

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mountshannon** Ref: **81**
County: **Clare** Mark: **279**
Category: **B** Date(s): **26/07/2007**
10/08/2007

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	48
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	28
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	279

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Mountshannon to the 2007 Tidy Towns Competition and was pleased to have an opportunity to return to this 1981 National Tidy Towns winning village. It is noted that a new Tidy Towns Committee is now in place in Mountshannon. The documentation received from Mountshannon for this year's competition was limited to the Entry Form. For next year can the Committee submit a copy of the three year Tidy Towns Plan for the village and any other supporting documentation that you consider helpful to the adjudicator. With a Tidy Towns Committee of thirteen people you appear to enjoy good local community support for your important work. The high level of agency help that is available to you is evident in the many new projects that Mountshannon have developed over many years. We look forward to hearing further of the major new Childcare Centre and the new Playground that you have planned. In your Entry Form you refer to concerns in regard to vandalism and sustainable development. To date Mountshannon seems to have succeeded in the successful merging of new housing development into the old traditional village framework. Not all villages of similar size have been so successful in this critical task.

The Built Environment:

The built environment in general in Mountshannon has a very attractive appealing quality and older and modern buildings contribute to this. The two fine stone churches at either end of the village are well presented attractive buildings as is the old Market House noted as being for sale. In the view of this adjudicator it is essential that this building is retained in its entirety in any redevelopment of this property and this includes road boundary walls. The building occupies a critical cross-roads site and is an integral part of Mountshannon. At the lower end of the village the School was complimented by the excellent presentation of the grounds. The Post Office and petrol pumps area caught the eye and good presentation featured here. At the entrance to Nos. 4-15 Harbour Road the white roadside building was in need of repainting. The Village Inn stands out as a good example of a traditional shopfront recreated in relatively recent times. The colour choice here is also

appropriate. On the Main Street the East Clare Heritage display panel is most interesting but damp had discoloured some of the interesting illustrations. At the recently created beach area the Tearooms building needs maintenance attention. Windows need to be replaced here and the building painted. A beautiful old cottage at the Scarriff end of the village was noted and the preservation of this structure is important to the village.

Landscaping:

Good landscaping is one of the real strengths of Mountshannon and the standards that have been achieved in this respect are high and cover such a wide area. The Aistear Park is a beautiful interesting and relaxing area with glimpses of the lake in the distance. The work done here to facilitate wheelchairs and buggies was welcomed. The Sundial feature fits in well in the location chosen for this feature. Some of the picnic benches and seats here and in the Harbour area are a little industrial and utilitarian in terms of construction materials and do not really fit in a high quality environment. At the Maze area in the Park some of the shrubs needed to be trimmed a little and dead vegetation removed. Bare earth patches were also noted obviously developed by people taking a 'short cut' through the Maze. Briars also needed to be cut. The adjudicator was of the view that the attractive Maze area seemed to be a little tired in presentation terms. At the Harbour area the new landscaping has matured well and this is really a most attractive area. The triangular landscaped area at the junction to the Woodbrook Forest Park was well presented and attractively located on the Scarriff approach to the village. Opposite the Post Office the unexpected raised landscaped area was attractively presented and well maintained. On the Whitegate approach to Mountshannon the black timber fencing at the large landscaped area was damaged and needs to be repaired or replaced. The recently cut grass here had not been removed and this detracted from the overall impact of this landscaped roadside area. Along the Main Street the fine mature trees were complimented by the colourful window boxes. Along Harbour Road some trimming of the vegetation overhanging the footpath was required.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Harbour area, the Forest Park and the Aistear Park areas have great wildlife potential but it seemed to the adjudicator that this aspect of the Mountshannon Tidy Towns entry has much more potential. Public displayed information on local wildlife seemed to be a little sparse. It was noted that Bat boxes are under construction for the Aistear Park. Presumably you have taken professional advice on the best locations for these. The beach area is an attractive relaxation area and was well presented, neat and clean.

Litter Control:

The role of FAS in upgrading facilities at the Harbour is commended and the Bring Centre here was well presented but the official Bring Centre signage was missing. Have you considered screening the Bring Centre from public view? On the day of adjudication litter control was disappointing for a former National Tidy winner. Litter was noted along the road to the Woodbrook Forest Park at the left hand verge and a lot of litter some of which appeared to be 'aged' was noted along Harbour Road along the roadside steps.

