

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Shannon** Ref: **88**

County: **Clare** Mark: **252**

Category: **F** Date(s): **15/06/2006**
25/08/2006

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
Litter Control	50	26
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	29
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	252

Overall Development Approach:

Shannon is welcome to the 2006 and thank you for the comprehensive submission complete with equally excellent map of the Town and its greater environs.

The submission, which was expertly compiled, succeeded in encompassing all aspects of your Committee's activities and interaction with various statutory bodies, relevant agencies and most importantly local community organisations and business people.

The provision of the Town Map produced by North Mapping was extremely beneficial to the adjudicator in identifying areas in a fast growing town that is Shannon.

The publishing of town related literature in different languages indicates the multi cultural make up of the town. This kind of initiative helps to develop trust between the local and immigrant communities and helps integration no end

I sense that your overall committee of 13 is held in high esteem within the Shannon Community.

The Built Environment:

Shannon Town, especially its core, has been transformed and I use that word reservedly over the last few years. The lure of tax incentives under the Town Renewal Scheme has brought massive development into the town.

The level of development is likely to continue for a few more years and there is no doubt that, as you rightly pointed out in your submission, it has impacted on the efforts of your Committee to present the Town to a high standard.

Some development has been in keeping with existing infrastructure but one has to question the appropriateness of the latest mixed units adjacent to the town park.

That said there are many examples of the positive Built Environment to be seen in the town and its environs.

It would be impossible to mention all but the following were appealing to this adjudicator;
The New Town Square, with its Plaza like look, is a plus feature and it has become the central home of the new Shannon Farmers Market.
The public buildings in the Town were for the most part presented to a very high standard.
Both Churches Mary Immaculate and St John and Pauls, all the national Schools St Tolas, Senans, Aidans and The Gael Scoil the excellently appointed St Caimins Community School and the New Cemetery all deserve mention and credit to these responsible for their upkeep.
The Garda Station, Health Centre, Leisure Centre and Library were also well maintained with surrounding areas quite tidy.
The Graveyard at Illaunamanagh, which is being expanded at the moment, is very well maintained and credit is due to the voluntary group that undertake regular clean ups
The Main Town Centre tenants have their business premises presented to a high standard, which is to be expected.
Credit is due to the Wolfe Tones GAA Club and its members for the standard of presentation of the Clubhouse, Facilities and the Goalpost Bar and a similar comment applies to St Senans RFC new grounds at Illaunamanagh.
Naturally there are negatives and Shannon has its problems with dereliction that have to be addressed and it is good to note that the Committee is engaging with Clare Council to reduce and eventually hopefully eradicate this problem.

Landscaping:

Trees are the most important plants in any urban landscape and Shannon is fortunate that it has a bountiful supply of trees that are planted at vantage points all over the town.
The trees at Bothar Na Luachra in front Aidan Park has matured and gives a settled feel to that area. This is replicated in areas like Corrib Drive and on Bealach Bri at Brookville Town Houses.
It is good to note that flower beds and planters are maintained all year round, green areas were well maintained and seemed to be cut regularly The Committee is being helped in this respect by the cooperation of the local residents in the older established areas such as Corrib Drive, Dun An Oir, Lios Darog and Carraig Lia who have provided excellent gardens.
The newer developments such as the architecturally impressive Cul Na Greine, Gleann an Or and Rosmin will in time provide the same standard of presentation.
Unfortunately the revamped Town Park seems to be devoid any creativity as it looks purely functional.
Overall a very good performance in this category and a step up on last year.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There are a number of initiatives planned that are contributory to the promotion of good wildlife conservation and management.
The adjudicator experienced the initial stages some of these initiatives at first hand especially in the Drumgeely area at the back of Corrib Drive.
The river walk seems to be more accessible as the paths were easily traversed and there was easier access to the various points on the estuary.
I am not surprised that the Habitat Survey commissioned by Clare County Council in 2004 has identified a number of important areas of wildlife conservation in the immediate Shannon hinterland.
The aim is to build on this and develop a series of appropriate information boards depicting the main fauna and flora in the area
The Tidy Towns Committee's contribution in making this happen has been noted.

Litter Control:

The reports of the last two years stated boldly that this was a category that the Town did not perform well in and detailed why that was so.
It was incumbent on this year's adjudicator to be fair and objective and make his/her assessment of the situation on the ground.
Cognoscence was taken of the town layout, increase in population and the throughput of transient traffic that Shannon attracts.
To this adjudicator the standard was acceptable with room for improvement of course.
Development sites by nature are messy and unfortunately these and adjoining areas are littered from time to time. One could list a large number of negatives that were noted during an intensive walk about but that is not the purpose of this comment section.
The adjudicator is more satisfied to note that the Committee is doing all in its power to help make further improvement possible in this category.
The message of good litter control is being put out by way of flyers and formation of clean up groups in individual areas. The Community, business included, has to embrace this type effort and make it happen. It

also incumbent upon the local authority to fine serial transgressors of the litter laws.

