

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Galway City Centre** Ref: **1340**
County: **Galway** Mark: **256**
Category: **H** Date(s): **26/07/2007**
07/08/2007

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	38
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28
Litter Control	50	27
Waste Minimisation	20	0
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	256

Overall Development Approach:

Galway is welcome to the Tidy Towns Competition for 2007. Congratulations to all involved in setting up a Tidy Towns committee. Lets hope that this is the launch of a relationship that will benefit both Galway City and the Tidy Towns movement in Ireland. The adjudicator would have appreciated a map highlighting areas that should be visited in connection with the special awards. You are fortunate to have such a representative group involved on your committee, people who have experience of Tidy Towns at a local level, employees of statutory bodies and other interested parties. This mix on committee suggests that you have people who can identify projects based on their experience and others who can facilitate those plans. If your effort is to be sustained your committee needs to be funded and already it is clear that that funding is at hand. Tá sé ar intinn agaibh úsáid a bhaint as TG4 agus RnaG chun bhur n-aidhmeanna a chur chun cinn.

Ós rud é go bhfuil Gaillimh ar imeall na Gaeltachta agus go bhfuil báidh chomh láidir sin leis an nGaeilge sa chathair d'fhéadfaí tapú don deis oidhreacht na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn mar ghné de bhur bhfeachtas Gaillimh a choiméad glan agus Gaelach. Your awareness of the work being done in the schools suggests a 'hands on' knowledge of what is happening on the ground. Well done. We wish you many happy years of involvement in Tidy Towns. Go n-éiri go geal libh.

The Built Environment:

Arrive in Galway, park the car and enter an ageless, enchanted world. Wander through the warren of streets and lanes, so conveniently interconnected, so pedestrian friendly and witness the glorious multi coloured spectacle of Shop street and listen to street entertainers cajoling your Euro from you with their jigs and reels on fiddle or banjo. There are so many buildings to admire, many of them now in possession of banks. Of course you are delighted with how Eyre Square has been brought back to life. The Spanish Arch open area is also an achievement to be proud of. That whole area retains the quay character in its design. One building to

stand out is the Harbour Hotel. The modern Galway City museum nestles naturally amidst its surrounding elders. While the Cathedral may be your flagship religious building, the Church of St Nicholas offers spiritual, tranquil relief from the action on the street. And the roses at the Church looking out on the Claddagh Quay are beautiful and attract the eye to the lovely Church. Galway is also a city of modern hotels and they add to the prosperous tone of the city. Many of the shop fronts catch the eye. Cookes, Finnegans and Taaffes among the pubs. 'Torthai Úr ón Tuath' enhances its surroundings. Not all areas reach the standards you would wish for them. The area around the Bus station is shabby enough and gives an uneasy feel. The neon sign, 'Ryans', on Shop street reminds us of darker times. 'Spar' plastic signs haunt our towns. Graffiti grates and is all too frequent. But Galway is a worthwhile experience.

Landscaping:

No matter what road one takes to Galway one is struck by the landscaping. The older trees, younger shrubs, the wilderness, the manicured grass verges, all combine to offer relief from the surrounding building mass. Some of the landscaping seems to have happened naturally and wildly. Most has been creatively planned and has to be maintained. The entrance to NUIG a shining example of planning and maintenance. One is struck by the colourful landscaping throughout the city. All year shrubs are supplemented with raised beds of summer spectacle. 'Fáilte go Gaillimh' is landscaped beautifully right up to the roundabout. Again there is beautiful landscaping at the junction leading to College Road. If the houses leading into the city could continue the floral display it would take the breath away. Great care and attention has been given to softening the surroundings on Lough Atalia. There is attractive landscaping of a stark wall opposite the Harbour hotel. Would it be somehow sinful to introduce tiered floral displays into the Spanish Arch area? Galway roundabouts must get special mention. Each roundabout seems to be landscaped in its own individual manner and all have character. Lovely.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your submission illustrates that this section is of great importance to your Committee. A visit to the Terryland Forest Park is a most rewarding experience. An urban wilderness is an apt description. A well surfaced pathway and the many benches invite one to experience the area. The 'fógrai' inviting one to the tree planting in 2006 suggests that this fine project may be left to look after itself now. There are very few bins for the bottles and cans which are inevitable in a habitat so suitable for revellers who cannot be served in the pub. The graffiti again creates unease. What a shame. A list of the trees planted would also add to the experience. A description of the habitats around the city would also make the visit more informative. This 'walk on the wildside' contrasts with the manicured walk way along the Corrib, right down to the Claddagh. Another wonderful experience. Galway City has wonderful potential in this section. Your task is to develop your wildlife potential so as to protect the wildlife environment and make it accessible to the public. The Claddagh Quay opens up the bay to the public and makes the swan and duck population available to an eager public.

