

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Virginia** Ref: **58**
County: **Cavan** Mark: **205**
Category: **D** Date(s): **27/06/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	33
The Built Environment	50	29
Landscaping	50	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	24
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	205

Overall Development Approach:

Since the return to the competition the committee has performed very useful work – particularly with the presentation of the document supplied with the entry form giving very interesting history of the town. The plan is very welcome as it highlights all the areas of concern that can be improved and indicates all the issues concerning the planning processes. The high volume of traffic through the town presents its own problems. The Building developments taking place, litter control and the enhancement of the lakeside areas are all very relevant. The influx of new residents in the town presents a new dimension. Waste management, road safety and recreational requirements are all pertinent issues too. While the plan presented lists the items in summary it would be wise to have a more detailed action plan with precise work planned for each year over the next few years. This could be assessed each year for progress and adjustments made as time passes to form an inclusive and coherent drive towards betterment within the town. The photographs included in the presentation are attractive and helpful.

The Built Environment:

The Courthouse building is a fine building and in an imposing position as viewed well from the junction and square. Some attention is needed to the décor of this building now to present it to its finest condition - it is understood that work has been in progress with the windows and roof. The new Health Centre is an important landmark of modern architecture within the town. The Town square is well presented and forms a good focus within the town. The Church of Ireland is a magnificent building and the setting for this is superb. The Catholic Church looks very well. Stone features prominently within the town. In particular the bridge looks especially well. Also looking well is the stone building next to the bridge. The Ramor theatre building forms an important landmark and is an important part of the buildings fabric of the town. Commercial premises along the streets

look well, there are some that need attention to cleaning and painting and these become more evident as others lead the way in presenting well cared for images. St. Marys national School and the Virginia College are both looking very well and contribute well.

Landscaping:

One great advantage that Virginia has is the presence of very large trees right in the centre of the town – at the bridge for instance and at the Church of Ireland grounds. Trees of this size and magnificence add marvelous character to a town. Unless similar trees are planted wherever a site possibility arises there will be no follow-up of these for future generations. These trees were planted by people who could never have expected to see the trees reach their full maturity – we owe a similar legacy to the next generation. The lands at Virginia college are important in the landscape and good planting has been done here. Trees by the lakeside are also attractive. Trees form the backbone of the landscape. Street tree planting has progressed well and scope for further planting is possible. The entrance to the Drumlins estate and the Catholic Church grounds are nicely planted. There are some extremely old Yew trees the Church of Ireland grounds as well as beautiful Lime trees. Containerised plantings through the town give a good sparkle of colour in the summer and good credit is due for these as they take considerable care to maintain. Individual gardens along the roadsides also contribute well to the overall landscape appearance of the town. The containers at the bridge were noted and form a good impact at that point

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The lakeside areas form a marvelous opportunity for wildlife appreciation and observation. More information and details of walkways would harness this facility to a greater extent. Projects to establish what may be seen and where could be interesting. Involvement with the local schools and establishing the local information would also be helpful. There is very good information in the tidy towns handbook that could help with these issues. Some sedum plants growing along the tops of stone walls were admired and these contribute well and are deserving of a place in the town.

Litter Control:

The involvement with the National spring Clean up is very useful. Litter control is a full time requirement day by day. The campaigns planned will be helpful. At present there is a considerable amount of litter to be seen through the town. Litter was noted especially at the bridges area, by the lakeside car park and at places along the streets. Constant dedication to litter control is needed and continual antilitter campaigns will eventually pay off as the message sinks home.

Waste Minimisation:

The work with the Local Council in regard to waste and litter is commendable. The need for a civic recycle centre is very pertinent and hopefully your efforts will succeed in this regard. The liaison work with the schools is a very good idea as this instills the need for waste minimisation and recycling at an early age. The recycle centre at the back of the supermarket is well managed although some cartons were placed beside this on the visit. It is important that these containers are emptied frequently so that no waste gets deposited outside. Continue to lobby to have a civic recycle centre established. This aspect of the competition is about concentrating both on the need to choose materials and methods that avoid producing waste and to consider environmentally friendly ways of dealing with the waste that is generated. A campaign of awareness with both homeowners and business people needs to be started to give an understanding of the importance of waste management and recycling. Compost heaps can be made for green materials, avoidance of using materials that do not degrade easily and separation of the various materials so that they can be recycled.

Tidiness:

Some tidying is needed at the surrounds of the planted boat at the road junction. The railed in footpath up from the bridge towards the town is currently overgrown with lime trees and needs attention – this would not be very pleasant on a wet day. The main street areas are tidy and the market square development is well cared for and presents a tidy appearance. Some projecting shop signs and some materials outside shops could be reduced. The area by the lake shores and harbour would benefit from a more organized and tidy appearance. On looking over the bridge to the river there seems to be excessive growth in the river bed and this condition could be improved.

Residential Areas:

There is a considerable amount of new housing developments within the areas of the town and surrounds. It is important that these sites are well finished off with proper sustainable landscaping especially at the entrances and open spaces before developers leave the site. There is a wide variety of residential areas within the town. Good standards are pertaining generally within the residential sector. A number of roadside gardens and

properties contribute well along the approach roads. It is good to see so many residential properties within the main areas of the town – this keeps a good spirit of life within the town and is important. The care and attention of grassed areas at entrances to estates and beneath trees in footpaths is always an issue and good care enhances an estate considerably.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads are attractive with many mature trees along the approach roads adding to the fabric of the natural landscape of the area. Attention to roadside verges without them becoming too manicured is all important. Some footpath developments have left the area to the side of the road as it meets the new pavements very rough and needing attention. Overhead cables hopefully will be removed in time and continued lobbying will help in this regard. Some pot holes were noticed on the road to the lakeside. Kerbing, good definition of roadsides and footpaths are very important both visually and for safety. Crossing the street is difficult in Virginia with the volume of traffic and there are too few safe places to cross.

General Impression:

Virginia is a very attractive town with great features of the river, the lake and harbour as well as the character of the buildings. With so much development taking place and increase in population and housing it is important that actions are taken now to maintain the important features and to plan for the future needs. The work of the tidy towns committee has an important role to play in this respect.