

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tullamore** Ref: **727**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **274**
Category: **F** Date(s): **18/06/2008**
17/07/2008

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	46
The Built Environment	50	39
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	24
Litter Control	50	29
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	274

Overall Development Approach:

Tullamore Tidy Towns Association is welcome to the 2008 competition. Many thanks for your completed application form, submission document and maps, which were most useful on the day. You would appear to have quite a small committee given the size of the town. The Credit Union Competition sounds like an excellent idea and many of the surrounding towns and villages seem to participate. The annual clean up of the Grand Canal is a marvellous project, and you would appear to have a strong relationship with Waterways Ireland as well as other relevant agencies and bodies. The Tidy Tots project sounds like another good initiative. Have you put together a work programme? This would be of great benefit to you in order to clearly see your priorities in terms of the ongoing improvements in the town, particularly in light of its importance and a Midlands Gateway town.

The Built Environment:

Buildings along the main street generally looked good. There is a mixture of traditional and very modern shopfronts although one or two are quite dated and could do with an upgrade. The Garda Station looked well. The traditional Bridge House Hotel looked very well. Number One Church Street was well presented. Post Offices looked good on O'Connor Square and Bridge Street. There were quite a few very fresh shopfronts of note being Pauline's Beauty and Spa, Spice Restaurant, the various Galvin's premises, the Wolf Trap and Delicious Cafe. Coco Blue had very interesting paintwork in different tones and an attractive old stone building on Church Street with a chiropractor practice was greatly admired. The retail park and commercial park on the outskirts of the town were well presented as was the shopping centre. The Church of Ireland on the hill looked marvellous and the Catholic Church looked well. We were pleased to hear of the development of the derelict buildings on convent road and the facelift of the former garage. New footpaths and bi-lingual signage are all positive contributions to this category of the competition. We look forward to seeing the results of the street-scaping programme and the towns centre developments at the Texas and Coens sites.

Landscaping:

You could consider the development of O'Connor's Square as at the moment it looks quite dated and basically just seems to act as a car park. Congratulations on your work maintaining the planters in this location but a more dynamic design in this area would be of great benefit in its central location. You could also consider further development of the canal bank areas. The town park looked magnificent it is a real civic amenity and extremely well maintained and must be of great benefit to the people of the town and visitors. It had a very active and attractive playground area. Market Square looked well with its polished pink statuary. Planting to the retail park was very good although some of the hedging was failing and should be replaced where necessary. Another area to consider developing would be to the front of the GAA pitch. Although the traditional signage was greatly admired the boundary wall was quite grubby in this location. The refurbishment of the Town Park was a well worthwhile project and will be of major benefit to local residents and visitors alike. The planting and maintenance of the roundabouts is a marvellous undertaking, and one that is all too important in modern Irish towns. We look forward to this programme planned expansion and seeing the results of the landscaping of the Clonminch Business Park.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

We applaud the completion of the Town Park refurbishment and ongoing maintenance of the canal banks in conjunction with waterways Ireland. We look forward to seeing the new information boards in these locations. You mention discussions with this body, and the Heritage Officer of Offaly County Council but give no idea of the contents of these discussions.

Litter Control:

The standard in this category was somewhat inconsistent although there was little evidence of litter on the main streets of the town and the litter bins were in good condition, there was some evidence of litter to approach roads and outlying areas of the town. We were pleased to hear of your weekly clean ups. You would appear to receive the support and help of local residents groups which is all to the good. We were pleased to hear of the acquisition of the new Green Machines by the Town Council, and of the new litter bins.

Waste Minimisation:

We were delighted to hear that there are 7 Green Flag Schools in the town and wish them luck with their future work in this regard. The RCO Points recycling initiative sounds like an interesting one and we were pleased to hear of its expansion. The reduced price composting bins are an excellent concept. We were pleased to hear of the segregation of litter on your clean ups and the proposed Energy and Waste recovery seminar in the autumn.

