

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Duleek** Ref: **310**
County: **Meath** Mark: **221**
Category: **D** Date(s): **27/06/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	39
The Built Environment	50	29
Landscaping	50	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	19
Litter Control	50	25
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	221

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Duleek to the 2006 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for the detailed Tidy Towns Plan for the period 2006 – 2010. This is a very clear straight forward document that shows clearly your vision for Duleek for the future. It is recommended that the objectives be detailed by implementation year, together with the estimated costs (if any) and the supporting project partners (if any). Your public relations programme seems to be a good one and your involvement with the schools is commended. It is great to see that the Duleek Credit Union are so strongly supportive of your work – businesses who benefit from the community do not always try and return some environmental benefit to that community.

The Built Environment:

The Courthouse project is strongly welcomed by your adjudicator. This is a beautiful stone building in a key town centre location. Nearby the Connell's Cottage project is equally exciting. Another old cottage was noted to the side of the Connell cottage – are there restoration plans for this in the future? It is most important to get the best advice possible when restoring this property. The Heritage Council as well as Meath County Council are two good information sources. It is important that the present windows be replaced with timber windows reflective in design terms of the cottage period – over 300 years old. We look forward to viewing the progress in summer 2007. The work on the Parish Centre is another most worthwhile undertaking. The Meath County Council office building occupies a key location at a junction and the external cladding reflects the tone and texture of the nearby church building. The Greyhound Inn has the potential to be a well presented keynote building in Duleek. However the wirescape needs to be removed, signage updated and lighting replaced. The existing colour scheme is appropriate. The grey limestone church building sits well with the nearby beautifully presented Village Green area. The colour used on the Take it Home premises is very strong for that location and a less stark colour is recommended when next the building is being painted. There are still some old plastic signs in Duleek and there should be a concentrated campaign to try and get these updated with more

appropriate signage mounted flat to the wall in each case. Kelly's Lounge has just one projecting sign really excellently designed.

Landscaping:

Your recent work on the Village Green looks well and this area is being well maintained. The indigenous planting on the Drogheda approach road was examined and this is looking really well. The new Lime trees here are already beginning to give the visual effect of an avenue leading into the town centre. At the large grass area at the junction of the Navan and Balrath roads the grass area with the cross looks a little bare. Some trees in this area would make a great difference with perhaps a colourful raised stone flower bed. Landscaping at the Drogheda / Ashbourne road junction looked a little dried up or burnt out. Opposite The Commons estate the landscaped area with the raised stone planters looked quite colourful but was marred by some litter here.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your policy of not cutting some of the back lanes to provide a wildlife resource is in theory sound. However you must strike a balance between that concept and the fact that such presentations can look very untidy and abandoned to the casual visitor. It is important that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine further the wildlife potential of Duleek, and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly.

If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat survey carried out of the wildlife in the Duleek area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following –

- Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
- Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds, lakes, canals, reed marsh, bogs
- Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
- Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to the Duleek area.

This need not be an expensive survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable person locally who might undertake this task for you. Basically the survey would identify the animals, plants, birds, fish that inhabit your area and their associated habitats. It should be remembered that to carry out the survey properly that it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different time of the year.

Using the results of the wildlife survey your next step should be to draft a straight forward Plan for Duleek to preserve the identified habitats in your area, and investigate the possibility of new ones. For example perhaps there is an old Pond in your area that is disused, but with a little work could be an important area for wildfowl.

It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many Schools there is probably a teacher who may have an interest in this area who would be willing to get involved.

As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof display panels in Duleek, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland.

Litter Control:

Litter control on the day of adjudication was not particularly good; litter was noted at the following locations –

- The Balrath approach road
- The Commons estate
- At the landscaped area opposite The Commons
- Very bad at Millrace estate
- On the Ashbourne approach road where large quantities were noted
- Some casual littering on the Main Street.

It is very important that your Committee would develop a litter control plan Duleek. The issue of litter control is not an issue just for the Local Authority. All citizens and especially your Tidy Towns Committee have a key role to play. Your plan should include such issues as surveying the litter bins that you have in your community and their adequacy, clean up days and the role of your local schools.

Waste Minimisation:

This is a new category in the Tidy Towns Competition introduced in 2006. The purpose of this new category is to encourage Tidy Towns Committees and the community that they support to get involved in projects that will reduce waste and encourage recycling. Marks can be gained by Duleek for the promotion of best practice. This can include community guidance on methods of reducing waste, segregating litter during clean up events. You could also consider a partnership with local firms and businesses in the Duleek area to encourage them to reduce unnecessary waste. The recycling project at Duleek National School is welcomed as a contribution to local waste minimisation. The adjudicator agrees with the idea of a recycling centre for Duleek.

Tidiness:

Weed growth was noted at the base of a wall in Lower Main Street opposite the Courthouse. Another untidy area was noted on Station Road on the right hand side immediately after leaving Lower Main Street. The rusty gates here need to be repaired and painted. The large vacant space beside the Greyhound Inn needs to be screened from view using timber lattice fencing, pending site redevelopment. A weedy entrance area to the Oscar's Bistro car park caught the eye, as did long grass at the rear of Colosseo. The potential redevelopment of this site was noted.

Residential Areas:

At St. Clanan's Villas good landscaping with trees is a feature at the entrance area but weed growth at kerbing is a problem here. Some road boundary walls need to be painted but the overall landscaping approach here is good. Many more trees at The Commons would improve this estate a lot, especially at the large open spaces. Much litter was a feature of Millrace estate and weed growth at kerbing needs attention. The blank concrete wall on the right just inside the entrance would be improved if painted. Abbeylands estate creates a good impression with excellent landscaping a feature of the area with the stone estate name. Weed and grass at kerbing was present at Oakleigh which has good grassed areas. At Fr. Ryan estate weeds at kerbing need to be removed, some road boundary walls need painting and some grass areas were uncut. Fine trees are a feature here. The presentation as Ashvale Court was found to be quite good.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The plan to redesign the Navan road entrance is noted and that would improve this area a lot. On the Ashbourne approach over this road very poorly presented verges are a feature with much litter, especially at the bridge. The Battle of the Boyne sign is very interesting but there is no parking space at this point. Relocation might be considered. The Lime trees project on the Drogheda approach are beginning to have a visual effect. The roadside banks were not cut on the Balrath approach. The long grass at the wire fencing at Jodi needs to be removed. Stone walls are an attractive feature of this approach. On Station road banks were uncut and the timber post and rail fencing should be repaired. Verges and banks were uncut on the Navan road approach to Duleek and the town signs were partially covered by weed / hedge growth

General Impression:

Though Duleek is a large town it still retains some of the older village qualities. Your work on property restoration is very important and this will help to reinforce the village identity. Good luck with these projects in 2007.