

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dunleer**

Ref: **78**

County: **Louth**

Mark: **196**

Category: **C**

Date: **14/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	27	28
The Built Environment	40	27	27
Landscaping	40	31	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	15
Litter Control	40	25	26
Tidiness	20	11	13
Residential Areas	30	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30	29
General Impression	10	5	5
TOTAL MARK	300	196	198

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Dunleer to the 2005 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for the town map and 2004 - 2006 Plan. The photographs were most useful on adjudication day. The documentation did not detail exactly what work had been completed in the period July 2004 to June 2005. That made it difficult for the adjudicator to allocate marks for new projects undertaken.

The Plan should detail clearly by year what projects are to be undertaken in that year and who the supporting agencies or organisation are to be for each project. In that way progress from year to year can be measured.

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:

Your approach to Iarnrod Eireann in regard to the Railway Bridges was noted and the adjudicator wondered of any progress had been made. The painting of the iron work of these bridges would make a big difference. The old Railway Station is in a very poor state of repair and the area around it is extremely untidy. There are some attractive stone and brick buildings in Dunleer. Unfortunately there are also a number of premises that use shutters, and these do not usually look well when they are closed. Some Local Authorities have strong views on the use of such shutters.

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.

Have you considered trying to encourage the use of the Irish language on some of your shop fronts? There is a special award in the Competition that includes the use of the Irish language.

Some of the shop front signs in the town could be replaced with signs that use more traditional materials such as timber and hand-painted lettering. This could be approached on a co-operative basis.

Landscaping:

You have done good work on the issue of landscaping and the strategy of moving from grass to landscaped areas may reduce the labour involved. However landscaped areas also have to be maintained properly. The hanging baskets in Dunleer added much welcome colour on a dull July morning. The new planting in the corners by the Railway Bridges looked well on adjudication and brightened up areas that can otherwise look quite untidy and dull. Another attractive landscaped area was noted by the village pump on the Ardee road and that area was being maintained to a high standard. A beautiful grass area was noted at the road junction on the Ardee / Philipstown road.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Based on the Entry Form it did not appear that any work had been done in regard to this category, and the adjudicator wondered what had happened about the plans for the suggested riverside walk.

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 was only of average standard on adjudication day. Litter was noted in a number of areas including the Castlebellingham road , Shamrock Grove, and the litter situation at the recycling centre was extremely bad.

It is very important that your Committee would develop a litter control plan for your village. The issue of litter control is not an issue just for the Local Authority. All citizens and especially your Tidy Towns Committee have a key role to play. Your plan should include such issues as surveying the litter bins that you have in your community and their adequacy, clean up days and the role of your local schools.

It is most important that litter bins are placed in close proximity to the largest generates of litter. The regular emptying of a litter bins if of course essential.

Tidiness:

Some very disappointing areas were noted in regard to tidiness. The approach lane to the Library was very badly presented. The banks and verge did not appear to have been cut for a long time and very bad weed growth was noted at where kerbing meets the road. What a disincentive to visit the Library, and that should be an enjoyable experience for everyone. The area at the Library was extremely untidy and very badly littered. The lettering at the building is still incomplete, and that was reported on a year ago in the last Tidy Towns report. The improvement of standards here must be a priority for everyone concerned. At the Clogherhead junction the commercial storage area might be screened from view. On the Drogheda approach road on the left hand side just after the parking area an untidy space was noted and again some form of screening here would help.

Residential Areas:

The building pressure under which Dunleer is coming was noted by the adjudicator. A lot of new housing development was noted and this is to be welcomed, however the provision of appropriate landscaping by the various developers is of crucial importance. If you have not already done so your Committee might talk to your Local Authority to discuss the issue of landscaping by future builders. Perhaps this can best be delivered through the Planning Conditions process.

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 your village. If you have not already done so, your Tidy Towns Committee might consider asking the housing estates to organise their own 'Best Kept Estate' Competition. In this way they will make a meaningful contribution to your overall

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Generally most approach roads were quite well presented. Verge damage was noted on the Dundalk approach road. A frequent problem with that approach road is that there is no road kerb to divide the road surface from the grass verge. This is a problem especially where the grass verges are wide. Do talk to your Local Authority Engineer about this difficulty.

Some verges have been cut but the cut grass has not been taken away. The result is an untidy appearance with new grass growth trying to grow through the dead cut grass. 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 and mower will not give the neat well kept appearance that can be achieved by a motor mower. On the Clogherhead road no work appeared to have been done recently on verge / bank maintenance.

The presentation of the laneway to the Library was quite poor and no work appeared to have been done on this approach for some time.

General Impression:

A priority is to refine your annual Action Plan as suggested above. Dunleer has the potential to well in the competition given a strongly structured approach to the competition assisted by a well thought out annual work programme.

Second Round Adjudication: