

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tallanstown** Ref: **852**
County: **Louth** Mark: **287**
Category: **B** Date(s): **06/06/2006**
26/08/2006

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	48
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	24
Litter Control	50	39
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	20
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	37
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	287

Overall Development Approach:

Who would believe that only about 15 years ago Tallanstown was an unremarkable and somewhat unkempt village now that it is consistently top of the county in the National Tidy Towns awards? Such in fact is the case, due principally to the vision and persistence of the people of the locality, especially in the matters of tree-planting, landscaping and rehabilitation of buildings. With unspectacular scenic environment no outstanding architectural features Tallanstown has surpassed villages that have always possessed those two useful qualities. Highest congratulations are in order from the adjudicator you first visited the village all those years ago. Other adjudicators concur. It is a pity that there are not more guest houses in the area so that visitors can stop to enjoy the neighbourhood further – but on the other hand there is something to be said for keeping a place unspoiled by tourism. The Three Year Plan is impressive: not only has the research been thorough, but unlike most plans of the kind there is a time-scale which is partly important in creating a sense of urgency but mainly of avoiding all projects going ahead at the same time with the same momentum which can create general exhaustion. Best wishes for a successful three years.

The Built Environment:

The principal buildings have, as usual, been presented to a very high standard – the charming church, the bright modern school, the quaint old school, the smart pub, the tidy GAA clubhouse. The mural paintings by children are an admirable initiative: perhaps when a new set is created they might take their inspiration from something in the children's lives and experience rather than in the rather Disneyesque line of country. The temporary notice commemorating Vere Foster was noted with much interest: would it be possible to find sponsorship for a more permanent memorial – perhaps from the INTO of which he was a founder – to the man who declared at a very uncertain time in our history that a nation's source of strength lies in the education of its people?

Landscaping:

It is excellent that you have the advice of a qualified professional gardener. Planting is therefore appropriate to the locations that suit certain species. The park furniture at Maguire Park is of really good design and the park itself is beautifully kept – an enormous amount of work obviously involved – with an absence of the kind of fussy bedding that is seen in too many public places elsewhere. The wild nature of the motte is visually arresting as well as being appropriate (see Wild Life below). Landscaping at Glyde Road is more eye-catching with a quaint display of agricultural implements. In early June containers and raised beds were awaiting planting and had been well prepared: this is as expected. Veronica, rock-roses, lavender etc were making a more permanent display. It is good to read that to intend to concentrate on shrubs that add interest all the year round.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The huge amount of tree-planting that was done in the early years has really made its mark: this was the most far-sighted decision of that time. The more recent decision to leave the Motte in its natural state was surely the right one – not only on account of its inhabitants but also because it looks more striking in contrast to the park that surrounds it. It is also good to read that you have abandoned the use of harmful pesticides. Bird and bat roosts were not actually seen but are known to be in place. The illustrated notice board must surely be warmly appreciated. The decently preserved ancient graveyard with its awesome Gothic gate must be a rich habitat for all kinds of bird, animal and insect life. At the date of the visit the whole neighbourhood was alight with may-blossom and elder-flower: wonderful!

Litter Control:

Newly placed litter bins were seen. There was very little litter of any kind on the date of the visit, but you will certainly not be diminishing your admirable efforts to eliminate this scourge.

Waste Minimisation:

Your notes disclose a very active initial response to this new category. Please report on progress in your 2007 submission. The old school is certainly a good central location for the recycling bins. It was good to learn that the school children have already undertaken a household composting survey.

Tidiness:

You have now reached what was the top mark obtainable under the old marking system! The village was very tidy on the date of the visit and your efforts in all categories that contribute to this are commended.

Residential Areas:

The older cottages are very attractive; they, and other comparatively modest homes, provide the village with its essential charm. It was exciting to see the imaginative addition being built to the lodge opposite the ancient graveyard, respecting the style and materials of a former age. Tallansfield is a promising large estate. (Incidentally, do you involve new residents in your work, and have any joined the committee?) At least there is some variation in the largely uniform design of the houses and it was good to see that young trees, and a large open space for grass, was already in place.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

All the roads were well surfaced and paving was generally good. It is welcome news that sidewalks will be made more accessible to people with special needs. Cycle paths were favourably noted. It was very impressive indeed to see older children doing lollipop duty – and so efficiently – on the road outside the school.

General Impression:

Congratulations once again. The new Development Plan demonstrates – if demonstration is needed – that you are not resting on past achievements but are looking forward and introducing new initiatives. Standards are rising everywhere. Keep ahead!

Second Round Adjudication:

Tallanstown is characterised by the most impressive tree lined entrances to the village. The winning formula along these roadsides of well tended grass verges, walls in good repair and well maintained hedgerows shows a great example from which many towns and villages could learn lessons. The careful retention of the character of the village core is very important – perhaps some reviewed thought could be given to the assembly of signs on the islands at the village centre. The colourful displays of summer bedding plants were giving of their best at the second round adjudication in late summer and these add a great sparkle of summer

colour without being excessive. Work was noted at the old cemetery on the Ardee Road, it would be wise to remove the ivy from the ancient yew trees as it tends to break the natural form of these trees. The gate pier traditional theme of brick and stone is well continued in Tallanstown. Housing estates look well with very good entrance appearances. A tree screen along the perimeter of the field that meets the backs of the housing estates would be a welcome project. The Maguire Park has matured well over the years and provides a lovely facility with a great amount of permanent plants that give benefit all year round. Tallanstown is truly a "tidytown" and is a credit to all concerned in the presentation of this lovely village.