

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tullamore** Ref: **727**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **270**
Category: **F** Date(s): **29/06/2007**
07/08/2007

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	46
The Built Environment	50	38
Landscaping	50	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	24
Litter Control	50	28
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	270

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your comprehensive entry form, town map and additional information in the form of photos and leaflets. There have been a lot of improvements in Tullamore over the past few years and the achievements are something to be proud of. There is a broad cross section of community and agencies represented on the committee which lends itself to an effective partnership approach. With the various festivals approaching including the National Ploughing Championships, there will be increased visitors to the town and the efforts of the committee will make for pleasantly memorable experiences for residents and visitors alike. Keep up the partnership working, engaging with residents associations, and strengthen the local links that exist. Best wishes to all.

The Built Environment:

The restored courthouse looks very fine since it's been cleaned up and the style is very much combining old heritage building with modern use. Looks like original sash windows have been retained, combining with a modern public office with a lot of glass and timber so plenty of light.

There are still some derelict sites around the town but not as many as there used to be. Keep the pressure on with owners to see if these can be improved. There is an increased level of activity and a new energy to Tullamore.

At the approach from Mullingar, some of the buildings there are in need of attention, such as the Gaa hall's wall needing repaired. If Phil's shop is closed take down signage. This approach could be improved at the bridge which is a focal point, by replacing the low broken wall around Beverley's hair studio. The bridge itself has beautiful black railings at canal area which is very smart indeed, and the Kelly's bar is a lovely welcome to this side of town.

The treatment of roundabouts is excellent. Once its started, now its noticeable the roundabouts that haven't been done stand out as being shabby compared to ones which have been done. There are plans to keep going on this project so that's good.

The new Main st area is a delight. With no overhead wires, and cobble lock and, nicely painted shopfronts, flowers and foliage out front, and hard landscaped area with bike stands. It is much quieter here than what I would have called main st, outside the bridge centre. Even places like budget travel are well painted and neat – pharmacy and elle clothing com and cartridge world and glitzy bits – these shopfronts are simple, clean lines and not garish looking. Lovely traditional fronts like carrolls and the retreat. Good job, well done.

O'Connell square is busy as ever, but is clean and litter free. Some interesting buildings here such as the post office, with its wheelchair access. Most shopfronts now in town are looking well and there are different styles blending well such as the glass fronted galvin for ladies

Harbour st is up for streetscape renewal and this will improve this side of town. This street has lot of run down buildings and streetscape is messy.

Da vincis and little pharaoh look well

Fergies deserves a mention – also mother earth and natural matierals and anatolla nicely painted. This end overhead wires have been done, makes a difference when you look back. It seems well planned so good luck with ongoing improvements

Market square – lovely old building with corrugated iron and white wash – at least the signage is symmetric and been painted recently enough. Nice trees, bollards, paving, not as well kept as some of the other areas but it has old style street lamps nice, no overhead wires here at all.

Sorocco's should mention for its nice shopfront. Everything looks very well on Kilbride st and o Connell st. some lovely trees in parking area there. Building where off licence is and one beside should be mentioned. What really stands out is amount of trees around. The edge of car park at Texas could be tidied up as the tree bases are a trap for cigarette litter. Old molloy st and marian place looking very tidy
Lovely tullamore dew building has containers for baskets but no flowers out and its flags are a bit tatty but colourful all the same and maybe due for replacement the next while

Landscaping:

Refurbishment works of park underway as stated in entry and it will be a fantastic community amenity when finished. This town park permanently placed opposite courthouse is going to have a playground, skatepark, outdoor green bowling area, water feature, performance area and walks so marvellous

The area of main st which has been streetscaped – hard landscaping very nice – clean bright open, chrome style with beige paving, benches and trees and superslick lighting, contemporary design.