Waste Minimisation:

The proposed Recycling Centre will be a welcome addition to the town and to the South East Region of Clare. The Committee is encouraged to come up with an initiative or project that promotes the race against waste concept which was well promoted within the County.

It would be worthwhile to re visit The Race Against waste website and see what can be done under the Community Action category.

Liase with the schools and also seek advice from the County Environmental Officer as well as consultanting the RAW publication included with the application package.

Tidiness:

Shannon Town is presenting itself in a positive light and the standard in this category was good, again given the size and layout of the town and its immediate environs.

The only major problem is fly posting in central locations such, as the core of the town centre shopping mall; bill posting on hoardings should be discontinued.

There should be a central community notice board area for this purpose.

The practice of abandoning trolleys seems to have abated somewhat as there were only a few to be seen in black spots mentioned in last years report.

The Bring Bank at the side of the Pool and Leisure Centre still needs to be tidier, maybe a change of site might be worth considering as the present one is rather tight. A matter for local councillors to consider.

As Shannon is serviced by Clare County Council kerbside weeds are cleared on a regular basis.

Residential Areas:

Shannon has a myriad of both established and new housing developments.

The older ones, which were state of the art design in their time, are now overshadowed by newer ones such as Rosmin, Gleann an Or and the hugely attractive Cul Na Greine.

The incorporation of visible playing areas for children within the latter is novel but very practical

The estates for the most part were well presented with Corrib Drive in Drumgeely looking very well with some very pleasant front gardens.

The "frog" at the entrance to Ballycaseymore is now a Shannon Landmark.

Both the greater Tullyglass and Tullyvarriga areas incorporating all the housing developments have some very impressive and well maintained homesteads and credit must go to the owners for such high standards.

The new footpaths on the Gort Road, Fergus Road and around Drumgeely shopping area make the area much more visually attractive and tidy, not to mind the practical benefits that have ensued - safer walking for the towns residents.

There are negatives and it's a pity to see the "Flats" on Drumgeely Hill looking so tatty especially when they are facing one of the oldest and well maintained group of houses in Shannon.

There are plans to paint this complex later in the year and it is hoped that a vibrant colour such as cream or off white is chosen.

Reference was made in last years report to the condition of some of the place names in estates and this needs to be addressed as many are in very poor condition.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The roads into and link roads within the town and up to the Airport have improved immeasurably over the last few years.

The Ballycasey entrance has still too many advertising signs but the entrance still has nice inviting appeal and the stone flower bed adds to that appeal.

The main roundabouts are well maintained but are due to be replanted and this will make them more appealing.

The new paths on the estuary walk(On to the Points) have been upgraded. This is a bonus to all the leisure walkers in the town and full marks to Clare County Council for this work.

The Road down to the Old De Beers complex has been re tarred and it is also used as a leisure walk by the residents of Shannon as it affords an excellent view of the Estuary.

It is a pity that old All Weather Pitch has not been at least cleaned and made available to the community, indeed this adjudicator witnessed a number of the local Indian Community playing cricket on adjudication day.

General Impression:

The Shannon Tidy Towns committee deserve immense credit for the work it has done in putting Shannon to the forefront in the Competition over the years.

The Town is in a period of transition and it is hoped that the new developments and expansions will have a very positive effect.

The original community that founded Shannon has been supplemented with people of different nationalities and this should also have a very positive effect on the Town.

Keep up the excellent work.

Second Round Adjudication:

The second round adjudicator was on his first visit to Shannon Town for many years and was immediately impressed by the way in which this 'new' town had developed. On the approach from Ballycasey the first impressions of the town are indeed positive and the good landscaping and unusual lighting standards sets the scene for the visitor. However the apparent lack of good directional signage within the Shannon Town area appears to be a significant problem and the adjudicator found the lack of such signage quite confusing. Indeed this issue was mentioned in the 2005 Tidy Towns Report and is worthy of consideration by the Tidy Towns Committee. Shannon Town is lucky in that the many fine trees have softened considerably the impact of the built environment. As a built town that seems to lack a core or focus area it is obviously difficult to achieve any sense of town cohesion. This is mentioned not by way of criticism but as an acknowledgement of an unusual situation that other Tidy Towns Committees do not have to handle. Signage at the entrance to some estates is still a problem and a number of such signs were noted where replacement is now appropriate. The overall presentation of housing areas impressed this adjudicator and there appears to be much pride in how individual properties are presented. Litter control on the day of the visit was quite good and litter was noted on occasional green areas and some street kerb-sides. The Riverside Park was one such area. The fine open plaza to the front of the Ulster Bank area impressed and was excellently presented. The Tidy Towns Committee has a large area for annual consideration and is to be congratulated on their achievements and good work to date. Good luck with your 2007 Tidy Towns projects.