

# Tidy Towns Competition 2006

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Milford** Ref: **273**  
County: **Donegal** Mark: **195**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **15/06/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	28
Landscaping	50	20
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	10
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	9
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	29
General Impression	10	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>195</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Do not be disappointed if your mark is comparatively low in your year of re-entry into the competition, to which you are welcomed. Obviously marks from a non-participating 2005 can not be used to measure increased activity and physical improvements to the townscape, so we are starting with basic averages under each heading - except in categories where it is clear from inspection that effective work has been undertaken or the particular feature or neighbourhood is clearly well maintained. You start with a real disadvantage by failing to provide a useful map - some of the streets are shown and two are named, but no buildings, sites, estates, parks or other places of interest are marked. The implication of course is that if the committee can not rise to a proper map then it hardly has the capacity to engage in an adventurous approach to development! However, this is being overlooked for this year, and the following comments are based on what was seen at the time of the visit: if certain important features have been missed we are sorry, but it was because they were not listed. It is good to learn from your entry form that you hold regular meetings and are in close contact with the local Authority.

### **The Built Environment:**

You do not mark any buildings on your map or mention any in the appropriate section of the entry form. Milford is endowed with several unusually fine buildings, of which McCormick's splendid church is the most conspicuous. Others which contribute positively to the townscape are the Presbyterian Church with its neat car park and beautifully tended graveyard, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, which is so tastefully painted. Due to its thoughtful siting the interestingly designed County Council building manages to enhance the lower part of the town due to without conflicting with neighbouring existing buildings. It was good to see that a fine older structure nearby was being renovated. The Health Centre with its well-planted shrubbery was favourably noted. It was encouraging to see that part of the ugly secondary school was being replaced by what looked like imaginative new structures; the vocational school on an eminence needed freshening up.

Mulroy College is most attractively laid out; Scoil Muire was tidy at the date of the visit but planting would help to take the bare look off it, and it was a pity to see a block wall replacing the original stone. Some of the business premises and shops were quite well presented, but most were not of a high standard and the majority were defaced with poor mass-produced signage and advertising, rendering the entire perspective of the main street something of a visual nightmare. Derelict buildings, mainly at the top of the town, give a very poor impression indeed as they are so conspicuous; they should be assiduously reinstated as they are basically most attractive.

### **Landscaping:**

There is room for much improvement and also for planting development of open corners and other vacant spaces. A landscaped feature at the top of the town makes a curious contrast with the derelict buildings beside it; this whole area needs re-thinking. Planting round some public buildings was more favourable noted, and several business premises had taken the trouble to produce attractive floral tubs and hanging baskets. Picnic tables and seating at a picturesque spot on the Carrigart road was completely neglected and overgrown, giving a very poor impression of the approach to the town. The numerous cemeteries were seen to be decently kept, the one at Tullyfern including a handsome entrance and interesting historical plaque.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

You have left this category blank on your entry form. It is clear that in a town surrounded by woods, meadows and forests that the wild life resources must be particularly strong. The leafy Church road is an impressive natural resource right in the town. What is required under this heading is sensitive accessibility to nature and its interpretation for the urban dweller and especially for children: signposted walks - one was seen off the Carrigart road and there may be others - and illustrated information boards would help, but above all active educational projects. Probably such essentials are in existence, but you do not provide any information and therefore the mark is purely nominal.

### **Litter Control:**

It was good to see that there was comparatively little disposable litter in Milford on the date of the visit. Your clean-up must have helped, and it does seem that the public in general are becoming more litter-conscious. Almost all the towns and villages in the county received high marks for litter control this year, and that is splendid.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

This is also an average mark, as you do not state what steps you are taking in this category - a category that will increase in importance as time goes on. Please study the documentation provided, and also liaise with your local Authority - which may indeed already be providing adequate services, though you do not say so.

### **Tidiness:**

Dereliction and neglected sites contribute hugely to the absence of tidiness in several places. The mass of unsightly poles and overhead wires, particularly noticeable on Main Street, is another adverse factor. The conglomeration of obtrusive commercial signs in the same street has already been mentioned. Small matters, such as abandoned petrol pumps, badly stained boundary walls at the Vocational school, an untidy field opposite - it would make a superb public park - kerbside weed in several areas such as the curving road at the 1860 cemetery - add up to something quite considerable. Each landowner and householder has a responsibility to ensure that their particular patch is neatly looked after, and the local Authority has a responsibility for public spaces and facilities.

### **Residential Areas:**

It is the older houses of the town centre that give Milford its essential quality. Terraces in the street beside the hotel showed where infill housing of the same scale as older structures can be effective. The unusual design of a new terrace on the Kilmacrennan road was noted. Another, more conventional, estate of houses with pitched roofs, gables, dormers, porches and stone boundary walls on the same road looked most attractive and was maintained with a real sense of pride. In the large estate to the west of the Vocational school the homes were seen to be well kept though some boundary walls needed painting and the hedge on the non-housing side was in need of trimming. Grey Rock was admired for its smart entrance and well presented homes.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Generally, approach roads were better surfaced and marked than those in the centre of the town, though a section of the Ramelton road was poor. Some name-plate signs were in need of cleaning. An ill-kept car park was seen on the Kilmacrennan road. At the top of the main street, and in the neighbourhood of the Council

offices, excellent lighting standards were noted - this type of high quality street furniture could be extended to the rest of the town to great advantage.

**General Impression:**

There was much to admire in Milford. Unfortunately, it is the more disreputable sites that catch the eye and give a poorer impression than is deserved. You do well on public buildings, but in almost all the other categories there is room for improvement. By including increased information on your entry form next year there could be a considerable rise in marking, and by taking steps to improve the town where this is necessary, a very considerable increase should be possible. Milford is potentially a most attractive town and it is hoped that the energies of this new committee, in co-operation with business-people and residents and also with the official bodies, will show commendable results. Every good wish for this achievable end.