Great park at Kilcruttin, nice bollards nice fencing lovely mature trees, and adequate railings, nice little park in between road and river.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There are some good wildlife habitats in Tullamore with the river, canal and parks. Has there been surveys done? it would be good to engage with local experts and develop projects in conjunction with schools. It is noted there are plans for nature information boards and extending nature walks

Litter Control:

There was very little litter for a town this size. No doubt there are some black spots beign carefully monitored. The only litter in town centre was quite a lot of cigarette related litter outside the bridge centre, a busy spot, but they do have cigarette bins in place so it just comes down to regular sweeping. Perhaps there could be a focus on this with the local litter wardens? There is also a glut of cigarette related litter outside xtravision in the new town centre – that catches in that grate. Statoil garage also needs to keep watch over its entrance as that was littered. The new park is a fabulous landscaping project, no doubt a great improvement on the derelict site that was there before but unfortunately it was heavily littered at time of visit.

Residential areas were, for the vast majority of places, very clean and it's a credit to all involved there.

Fencing around the derelict is good way to deal with it. Hides the worst from view. Litter very good for a town this size. Some here and there and some blackspots but overall really clean – for somewhere this size

Unfortunately loads of stuff dumped at recycling banks – mostly clothes but general rubbish as well – nice park around canal here, loads of parks in tullamore – loads of green areas and these lovely black railings everywhere – safe walkway and moorings nice – all houses very tidy on other side of canal as well

Few litter spots to watch – especially banks of canal but sure the committee is aware of those.

Waste Minimisation:

There are a range of projects noted in your entry form, engaging with various partners such as businesses and schools and ranging from composting to plastic bottle recycling. Continued efforts in this area will gain points. Well done to Tullmores green schools for their work in reducing, reusing and recycling waste. Liaise with the county Environmental Awareness Officer and refer to the Race Against Waste guide for support.

Tidiness:

Many areas in Tullamore have been resurfaced it seems and more on the way. The ring road has been successful in reducing the traffic in town and with further bypass planned, will take more traffic out of the centre.

In general roads good standard, good traffic calming and pedestrian walkways

IDA business park has great landscaping –Can see why locals would come in here for a walk. Not easy to make industrial estates pleasant places to walk in so well done

All businesses seem to be playing their part in keeping areas in front clean. Is noticeable once you come outside empty units to let, noticeable that the weeds growing at kerbs in front of unoccupied units

Residential Areas:

Most residential areas were remarkably clean and well cared for. The Tidy Tullamore competition seems to have engaged many residents associations in improving their area and taking pride in their surroundings. I was pleased to see all the following areas looking well: Srah Road (has some lovely new trees), Glen Daniel (entrance stone and interesting landscaping on green area), Lough view (entry stone lovely, almost mediteranean with white walls and sunshine), Convent view (row of charming terraced cottages along canal, totally litter free with well kept gardens)

Clara road has just a few frontages could do with paint but free of litter and acceptable. Moylina has a lovely entrance with trees both sides and is very presentable. There are some derelict sites and caps and pillars need repairing here and there.

Maple grove is adequate, but it is a shame to see the fine property at entrance obviously not lived in currently let run down.

A lot more effort needed to control litter in Ardan View, however green spaces have all been mowed and some gardens lots of effort gone into upkeep. Many properties looking fine but litter a problem throughout.

Tyrells road – litter free despite there being a shop

One or two in carney park walls to be washed or painted – road surfaces not as good here

In different residential area in charleville ns freshly painted and neat green areas outside and modern planting – car parking markings excellent. Lots of building work here. Seems like developers have planted trees as part of the process so that's good.