Litter Control:

Your submission readily acknowledges the challenge of litter control in the many measures you take to keep Galway clean. You are having great success as can be measured by the status IBAL confer on you. Maybe the Green Flags in the schools help. But each day is a new battle. Well done on the litter bins but the bottles on the green at Claddagh Quay suggests that people will not travel to dispose of the empty.

Waste Minimisation:

In your submission you state that 'Galway City has always been to the forefront of waste management in Ireland'. Well done. The emphasis in this section is not on management but on waste minimisation.

Tidiness:

The standard of maintenance of road surfaces, paths and kerbs creates a tidy feel right throughout the city. The general absence of dereliction, the quality home and shop fronts, the cared-for landscaping further contribute to the high standard. Graffiti is a major problem in Galway, despite your efforts. Kerbside weeds, especially, in many of the estates also diminish the picture.

Residential Areas:

The old and the new. Suburban and urban. All contribute to the impression of a city on the move but with a respected past. Kerbside weeds are a problem in almost all of the estates visited. Colourful landscaping is a positive feature. The front boundaries and garden landscaping of private houses compliment the prosperous

appearance of the buildings.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The varied character of the approach roads to Galway is an interesting aspect of a visit. The Clifden, Headford and Merlin roads are neatly verged with grass margins and the private dwellings lead one gently into the city. The 'bye pass' route walls off the many housing estates and also takes one into the commercial heartland. But again an inviting approach. From Salthill the experience is completely different due to confusion as to where one ends area and the other begins or are they both a unit. For the most part great care is taken to present all roads to the city with the appropriate care. Off the main streets and main roads the care continues for the most part: some improvement would assist the entrance to Galwegians, the Lisbaun is shabby in many areas. What a contrast there is between Quay Lane and Kirwans Lane. But for the most part the contrast is not too great.

General Impression:

The committee's sense of pride in this gem of a city is palpable in every line of your submission. The enjoyment so many get from hanging out in Galway is due in no small part to the environment created over the years. There is a sense of security and safety throughout. Gaillimh, tá idir fuinneamh is fiúntas ag baint le cuairt uirthi.

Second Round Adjudication:

It was with a certain level of surprise and a lot of pleasure that this adjudicator visited Galway - in the capacity of Tidy Towns Adjudicator - for the first time! It is a vibrant city, which offers much in terms of historical, cultural and heritage significance. The committee would appear to have an excellent working relationship with the schools who take an active part in the litter campaign, which is all to the good. The register of derelict sites is a useful tool to monitor the problems that these unfortunate properties can have on a city. Your active interest in the area of conservation is highly commendable, as unfortunately, we have lost far too much of our heritage in this country over the years! The habitat inventory is an interesting and worthwhile initiative. Your position as the cleanest city in the country in the IBAL litter league is impressive-certainly the standard on the day was very good, with only a very small amount visible in Eyre Square – despite the large volume of visitors. The large litter bins throughout the city appeared to be in good use. However, one by Spanish Arch was quite full, the very odd paper was evident along the main streets and a mesh box at the security barrier outside Casey Blakes on Shop Street was full of papers. The promotion of the Gum Litter Task Force is to your credit and we look forward to its launch in the City of the Tribes! The active residents groups must be a great help in your work. The traffic volume in the centre of the city is very high and leads to congestion due to the sheer number of vehicles. The Eyre Square car park façade was badly stained with rust. Eyre Square itself is an important focal point for the city and was being well enjoyed on the day and its fine playground area and attractive street furniture was greatly admired. Perhaps additional seating could be considered at Spanish Arch, as it is such a congregation point for people beside the fast flowing Corrib river? Road surfaces at Rosemary Avenue were a little rough. Some empty properties on William Street created a negative impression. Kirwan's Lane was admired and the attractive detailing to an upper floor window to the framemakers opposite is quite unique and attractive. All in all it was a pleasant visit to Galway on a sunny summer's day! Well done to all concerned in its high standard of presentation.