

# Tidy Towns Competition 2007

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Oughterard** Ref: **318**  
County: **Galway** Mark: **228**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **17/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	38
The Built Environment	50	31
Landscaping	50	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	24
Litter Control	50	31
Waste Minimisation	20	0
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31
General Impression	10	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>228</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Firstly, a warm welcome back to the competition and many thanks for filling out the application form and giving details of work done and future work planned. The map supplied was very helpful. You communicate with the local community via a number of mediums such as Newsletters, Flyers, Church Notices and Meetings which is good but for a developing such town such as Oughterard have you considered using a notes section in your local newspaper, email, or the local radio station to target more residents and inform them of the good work that is on-going?

### **The Built Environment:**

The Corrib House Hotel, the Church of Ireland Church and the Church of the Immaculate Conception were looking well on the adjudication day. Your application details your plans for the restoration work on the Courthouse, we hope you are successful with this grant application and look forward to seeing the finished product next year. The adjudicator thought that there were excessive materials outside Keoghs Gifts and Crafts and the Spar shop fronts. In comparison, Breatnachs Bar and the commercial units on Camp Street containing the Tile Centre and the Opticians were well presented. Three derelict properties were noted two across the road from Probus Wines and the other beside Kenny's Bar.

### **Landscaping:**

The trees in the front of the Health Centre and on Main Street are attractive as are the hanging baskets and the tubs with flowers. The street lighting is also in keeping with the rural area.

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

Your application has left the wildlife and natural amenities section empty, this is disappointing as the

adjudicator was impressed with the plethora of wildlife and natural amenities on your doorstep. More than most centres you have the opportunity to raise your marks in this section and we encourage you to include something in this section for the competition next year. The Owenriff River and Lough Corrib are wonderful amenities; the number of boats at the Boat House is evidence of how many people enjoy them. It was encouraging people enjoying a picnic at the Shrubbery and a duck race was about to get underway along the river. Signs were noticed highlighting the need to preserve the wildlife on Lough Corrib and the Owenriff River that is under threat from the invasive species zebra mussel. The waterfall was also visited and is extremely well maintained. Your idea to develop the existing bog walk to include flora and fauna with the development of the nature is good and we await the result of your hard efforts. Consider erecting display boards with wildlife information along the nature trail. Perhaps for next year the school children could also prepare something in relation to the local wildlife that you could include with your application, this would also give them "hands-on" involvement with the Tidy Towns competition.

#### **Litter Control:**

Litter was not a problem in the town and there was no visible litter around the Bring Banks, well done! However, some litter was evident at the steps at the bridge on Glann Road and along the Owenriff river walk, this area is acting as a litter trap, and this is disappointing given the scenic beauty and natural amenity value of the area.

#### **Waste Minimisation:**

Your application has left this section of the competition form empty. Waste Minimisation is a new section of the competition that was introduced in 2006. It may be helpful for you to consult the guidance document produced by the Department entitled "How to win the Race against Waste in your Community" to allow you to gain more marks in this section next year. The Waste Awareness Officer of Galway County Council may also be a good starting point. Consider engaging with the local schools and businesses. You state on the application form that you are involved with the local schools, may be for next year you could work together on a waste minimisation project. The schools involvement would also contribute to the Green Flag project if your local school is a participant.

#### **Tidiness:**

We have to mention the plethora of signs at the main junctions in the town; we counted thirteen signs (two directional signs, three "for sale" signs on an electricity pole, and eight other tourist related signs) on two posts at the Bridge near the Church of the Immaculate Conception. More signs were visible further up the road at the junction of Bridge Street and Station Road. We wonder is there any need for all these signs? Weeds were noted in a number of places through out the village: the Oughterard sign on the approach road from Clifden was overgrown with weeds; weeds were prominent in the flower beds in the car park beside the Health Centre; weeds were present around the grounds at the GAA pitch; and a sign in relation to joining the local club and contributing to anti-pollution funds at the Pier was hidden with weeds. The old changing facilities at the GAA pitch are somewhat depilated looking with the boarded windows.

#### **Residential Areas:**

The residential housing along Camp Street and the Cul de Sac at the end of the road are all exceptionally maintained. The green area in the Cul de Sac is well cared for. These residents and the B&B owners all deserve praise for their individual effort. The small housing estates off Main Street were also presently well. The close proximity of these houses to the centre of the town has the potential to give these residents a greater incentive to get involved with the Tidy Towns competition and foster a sense of civic pride and we urge you to try to recruit more volunteers from these developments.

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

The approach road from Galway is quite rough until you reach the car park where the Bring Banks are located beside the Health Centre. It was noticed that potholes need filling around the boat house however your application states that a project planned for next year will focus on the area surrounding the boathouse at the river. We noticed that a pavement was available on one side out the Clifden road and not the other, leading from the car parking area across the road from Sweeney's Oughterard House to the Shubbery.

#### **General Impression:**

We thoroughly enjoyed our adjudication of Oughterard and were impressed by the town. The Pier area, the Owenriff River, and its associated bridges and walkway, the Shubbery, the waterfall upstream and the two Churches are your best assets. We are sure that the town has the ability to score highly in the competition and hopefully with now with continued momentum your plans will come to fruition in time for the 50th anniversary of the competition in 2008. For next year please bear in mind that the more information supplied with your application the easier it is for the adjudicators to award marks. It is possible that you might be doing

yourselves out of additional marks in some sections because of the lack of information supplied. Overall you should be pleased with your efforts on your return to the competition after a year of absence – congratulations and best wishes for your future proposals.