

# Tidy Towns Competition 2005

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mohill**

Ref: **556**

County: **Leitrim**

Mark: **181**

Category: **C**

Date: **25/06/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	31	30
The Built Environment	40	27	26
Landscaping	40	23	22
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	15
Litter Control	40	23	22
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	19	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	22	21
General Impression	10	6	5
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>175</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to thank you for the very detailed documentation that you submitted with your entry form. The map was most useful on adjudication day. The Mohill Urban Framework document is an excellent visionary document and the adjudicator wonders if it has been formally adopted for implementation by the Local Authority. The Overhead Network Plan is another interesting document and it is good to see that this has been implemented to great effect.

The Three Year Tidy Towns Plan is a most useful guide to your annual activities, and you will need to update this before the end of 2005.

### The Built Environment:

The under-grounding of cables and the new light standards make a big difference to the centre of the town. The adjudicator did not see the signs for your walking route and perhaps this project is not yet finalised. The Shop Front Upgrading Scheme is an excellent initiative and the adjudicator notes that a total of 5 shops have been upgraded in this way. Presumably Carroll's public house is one of this as this is a premises in a prominent position that really catches the eye. However this is a lot more work to be done on shop fronts and a number of tiled frontages were noted that do not fit into the character of Mohill.

Projecting advertising signs were noted in a number of locations in the town centre and this needs

attention. The issue is how many of these signs are really essential from a commercial point of view?

The Maxol Station on Station roads and the immediate area surrounding this property is in need of upgrading and is quite untidy. Perhaps the area beside the garage can be screened from view?

A number of derelict buildings were noted that detract from the overall appearance of the built environment of your town / village. However there is a way in which perhaps you can make a feature of these buildings pending their removal or restoration. Try and get the owners to agree that they will blank out the window and door openings with heavy waterproof Marine plywood. This should then be painted matt black, and window bars and door panels painted in white. This approach as a temporary measure can look quite effective.

## **Landscaping:**

New landscaping at the Catholic Church looks well and will provide much additional colour at this road junction as they mature. The gravel background here is quite effective in that it tends to highlight the green of the planting. On the road below the Church fine mature landscaping and the long stone wall provides an attractive entry to the town from that approach road. The river bank clean up work is noted.

The waterway from the Library down to the monument has the potential to be a really attractive area where the sound of flowing water could be a very relaxing feature. Instead of that there is stagnant or semi-stagnant water. Some work must be done here to encourage a continuous water flow down the stream. Good landscaping work has been done at this location.

The small landscaped areas around the trees on Station road look quite colourful as does the Leitrim County Council Offices.

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

You have planted some shrubs and plants to attract wildlife. In many towns and villages this is an aspect of the Tidy Towns Competition where there can be significant potential for development. All towns and villages have the presence of wildlife to some degree. It is important that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine further the wildlife potential, and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly.

If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat Survey carried out of the wildlife in your area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following –

- Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
- Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds, lakes, canals, reed marsh, bogs
- Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
- Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The Survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to your area

This need not be an expensive Survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable person in one of your Schools who might undertake this task for you. Basically the Survey would identify the animals, plants, birds, fish that inhabit your area and their associated habitats. It should be remembered that to carry out the Survey properly that it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different times of the year.

Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be to draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats in your area, and investigate the possibility of new ones. For example perhaps there is an old Pond in your area that is disused, but with a little work could be an important area for wildfowl.

It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many Schools there is probably a teacher who may have an interest in this area who would be willing to get involved.

As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof and vandal proof display panels, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland.

### **Litter Control:**

Your new litter bins are a welcome addition to the town, as is the concept of your weekend clean-up programme. Some litter was noted on the Dromod approach road and in occasional areas in the town centre. Otherwise litter control on the day of adjudication was quite good.

### **Tidiness:**

On the Dromod approach road the corrugated iron shed and the wall opposite the Texaco property needs urgent painting. Some untidy areas were noted on Station road especially the pipe storage area. Could this area be screened from public view?

The adjudicator is not in favour of the display of retail goods on the pavement as was noted here. Apart from looking rather untidy such displays can cause major difficulties for people in wheelchairs or the visually disabled.

### **Residential Areas:**

Good examples of residential development were noted in many areas but many of the properties on the Drumsna road stand out. Property owners in Mohill seem to demonstrate a strong sense of pride in the way that they present their houses, many of which have excellent landscaping.

The presentation of the estate off the Dromod road needs to be improved, and at O'Carrolan Court the open space there is untidy and the grass has not been cut for some time. Some good examples of individual landscaping was noted at the small estate of bungalows off the Ballinamore road. In places boundary walls need to be painted. This must be done much more frequently than the painting of the main property.

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

The overall presentation of all approach roads is of critical importance. It is this that gives the first impression of your town or village. Attractive well presented approach roads give a great impression of a community that cares about how others see them.

Where there is a wide verge on one or both sides of an approach road best practice indicates that only about 1 metre of the grass verge in from the road should be cut on a regular basis. This applies to verges that are about two metres or more in width.

The rest of the verge area should be kept wild to allow for the needs of wildlife. However you will still need to pay attention to this area. In general you should not let this area get too overgrown and untidy. Watch out also for litter that may get trapped by the long grass on this part of your verge.

A frequent problem with approach roads is that there is no road kerb to divide the road surface from the grass verge. A frequent result of this is that verges get badly damaged by parked vehicles. This is a problem especially where the grass verges are wide. Do talk to your Local Authority Engineer about this difficulty. If kerbing looks out of place in your rural setting then perhaps large stones can be used by the Local Authority to define the edge of the roadway.

Do make sure that any old stone walls on approach roads are not in need of repair. Gaps due to collapse can look quite untidy. Fences should be kept in good repair and do cut long grass that may tend to grow up through the timber fencing. Hedging on approach roads needs trimming from time to time but do avoid bird nesting time of the year.

Some of your approach roads are excellently presented and the Ballinamore road stands out. Here the fine road surface, good kerbing, and lush green verges and landscaping come together to give a very effective visual appearance. Little work seems to have been done on the Dromsna road. On the Dromod road grass has been cut recently but not removed, however some attractive landscaping was noted here.

On Station road the road banks have been cut but too short and the grass now has a burnt appearance.

Unfortunately all bank cutting cannot be done with a tractor and cutter. This is a crude instrument that will never give the lush green effect that is so desirable. This machinery will always give a rough or coarse final effect.

### **General Impression:**

Very good work has been done in Mohill by all the interests working together. Keep this work up and you will make future progress.