Tidiness:

Do pay attention to outbuildings when considering overall presentation. There were a number which were in need of fresh coats of paint to either the buildings themselves or to tin roofs. A few were noted to the car park area in Market Square and on O'Carroll Street. Do consider screening the industrial buildings on the Dublin Road. Along this road a rusty frame was missing its signage. Weed control was a problem in the vicinity of the hospital. Do discourage advertising hoardings, there were a number on approach roads and indeed in the town centre which do give a rather cluttered appearance to roadsides. We were pleased to hear of your graffiti initiative and weed control programme. Are you using environmentally friendly products? The completion of the by-pass will have a positive impact in regard to this category of the competition.

Residential Areas:

Both street houses in the town centre and estates along approach roads were generally presented to a good standard on the day. Houses at Clontarf Road were greatly admired as they are most attractive. New trees were noted at Norbury Woods. The large green space at Arden Heights was well maintained and across the road at Arden Vale there were a number of magnificent planted areas and green space and a new nameplate which looked very well. The Tidy Tullamore project sounds like a worthwhile one. You would appear to have an excellent working relationship with local residents groups, and they must benefit greatly from your expert's advice.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The attractive granite kerbs and trimming slabs on Harbour Street were admired. Roundabouts were generally well maintained with attractive permanent planting. The area of industrial buildings on the Geashill Road looked very well although the verges further out were somewhat inconsistent – were road works taking place in this location? The Dublin Road could have been to a higher standard, it was particularly overgrown by the town nameplate. You would appear to have a large area to maintain, as the town is so big. The streets of the town were generally good in appearance and road surfaces were in good condition. Do consider rear areas and their further development, as well as that of laneways. In terms of street furniture the new litter bins

were admired. A minor point would be to attend to the bench opposite the Bridge House Hotel as it was in need of some attention. Directional signage at the Dublin Road was quite faded but generally was in good condition. The work to roundabouts is all to the good and we were pleased to note that there have been improvements to footpaths and back lanes.

General Impression:

It was a pleasure to visit Tullamore. It continues to perform well in the competition and has much to offer the visitor and resident alike.

Second Round Adjudication:

Your 2nd Round adjudicator was pleased to have the opportunity to spend some time in Tullamore. This is an attractive town with some wide streets which generally has a well presented and cared for appearance. There is a dynamic feeling to the town center and this is complimented by some interesting modern buildings which usually blend quite well with older nearby properties. This adjudicator agrees with the 1st Round adjudicator that the preparation of a work programme or 3 Year Tidy Towns Plan should be considered by your committee. This will help to guide your work over the next three years. The two Squares appear to have much more potential as key focal points in Tullamore rather than just providing car parking. It is suggested that consideration be given to the development of a landscaping plan – both hard and soft – for these key areas even if this means the possible reduction of some car parking capacity. Tullamore has some very interesting older shop fronts and that at the 1796 Boland Pharmacy caught the eye. There are also some good hanging signs and these together with the use of colourful window boxes and hanging baskets provide many attractive individual elevations to the streets.

The Heritage Centre by the Canal makes an excellent use of a heritage building but a large building to the rear of this needed to be painted. The Bridge House is a beautiful older building excellently presented with hanging baskets and other flower displays. The centre of the town makes good use of colour in the built environment. At the time of second round adjudication the roundabouts were again excellently presented and this adjudicator especially liked the presentation at the IDA Business Technology Park.

The canal needed some cleaning at the bridge on Bridge Street where some litter was noted. The Town Park is such a great amenity for the town and the adjudicator was very impressed with the entrance to the Park off Cormac Street. The black railings and elaborate entrance here provides a fitting introduction to this amenity. Various parts of the canal were examined and the grassy banks admired. The 1st round adjudicator commented on the litter situation on approach roads and this remained a difficulty on the day of the 2nd Round adjudication the town centre demonstrated good litter control. Litter bins appeared to have been painted recently and proudly displayed the crest.

Approach roads were impressive especially that from the Portlaoise and Killeagh side where the fine trees create a good first impression of Tullamore. Some good roadside landscaping compliments the naturally occurring trees and greenery on this approach road. Congratulations on the work that you have done for 2008 and we look forward to your plans for 2009.