Waste Minimisation:

This is a new category in the Tidy Towns Competition first introduced in 2006. The purpose of this new category is to encourage Tidy Towns Committees and the local community to get involved in projects that will reduce waste and encourage recycling. Marks can be gained by Mountshannon for the promotion of best practice. This can include community guidance on methods of reducing waste such as segregating litter during clean up events. The organising of a Workshop on waste minimisation in your community is another initiative that you might consider. This could be held on a waste minimisation community awareness day as part of a series of local initiatives. Your local school or schools should also be involved with their own waste minimisation projects. You could also consider a partnership with local firms and businesses to encourage them to reduce unnecessary waste. In regard to waste minimisation it is important to remember that quite small actions can sometimes have a significant waste reduction impact. The recycling of all organic material from the Aistear Park is commendable. However do try and expand and extend your work under this category for 2008. It is good to see that local residents are involved in your waste minimisation programme.

Tidiness:

The anti-graffiti programme appears to be working because no graffiti apart from that in the toilets was noted on adjudication day. However other aspects of lack of tidiness were noted in various locations. It is suggested that with the approval of the Local Authority that sign poles be painted. Opposite the toilet block an untidy kerbed entrance was noted on the other side of the road. At the lower end of the Holiday Cottage a large untidy area was noted that has been fenced off with steel railings. Two large containers have been placed inside. Another open untidy area was noted at the main road entrance area to these cottages. Building materials were being stored here. At the Harbour area the old triangular information panel was in poor condition. One panel contained a number of dead Spiders. A number of projecting signs were noted along the Main Street which may not have a real commercial or marketing need. At the toilet block graffiti and litter

featured on the day of adjudication. At the cross roads junction in the centre of the village a broken sign for Ennis was noted.

Residential Areas:

It is noted from the Entry Form that you carried out no new projects under this heading for 2007 and that no future projects are planned. On the road to Woodhouse Forest Park some repainting of property road boundary walls was necessary. On the approach from Scarriff good colour choices were noted for the individual houses on the right hand side of the road. The stone fronted houses on the right hand side on the road towards Whitegate would be improved if the plinth of each property was painted matt black. Many property owners have made a most positive contribution to the overall appearance of Mountshannon in terms of property maintenance and associated landscaping.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

This is an area where it seems from your Entry Form that no work was carried out for 2007 and none is planned in the future. The presentation of the main approach roads from Scarriff and White gate was of a high standard. The wide well maintained green verges on the Scarriff approach were much admired. However the presentation of other approach roads to Mountshannon seemed to have received little recent attention though future potential was noted – the Garran road is a case in point. It is important that all approach roads play a key role in your annual work for Tidy Towns.

General Impression:

Mountshannon is beautifully located and has that great combination of attractive water areas complimented by excellent landscaping. The issues of litter, tidiness and the smaller approach roads should receive additional consideration in your plans for 2008. Good luck with your plans for next year.

Second Round Adjudication:

Mountshannon is located on the shores of Lough Derg and it makes great use of its waterside location. The entry from the Scariff/Limerick Road was well maintained. Stone walls on the left side of the road could be made more distinctive if they were cleaned up a bit. The new houses opposite the school were very impressive and we admired the use of stone, wood pelmets and even thatching in some cases that have retained the historic feel of the village. This particular development was set around an appealing pond and was a testament to how new buildings can be created that contain instant charm and a community feel. This street did require weeding as it had become a bit overgrown and the road way into the petrol station requires resurfacing. The landscaping around the monument was very well done, but some of the flowerbeds were a bit overgrown. The FAS created stone entry into the park is a great work and well maintained as was the park. It was great to see that the old oak and sycamore trees have been retained in the Sandygrove Estate. Sandygrove and the other surrounding new estates have been well designed not to overshadow the traditional aspects of the town and have also made great use of Mountshannons waterside location via the small boat piers available. The main street of Mountshannon has some wonderfully unique buildings such as the Pottery & Arts Studio. It is hoped that The Market House will be sold soon and the new tenants will redevelop as this is a great building that is just lying derelict. The Village Inn was very well presented on the day of adjudication. The harbour was admired for its tracts of grass, plethora of bench seating, winding paths and beautiful landscaping. Much care has been taken to make this an enjoyable area to visit not just for those using the harbour facilities, but also for those who wish to relax by the water. On the day of adjudication the Bring Bank had a bit of rubbish around them so this needs to be maintained. Some areas of the side roads need repair as they have become a bit rough. There was no litter to be seen on the day of adjudication so very well done on this. Mountshannon is a charming waterside village that has done well to retain its village feel by ensuring its new developments work well with the existing town. The main areas to focus on moving forward would be weeding and some road resurfacing but overall a very good effort.