

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mountshannon** Ref: **81**
County: **Clare** Mark: **291**
Category: **B** Date(s): **30/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	48
The Built Environment	50	39
Landscaping	50	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	37
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	291

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you, the Mountshannon Community Council, for your entry to the 2008 Tidy Towns Competition. Welcome to the village of Mountshannon with a population of less than 1,000 to the national Tidy Towns competition and congratulations on your continued participation in the Tidy Towns and for your previous successes in particular as National Winner in 1981. Your entry for 2008 included: Entry Form; typed document expanding on the Entry Form; Ordnance Survey Map; publications on Aistear Iniscealtra, The Aistear Labyrinth; Programme of Events 2008 Iniscealtra festival of Arts; Front page cover of Feasibility Study for new Community/Arts Centre in Mountshannon.

Thanks to your Committee of seven people who take the time and effort to attend your regular meetings in addition to other Tidy Towns events. Welcome to the new group formed to take on the task of Tidy Town efforts. Your Committee is doing so much very worthwhile work in this small, picturesque village and surrounding area of Mountshannon. A recommendation of this adjudicator for your Committee is the preparation of a very basic three-year plan for Mountshannon to assist you in the development of Tidy Town targets and initiatives. Your three-year plan would be a new initiative next year and would assist the Committee in forward planning and setting targets up to the end of 2011. This can of course be altered as the Committee's work progresses over time. A maximum of two pages would be sufficient and could be set out in bullet points. The plan could integrate into similar plans of the Community Council and would assist in discussions and negotiations with public and private sector organisations, and voluntary and sporting bodies, with which Mountshannon is in contact.

Your ongoing partnership work and those that have supported your activities is of obvious benefit to all. This is a vital ingredient in the success of Tidy Towns activities and could in itself be a specific target in your three-year plan. Your Communications strategy of meetings, use of noticeboard, School, newspaper and direct contact with teachers and parents association is very worthwhile. Congratulations on your excellent

Website www.mountshannon.com. – a first class introduction to the village and the surrounding area. The involvement of the schoolchildren in national Spring Clean up and the Green Flag project is an excellent strategy.

Your annual festivals and events must be of so much of benefit to all in Mountshannon. Keep up the excellent work.

Thanks also for your Ordnance Survey Map, but this adjudicator is of the view that a simple Village Map, outlining key places of activity of Tidy Towns is of more benefit, e.g. Festival Map of Mountshannon in the 2008 Programme of events. Mountshannon is on a very beautiful location and includes the Main Street in the old village centre, the Catholic and Church of Ireland Anglican Churches, the national school, the Aistear, and the Harbour. In addition some excellent and more recent individual and the residential holiday developments are featured.

I wish you all the best with your planned activities into the future. Keep up the good work.

The Built Environment:

In the view of this adjudicator, one of the ongoing challenges facing Mountshannon is to maintain a healthy balance between the "old and the new" the older area around the developments along Main Street between both Churches, and the newer developments including holiday residential areas. One area should not develop at the expense of the other. Former commercial premises, which are now closed, are in danger of becoming run down and dilapidated, every effort should be made to prevent this happening. The Market House is noted as still being for sale. The Aistear Park and the Harbour Areas are key assets for the residents and visitors alike. They must be further developed and protected with care.

The national school occupies a key location in the village; therefore the presentation of its grounds is of utmost importance. On the day of my visit the grassed area required cutting, in particular the areas around trees inside the front walls. It is recommended that consideration be given to the removal of two evergreen trees, maybe elwoodii species, which spoil the front view of the national school. Future Plans for developments around the school may or may not influence the existing structure.

Premises that looked well included: Churches-both are impressive; the national school-lovely (apart from uncut grass); the Woodpark Golf Club and Pitch & Putt; An Cupain Caife; The Bridge Bar and B&B; Callura Pottery Shop; The Snug Café and Wine Bar; The Village Inn and Hotel; Keane's Bar and Lounge; Cois na hAohna Bar and Lounge.

More care is needed in the selection of inappropriate signage for some commercial shopfronts. The old and still in use green P&T post office box was a lovely feature set in some excellent stonework on Main Street.

The residential estates all looked well as did the lovely individual houses around the village. Well done to all concerned.

Signs in need of repair/replacement (previously pointed out by adjudicators) are those for Ennis in the middle of the village. Signs by Waterways Ireland and the County Council at the Harbour/Beach area are in good condition (bilingual noted). The wonderful exterior of the Church of Ireland including the stone walls and well-trimmed hedge are a magnificent feature. The Catholic Church is similarly impressive. The entrance gate at the Church of Ireland is a work of art. Congratulations.

Landscaping:

From Scariff the Woodpark Golf Club and Pitch & Putt facility is set in a beautiful sylvan setting, a nice introduction to the village. The village entrance from Scariff is most appealing with mature trees, stone flowerbeds, and well-maintained cut grass verges. A negative is the two upright supports in the middle of a flower bed-the remains of an old sign. On the opposite entrance from Whitegate the black fencing at the large landscaped green area looked well and this area was quite attractive.