Residential areas over this side by no means letting the other side get the better of them. Bachelors walk, beautifully landscaped on the driveway down, trees on both sides, come into Ashleigh court, so well presented, so neat and tidy with some lovely private gardens and not a scrap of litter to be seen anywhere. Some very fine properties around these parts. Noted the creepers planted against the wall in Ashleigh court as anti graffiti measure – hopefully will work. Residences of hop hill looking fine and roundabout being redone. Lots of improvement going on in tullamore

Things are remarkably tidy and litter free for a town this size

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach to Tullamore from Birr is very impressive and welcoming, it helps that theres that castle and

some lovely wooden fencing all the way along that and good signs and long stone wall to guide us on our way in

Approach mullingar side, fine big wide road, well sign posted off the dual carriageway. All verges clear and not too much sign clutter

Generally good roads, but lots need resurfacing, especially outside health centre. Whats after that and opposite needs repainting – looks like gaa grounds

Approach from edenderry acceptable – grass tidy – not as tidy as other approaches. Opposite tesco, there are some derelict sites, bit tatty, some litter around there and verges untidy. It is noted that owners have been contacted with regard to hiding commercial areas with plantings

General Impression:

There is a lot of hard work and commitment into maintaining a town this size – well done. I was impressed by Tullamore and look forward to its continued improvements. There is good commitment, strong local links, a sense of pride in the communities while still quite a bit of work to do, it seems Tullamore is well on its way to achieving its goals.

Second Round Adjudication:

Early prints of Tullamore show a handsome streetscape with smart houses and shops. The latter are not marred by over-enthusiastic signage and advertising and the sky is mercifully devoid of wires. The only significant way in which the 20th and 21st centuries have improved on this is the surfacing of the streets. Clearly the present Tidy Towns Association is endeavouring to replicate the dignity and good taste of the past while ensuring that essential modern developments are encouraged and that they will blend harmoniously with the best of what has gone before. This has been largely successful. The Association will have found that maintaining what is in existence takes as much energy and resources as the creation of new initiatives. Standards are rising everywhere, and Tullamore is keeping well ahead. The mark for Developmental Approach is exceptionally high; and those for Buildings and Landscaping are very high; trees - maintenance of existing and the planting of new - are usually marked under 'Natural Amenities' hence the increase in marks in that category. Litter control (always a variable) was better on the second visit than on the first. The first adjudicator mentioned 'some derelict sites...but not as many as before' and this is so, but unfortunately there is still an unusual amount of conspicuous dereliction, hence the comparatively low mark under 'Tidiness'. Eyecatching vacant buildings were seen in the neighbourhood of Main Street/Water Lane, and also parallel with the river immediately north of the new section of the Bridge Hotel, and a fine 3-storey 5-bay house ignominiously squeezed between St Columba's School and Edgewater House. Against this, there have been splendid restorations over the past few years with new uses found for old warehouses and mills, partly responsible for the continuous rise in marks under 'Buildings'. The way in which many new commercial and residential buildings have taken their cue from neighbouring traditional buildings in terms of profile and mass and often in materials is magnificent.

Here is a selection of good and bad points noted on a walk through what is undoubtedly a very well-kept town. It is remarkable how well-designed were the Local Authority houses of the mid-20th century, especially near the canal. The lovely manner in which the Town Park 'carries through' from its new (in the making) entrance at the Court House via a wooded dell and a playground, across the river and then across the road into the recently completed landscaping at Kilcruttin corner was much admired. Very fine old houses, among them the Round House, Conway & Kearney's, Hoey & Denning's and Donal Farells all give dignity to the street though some are in need of reconditioning. The absence of poles and overhead wires in Main Street contrasts with the untidy skyscape of High, Bridge and Columcille streets - the latter one of the reasons for the comparatively low mark under 'Tidiness'. Some gables were marred by obtrusive signage - one example is Shishir: is planning permission granted for defacing a building in this way? The urban space that is Market Square was found to be most charming, its elegant lamp standards and seating both attractive and practical; O'Carroll Street had something of the same enviable feeling.

Further afield (but not on foot) the industrial estate at Srah seems to be overtaking the business park off the Port Laoise road in tidiness and landscaping; both contain fine examples of cool-looking modern buildings. Congratulations to the Association, to the official bodies, sponsors and the local authority and especially to the residents and business people of the town for the continuing improvements. When the by-pass is opened - it would be interesting to know where it is to be routed - there should (obviously) be less traffic congestion and therefor a greater opportunity to enjoy the very real pleasures of this progressive town.