

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Carrickmacross**

Ref: **618**

County: **Monaghan**

Mark: **261**

Category: **D**

Date: **10/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	47	46
The Built Environment	40	37	36
Landscaping	40	38	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	24
Litter Control	40	32	31
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	27	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	33	32
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	261	257

Overall Developmental Approach:

The adjudicator would like to thank the Secretary for the really excellent documentation submitted with the entry form. All documentation was used on adjudication day and this was most helpful. You are extremely well focused on your key objectives for the town and the approach adopted by the Tidy Towns Committee and sub-Committees is highly impressive. It appears that the Committee has a very clear vision of what they wish to achieve in the future for Carrickmacross. The Tidy Towns Action Plan 2002 - 2005 is a very strong and clear document. Time has now come to move the document on to cover the period 2006 - 2009. The adjudicator would like to congratulate the town on winning the Pride of Place Competition, and on the introduction of your own Green Charter. This concept is excellent and will strengthen even further a very united community approach to environmental enhancement.

The Built Environment:

During the year you did much to improve the overall impression of the built environment, and the development of new footpaths with the needs of the disabled in mind was commended. The many boulders used as signs throughout the town and surroundings were welcomed as an unusual idea that works really well.

The development of 5 kms of new footpaths has been a major undertaking and the effect was impressive. The development of the Drummond Extra Car Park was welcomed and on adjudication it

was well presented. The provision of new street furniture and additional visitor sign posting was welcomed. The adjudicator shares your concern with the need to improve the presentation of some premises in the Main Street. Some plastic signs were still evident. The improvement of these shop fronts will not just bring new benefits to the town as a whole but to the individual premises concerned. Inappropriate projecting lighting fittings were also noted on a number of properties. A number of premises stood out for their simplicity and effective presentation and this included Mc Ardle Eng.

The new stone walls, using local stone, fit well with the stone buildings that are such a feature of Carrickmacross. Among these buildings that caught the eye was the Garda Station and Ulster Bank. The Courthouse is another building that was much admired by the adjudicator with its commanding presence at the top of the town. Congratulations to all involved in the Workhouse restoration project. This building looked really superb on adjudication day and it is great that appropriate new uses have been found for a building that was so important in times past to Carrickmacross.

Your approach to the handling of derelict buildings is commended and hopefully with the co-operation of the individual owners, in time you will be able to resolve all the issues involved.

Landscaping:

You have adopted a very strategic approach to landscaping and this is very effective. The major tree planting programme and the planting of approximately 13,000 from flowers from seed was a major undertaking that has contributed so much to the town today. The trees that come partially down the Main Street help to soften the built landscape and the red flowers add a lovely splash of colour. The many hanging baskets and window boxes combined with the more public landscaping quite effectively. On a few buildings perhaps too many hanging baskets and widow boxes were used. They should be used quite sparingly to highlight aspects of a building. Excellent landscaping was noted at many road junctions including the Ballybay junction. Good planting was noted at Inver College. However the wire mesh fencing here took away from the effectiveness of the young trees planted inside the fencing. Fine mature landscaping was also noted at Pearse Avenue and the steep slope above the roadway here was very well maintained.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Lisanisk Lakeside amenity area looked well on adjudication day. However where the grass meets the tarmacadam pathway some work needed to be done here as the grass edge was quite worn and uneven. It was quite disappointing here to find a litter bin damaged and overflowing. A larger bin or additional bins is obviously needed here. The adjudicator notes two traffic cones upended in the a hole in the ground and wondered what additional feature is to be provided here.

The adjudicator looks forward to seeing the future development of the Convent lands, and hopefully the walkway and the natural vegetation will remain in place as it is.

Litter Control:

Your new Draft Litter Plan and Strategy is a welcome development. Regardless of the degree of litter control that you achieve, litter control is an issue that must always be at the top of your Tidy Towns agenda.

On adjudication day litter control on first impression was very good but a more detailed examination of both the town centre and some of the approach roads revealed a different story. Some amounts of litter were noted in a number of different areas of the main street. On the approach roads litter on verges was noted on the Ballybay, Castleblaney and Shercock roads. It should always be remembered that when approach roads verges are cut that any litter uncovered by that process must be removed immediately. In some of the smaller side streets off the main street, such as the approach to the Drummond Etra Car Park a lot of litter was noted just before the ESB premises.

Tidiness:

The Bring Centre at the Drummond Etra Car Park was quite untidy on adjudication day. Though the units were not full bags and boxes of bottles and other items were left at the base of the units. Should you not consider running a campaign with the Local Authority to show how best the public can use these facilities? The grass areas at this car park were in need of cutting as the length of grass had got quite untidy looking. The adjudicator is not in favour of the display of retail goods on the pavement as was noted in Carrickmacross. Apart from looking rather untidy such displays can cause major difficulties for people in wheelchairs or the visually disabled. Do remember also that narrow opening of roads and streets and other incidental open spaces can look quite untidy.

Residential Areas:

You have integrated the many housing estates excellently in your overall work for Tidy Towns. 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. It is important that your committee would continue to discuss with the Local Authority to issue of an acceptable level of landscaping for all new housing estate developments in your town as 400 houses were under development in the last year. This can probably best be handled through Planning Permission Conditions.

Many of the housing estates were attractively presented and good work was carried out by a number of the residents. The landscaping at Clough Valley estate was much admired. This is an older estate with fine mature landscaping and well maintained large grass areas. The estate at Highfield demonstrated that a very simple approach to landscaping can be visually very effective, and the fine mature trees at Meadowlands estate combined with good landscaping created a strong impression. In the town centre the stone terrace of houses dated 1870 near New Street was very impressive. Indeed it appears that these houses and the nearby Garda Barracks may be contemporary in date.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Good work has been done on many of the approach roads and the landscaping done to integrate the new inner relief road has been quite effective. However it was noted that the roundabout on the Ballybay / Castleblaney road had not been landscaped, and likewise at the roundabout on the Dundalk road just beyond the lake side amenity area. On the Ballybay road additional work was needed on the roadside banks and verges in terms of cutting. The Ardee approach road were quite impressive. On the Shercock approach however the verges had been too tightly cut. The grass was a burnt brown colour, and the cut grass had not been removed. 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.

General Impression:

The overall impression of Castleblaney is that an extremely well co-ordinated approach and strategy is in place to deal with all environment issues. The overall community support for your work was very obvious on adjudication day. Your marks have improved again for 2005 and the adjudicator looks forward to continued progress in the future.

Second Round Adjudication:

Now that the bye-pass for Carrickmacross is operational and the volume of through traffic is reduced the negative impact of the latter upon the built environment of the town centre will be minimized to generate a more leisurely ambience. Carrickmacross was beautifully presented for second

adjudication and was a pleasure to visit.

Buildings are generally well presented and many attractive shopfronts were noted; two premises at the junction of the Dublin and Killeshandra roads (opposite the grotto) are focal points within the townscape and should always be presented to the highest possible standard, both however could be improved.

Lisanisk Lakeside Park looked wonderful, as always and landscaping throughout was admired both within the town centre and on approach roads. No doubt all stretches of grassed verges on the by-pass road will be landscaped in due course. As planting on the new roundabouts mature they will make a stronger visual impact.

The presentation of the car park and Bring Centre was good for our second visit and litter control was excellent.