fruit. A 17-member committee is a very healthy number and the support from the business, commercial, residents and public authorities makes progress possible. Local competitions and community approaches to projects are all very positive actions – particularly in the areas of litter control, appearances of premises and residential areas.

### The Built Environment:

There are some landmark buildings such as – Maynooth College, Maynooth Castle and Carton House, which give Maynooth great character. The new Market Square looks well and appears easy to maintain. One premises with damaged roof hopefully will be resolved soon. The many business premises along the streets look very well. They are well painted and well presented and give a lovely effect. The pavements – being especially wide give great comfort to the pedestrians – except for the bicycle lanes through the paths. The street furniture – lamp standards, seating, litterbins are well coordinated and the choice of the particular shade of blue is good. The very large development at Manor Mills is having a disruptive influence on the town at the present but that is only temporary – this will represent a sizable part of the built environment of the future. The school looks well as does the Garda Station and churches.

## **Landscaping:**

The enormous number of mature trees right within the village is of immense benefit to the town. The tree planting of previous generations in both Carton House and Maynooth College and their surrounds provides this. It is important that a similar legacy is left for future generations by tree planting now. Good progress has been made with newer tree plantings and the main street and the University Campus are well planted with more recent plantings. There are many attractive landscape features. The grounds of several premises also look very well – for instance the Charter House and the Health Board. The containers plantings through the streets look especially well and these give a great lift to the streetscape in combination with the street side trees. The hanging baskets along the terraced cottages opposite Charter House make a delightful picture. The College and Carton house landscapes are key features of the town in themselves. The Tesco area on entering the village is well landscaped with trees and shrubs, together with the roundabout and stonewall – all of these will make good impact when they mature. The landscaped areas around the Maynooth signs on entering the town are attractive. The Pound Park besides being littered, is not fulfilling its full potential, similarly the small Little Pound by the bridge seems a little neglected. The area by the river opposite the Castle is very attractive. Further up along that river opposite Parson Lodge – there is potential for improvement to the riverside

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The canal side areas offer great potential for wild life observation and the canal walks make very pleasant strolling ground – both for observation and for exercise. The wildlife area at Carton also offers interesting opportunities. The involvement of the two schools to encourage birds by providing food is a very good idea.

## **Litter Control:**

Litter control is well managed generally, although some litter was noted along streets and on the narrow path walkway by the Harbour field towards the canal bridge. Serious litter was noted by the small park – Pound Park under the shelter behind the Maynooth band premises. The great efforts being made in and around the town by the school children and community is very positive. By finding out exactly the sources of litter, action can be taken to prevent litter in the first instance.

## **Tidiness:**

The work of removing graffiti is excellent and so many towns and villages could follow this example. The litter collection by the committee on the Motorway is excellent and a difficult but rewarding job. The weed management on paving is also very good. The streets have a very tidy look. The building developments always cause a problem for tidiness but this is temporary and will be resolved

## **Residential Areas:**

The best estates competition is a very positive action and promotes good standards both in the estates in general and in individual gardens within estates. Open spaces at estates and entrances to estates are very important in a town as they influence the appearance of the entire area. Good progress has been made in this regard. Tree planting should always be a priority where open spaces can accommodate these. A constant vigilance is needed to keep weeds and litter at bay no matter how elaborate a scheme of landscaping may be. The entrance to the Moyglare Abbey, Village and Meadows are attractive.

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

Approach roads are well cared for. The approach from the motorway is well planted with trees and

gives a good impression. The Kilcock road benefits from the College grounds. The Leixlip road is in good condition and the plantings at the roundabout and associated areas offer good potential when they mature. The road surface at the corner near the Manor Mills development is very poor with holes and patches. The many back lanes are well cared for and it is great to see places such as Cross Lane, Coates, Kelly's, and Fagan's lanes forming part of the town. Traffic is a difficulty and some way of providing some pedestrian areas only would be very welcome

### **General Impression:**

Maynooth is a very attractive town and the work and planning by the committee shows great commitment to further progress. Traffic and new developments are two major challenges to be faced. Retention of the character of Maynooth is all important.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Maynooth has now entered the upper reaches of the competition, and therefore is accorded a second adjudication. Congratulations to the committee, and to the residents and business people of the town. The lively and inviting town centre is visually marred by over-indulgent use of mass-produced commercial signs; it is perfectly possible to be lively and inviting without resorting to garishness. Research has shown that shops with well-designed fascias do not, as a rule, do less business. The second adjudicator had not been in Maynooth for several years and was impressed by a number of thoughtful improvements. It was good to see new buildings at the town end of the Straffan road taking their stylistic cue from nearby original street houses. The lanes between the main street and the river are now quite attractive – quite the reverse from what was the case within living memory; the terraces of cottages with their floral decorations looked very charming indeed. Suburban developments are generally spruce, with a considerable amount of successful tree planting and several attractively landscaped spaces. The railway and canal area is so much more accessible and better maintained than heretofore. Your submission demonstrates how planning initiatives are very seriously considered. The vast development in progress at Manor Mills – once a dishevelled corner – does not seem to respect the surrounding townscape in scale and materials, but we may be surprised when we see the completed scheme. What it does already mirror to a certain extent is the 'new' or north campus of the university across the road. The latter is now much more attractive than it used to be, largely because the trees have grown up and create a natural background to the somewhat disparate buildings. Landscaping and gardens on both campuses are exemplary; especially admired was the walled herbaceous garden at the innermost part of the original college. Every good wish for your initiatives: it would be splendid to find a town that was conducive to university life and also an all-Ireland competition winner.