

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mullingar**

Ref: **589**

County: **Westmeath**

Mark: **220**

Category: **F**

Date: **21/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	36
The Built Environment	40	32	31
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	24	24
Litter Control	40	29	29
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	24	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	24
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	220	218

Overall Developmental Approach:

Many thanks for your application form, map and three year development plan. The strategy is clearly defined, and should all objectives be achieved, Mullingar will continue to thrive as a centre of excellence for the inhabitant and visitor alike.

The Built Environment:

The eclectic mix of buildings in the town is one of Mullingar's biggest assets. From the Cathedral and St. Mary's Church to the Park Hotel and Galvin's Menswear, the blend of old and new architecture lends a vibrancy to Westmeath's capital. This blend is carried throughout the town with traditional shop frontages such as Canton Casey's, Swarbriggs, the Bank of Ireland and the Druids Chair meeting McDonalds, Texas, the offices of the Westmeath Examiner and Westmeath Autos. The Market Square building is an example of a fine building as is the ACC Bank. The Court House and the Town Hall are very well maintained. One or two commercial premises need upgrading, as do some of the upper levels of buildings that house street level shops.

Landscaping:

Dominick Street, Mount Street and Market House are awash with colour from hanging baskets, whereas Austin Friar Street is devoid of same. This needs to be addressed. The Town Park, while

unfortunately screened off from public view, is beautifully maintained and is a plethora of greenery. The general condition of street furnishings, bollards, railings and hanging-basket standards is to be commended. The young trees which line Dominick Street lend a natural feel to the streetscape. Half-barrel floral displays adorn most islands in the town and the many roundabouts are colourfully landscaped. For this, the committee is to be congratulated. It is good to see that new premises, such as Buckley's Centra have gone to considerable effort to tastefully landscape their roadside areas. The lamp standards along the Canal are in good condition and enhance this area greatly.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The afore-mentioned Town Park and Royal Canal are the town's biggest claims in terms of wildlife and natural amenities. The growth along the Canal is a haven for wildlife and the park provides sanctuary for much of Mullingar's wildlife which would otherwise be homeless due to the rapid development in the area.

Litter Control:

The recycling facility at Marlinstown is very poorly signposted, as is the landfill site itself. Dumping was evident at the recycling facility at Harbour Court Shopping Centre. The walkway along the canal was littered with beer cans and on the day of inspection an old bicycle was visible in the canal itself. There is a good supply of litter bins throughout the town and in general Mullingar can boast clean streets.

Tidiness:

The wirescape in the centre of town is generally non-existent. However, Austin Friar Street, and particularly at the junction of Millmount Road, would be an example of much-cluttered wirescape. Weeding is not a serious problem in Mullingar but some areas are in need of attention. Many units in the Industrial Estate have gone to considerable effort to landscape their premises in order to neaten their appearance. Others, however, have shown absolutely no regard for this practise, resulting in road frontages which can only be described as an eyesore.

Residential Areas:

The majority of residential areas in Mullingar tend to be very well kept, with well-maintained common areas, and splashes of flowers. Some of the newer apartment complexes have been nicely landscaped and, unusually for apartments, there were no clothes drying on balcony rails on the day of inspection. Some of the road surfaces in newer estates are very poor, but this could possibly be due to the developers being still on site.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads to Mullingar were generally well maintained with well trimmed verges and hedges and indeed there was hedge cutting in progress on the Castlepollard Road on day of inspection. Unfortunately, weeding appears to be a problem on many of these roads and while in some areas, weed killer had been used it is advisable that the dead weeds are removed after a few days in order to prevent the unattractive brown staining. Approach signs were on the whole nicely presented with the subtle use of flowers and shrubs and the adjudicator notes the continued practise of replacing defective signs and painting sign posts in the town centre area – keep up the good work! The footpaths in the town are in very good condition, but on some of the back street areas and in the industrial estate these could be improved upon.

General Impression:

Mullingar Tidy Towns committee, while small in number, has risen admirably to the challenges presented to it by the rapid expansion of industrial and residential areas. The town has a pleasant

ambience and caters for a wide range of tastes, architecturally speaking. The street and landscape has come on in leaps and bounds in recent time and some shop frontages and tree-lined streets lend a cosmopolitan feel to the town centre. Traffic congestion, while a problem, is handled quite well by the relevant authorities. Would it be possible to make any of the main streets "Pedestrian Only Zones"?

Mullingar continues to do well in the Tidy Towns competition. This is just reward for the efforts of the committee. Well done to all concerned!

Second Round Adjudication: