

# Tidy Towns Competition 2005

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Annagassan**

Ref: **364**

County: **Louth**

Mark: **201**

Category: **A**

Date: **10/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30	31
The Built Environment	40	28	28
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	15
Litter Control	40	31	31
Tidiness	20	13	13
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	26	27
General Impression	10	6	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>203</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to thank you for the excellent map of Annagassan and all points marked on the map were visited on adjudication day. The adjudicator notes that a Tidy Towns Work Programme or Plan was not submitted with the entry documentation. All towns and villages are required to have a simple straight forward 3 –5 Year Tidy Towns Plan for their area. This Plan is prepared by your Committee in consultation with the appropriate local organisations. It should be no more than seven to ten pages long. The purpose of the Plan is to guide the work of your Tidy Towns Committee and others over the short to medium term. Your Plan should detail year by year the work that you intend to do each year. It is recommended that you do not have too many objectives each year – perhaps 4/5 key projects. You will find it a great help. Without a Plan it is difficult for the adjudicator to decide what work was done specifically in the past year and what was done at an earlier time.

The successful Tidy Towns Committees are those that succeed in harnessing the goodwill, skills and experience of a number of different groups and Agencies that have something to contribute to the implementation of the 3-5 Year Tidy Towns Plan. These groups and Agencies include the following –

- GAA
- Local Development Association
- FAS
- County Council
- Chamber of Commerce

- Local SuperValu outlet
- LEADER Company
- The CLAR Programme (if you are in a CLAR designated area)
- Local School or schools
- Urban & Village Renewal Grant Scheme

## **The Built Environment:**

Annagassan is an attractive sea-side village that has maintained quite a lot of character. The impressive road bridge indeed is an important part of that character. A site notice was noted at the harbour indicating that a project was under way or about to start. However no documentation was provided to explain this project. The Harbour area in general needs a lot of tidying up, and it appears to be used a lot by visitors to the area. A few derelict buildings were noted that detract from the overall appearance of the built environment of your 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 in white. This approach as a temporary measure can look quite effective, as is indicated by the old grain store at the road bridge.

## **Landscaping:**

The landscaped area at the bus shelter was quite attractively presented, but storage by presumably the Local Authority of what appeared to be road signs at the Togher end of this amenity area detracted somewhat from the overall effect. The grassy bank here had been cut recently but had been cut too tightly and the remaining grass had turned brown. The small landscaped area at the old fish house near the bridge was simply but effectively done. The low stone wall here as a backdrop to the landscaping and grass provided a most suitable back-drop. The Stoney Garden was another well presented area that caught the eye. The green plastic containers used as flower tubs did not appear to be totally effective. The plastic nature of these containers took away somewhat from the colourful contents. Once again your boat feature was very colourful and eye catching.

## **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

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 time of the year. Using the results of the Wildlife Survey your next step should be do 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:**

Litter control in Annagassan was quite good on the day of the adjudicator's visit. The new bins and daily collections were obviously being effective. However quantities of litter was noted at the seating area at the Harbour.

### **Tidiness:**

The core of the village was tidily presented. The Harbour area needs improvement and a general tidying up. The new sea front wall is a great addition however the wall needs to be finished - capping to go on top, and the wall itself needs to be plastered. Just behind part of this length of wall the long grass and weeds need to be removed. However the wall marks a great step forward in for that area in presentation terms.

### **Residential Areas:**

The Saltings estate appeared to be coming on well and the new trees looked well. Hopefully some landscaping will be done by the builders at the entrance to the estate before they leave site. Fine grass areas were noted at An Riann, and the raised landscaped areas here looked mature and attractive. The majority of private properties were well presented and a number were obviously freshly painted recently. Some attractive gardens were also noted, and the landscaping work by property owners contributes in an important way to the overall character of Annagassan. Indeed on adjudication day the village looked quite colourful. It is important that your committee would discuss with the Local Authority to issue of an acceptable level of landscaping for all new housing estate developments in your village. This can probably best be handled through Planning Permission Conditions.

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

Little recent work of a public nature appeared to have been done on the Castlebellingham approach road. However some private work on verges was most impressive. On the Balterstown approach road on of the good features here is the long low stone wall. On the Farm road again there appeared to have been little recent work on verges / banks. 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. Can you make a rule for yourselves and your helpers that all cut grass must be taken away on the day that it is cut. Do remember also that verges will need to be cut on quite a regular basis if you are to achieve a lush green well kept appearance of banks and roadside verges. A tractor mower will not give the neat well kept appearance that can be achieved by a motor mower.

### **General Impression:**

The adjudicator is of the view that Annagassan can be a strong future performer in the Tidy Towns Competition and recommends the following actions (not in any specific order with the exception of the Plan that must be your first task) as priorities -

- 1 - Preparation of 3 -5 year Tidy Towns Action Plan
- 2- Approach roads
- 3 - The Harbour area
- 4 - Derelict buildings
- 5 - Wildlife and natural amenities

**Second Round Adjudication:**