On Main Street the mature trees are magnificent and their presence is a wonderful legacy. At the harbour area well-laid out landscaped areas are a feature with nice wooden seating in contrast to the more inappropriate metal seats and benches. The mature trees are wonderful.

The development and ongoing work at the Aistear Park is quite excellent. Those that conceived, planned and brought to fruition the Park are to be congratulated. As are those who maintain the Park and develop the plants and other work within it. The great maze, the sundial, the play area all work well. The number and variety of plants and shrubs make it difficult to maintain the area weed free. But the overall work is to be applauded. The grassed and the path areas are well maintained.

Well done also to all involved in the various locations for good landscaping in the Individual houses and the newer residential estates were well presented. The flowerbeds at the entrances to the village are attractive and well done.

The various commemorative plaques, e.g. Mountshannon 250 (1742-1992) and the wonderful poignant Berkenheier- Sheedy Oak (June 1992) are excellent features. Well done.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Mountshannon is blessed with a beautiful location overlooking the Lake. Every attempt should be made to take further advantage of this location. The existing walks at Woodpark need to be protected for the benefit of all. Your plan to establish more flora/fauna and wildlife/natural history information boards is noted. These could be listed as a project to be included in your three-year plan for discussion with the relevant organisations. Some expert advice should be sought for the protection of existing wildlife and other species and the introduction of further birdlife. Also similar plans to get expert advice on the wild bird habitats might be considered.

The involvement of the school children in appropriate projects such as a Wildlife Interpretative Display is a project to be considered.

The Woodpark Forest Park is a great wildlife park on the doorstep of Mountshannon. The interpretative display at the entrance, maybe a feature to be repeated within the village itself for the benefit of visitors.

The Beach area with its Blue Flag and guarded by lifeguards during summer is a great facility.

The improvements at Aistear Park are to be applauded. The Bird boxes area welcome feature. The Park acts as link between the village and the harbour and its many elements are there to be a model for other similar developments in other towns.

Litter Control:

The Village was practically litter free on the day of my visit and obviously the work of TidyTowns Committee is paying dividends. The role of the teachers and schoolchildren is so very important in maintaining a litter free village. Well done to all.

Waste Minimisation:

The purpose of this category is to encourage TidyTowns Committees and the local community to get involved in projects that will reduce waste and encourage recycling. Projects could include community guidance on methods of reducing waste such as segregating litter during clean-up events.

The four separate projects listed in your Entry are excellent. These are National Spring Clean event with the National School, Weekly Litter Sweep, improved compost facility at Aistear Park, and the Compost management course for Fas participants.

One possible further project is the involvement of the primary school in the Green Flag Project

Tidiness:

Mountshannon overall looked neat and tidy on the day of my visit. Well done. Some signs need to be improved as highlighted above.

One area that requires attention is within Aistear Park. This wonderful facility is a magnificent outcome to the dreams and dedication of many people. It's a pity to see some scaffolding and boards discarded on the ground adjacent to the office area of the Park. These appear not just to be recently left on the ground. Some repair work is needed to that building so maybe they're part of the plans to refurbish.

There are two windows in the office building broken and need replacing.

Also in the Park are some large "bags" of gravel at the side of a footpath, apparently dumped but maybe part of a planned refurbishment.

Residential Areas:

The main street with its mature trees is most attractive, with some fine individual residences. Nice two storey residences, nice colours and well maintained, are situated across the road from the school. The residential estates all looked well as did the lovely individual houses around the village. Well done to all concerned.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

I feel it worthwhile to emphasise to the Committee that access to Mountshannon is by road and water, the aim should be to clearly identify, for the locals and visitors alike, the beauty and attractions of Mountshannon as one enters the village.

On land all grass verge maintenance and appropriate hedge cutting is vital. From Scariff the Woodpark Golf Club and Pitch & Putt facility is set in a beautiful sylvan setting, a nice introduction to the village. The "have you done your bit yet" signs for TidyTowns are innovative. The village entrance from Scariff is most appealing with mature trees, stone flowerbeds, and well-maintained cut grass verges. A negative is the two upright supports in the middle of a flower bed-the remains of an old sign. The village signs are clean and tidy with one exception being that of the sign for Shannon's Lough Derg-it simply needs a cleaning.

It is noted in your entry that approach roads and streets are included in general clean-up routines. The Harbour Road needs resurfacing after some specific work on that road just apparently recently completed.

The excellent entrance to Mountshannon by water is via the wonderful harbour area. This area is set out well and the links to the village are by lovely tree covered roads and through the wonderful Aistear Park. This twin facility of the harbour and the Aistear Park must be unique to Mountshannon. These both should be treasured. Well done to all concerned on the wonderful twin ongoing developments of Aistear and the Harbour and the connecting streetscape with its mature trees.

General Impression:

Mountshannon is a lovely village in which to live and spend leisure time. Congratulations to all involved in maintaining its natural and built beauty.

The ongoing co-operation between the private and public sector organisations, voluntary and sporting bodies, the national school and the TidyTowns Committee requires constant attention for the benefits of the village.

Congratulations on your 2008 entry to TidyTowns Competition and good luck for the future. I look forward to further visits to your village.