

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Midleton** Ref: **1019**
County: **Cork(South)** Mark: **244**
Category: **E** Date(s): **29/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25
Litter Control	50	31
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	244

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the filled up entry form and the map of the town. I did not find a three to five year plan. Planning is very important and this does not need to be an elaborate document. If you just write down a few items that you would like to do, have some discussions on them, if necessary, seek advice, and that's your plan. I note you have 11 on your committee and you hold meetings twice a month. You are getting support from SuperValu and Midleton town council. I do not know how you are keeping the local people informed of your plans and activities, and we find that the message is generally spread through parish newsletters and the local papers. You state you clean up school areas, and you find the competition to be rewarding.

The Built Environment:

This town has developed over the last few years in a very well planned fashion, with extensive new developments blending in very well with the older shops and offices. A good example of this is the Distillery Lane units. This is a big scheme of shops, but it is nicely fitted in and does not have too prominent a role on the main street, and stretches back well to open up at the back of the main street where there is plenty space in landscaped parking areas. There are other examples of well planned shopping units at the Riverside area and also the place where Tesco, Heaton's and the cinema are situated. Midleton College (1696) is a quite historic cut stone building, it is secured with impressive gates and sports attractive shrubs at each side of tarmac road leading up to the college, and it has developed additional classrooms in modern school fashion. Midleton Library plays a prominent role in the main street. Midleton Urban Council offices are situated in a site of considerable interest and I got the impression that this formerly was a substantial private house, it is surrounded with well maintained large lawns that contain suitable seating and leads on to a pitch and putt course. The function of this building is now very different from its original use but it has retained its original identity.

St John the Baptist church has a distinctive flavour of a historical church structure with a well maintained

graveyard on its grounds. The Catholic Church of the Most Holy Rosary is a beautiful stone church, it is visually striking and very well presented. The Community Centre is a spacious complex and it is pleasing to find that they have made space for a Gaelscoil. I enquired for directions to the schools from a local man and he very kindly pointed them out to me on St Mary's road, and he said, that with a few schools in the same area, it is very busy with traffic at school time. I saw this for myself later on, and I feel that some kind of traffic management system could be put in place to slow down the drivers. The schools looked well, except for one, and is it the old CBS building; it needs some attention. There are several shops and offices around this busy town and they are well maintained with bright colour schemes and appeared to be doing vibrant business.

Landscaping:

Your attention to landscaping is very good with some attractive displays around the town. The two graveyards near the Catholic Church are maintained in excellent condition and well done to all concerned with their upkeep. The park beside the river adjacent to the Jamieson Experience is a lovely amenity with fine traditional stone walls. The grounds around the Urban Council offices are maintained in great condition. The roundabout and general area near SuperValu is developed wonderfully and, in my view, the splendour of it would rival any other such development in Ireland. This was an exacting undertaking, but the rewards are obvious. The distinguishing features are the arched gateway where the quality of the workmanship with stone was high. The old Clonmult memorial statue is a reminder of bygone days, and I admired the modern stainless steel structure but wondered what it represents? A substantial paved space leads on to a good lawn and this area has most attractive public seating. It is adorned with beautiful flower beds and an array of young trees is maturing well. Other flower arrangements in tubs and beds are around the town. The little park down at Bailick road is a nice amenity, with well trimmed grass.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There is huge potential in Midleton to explore wildlife and you could enlist some people on to your committee that are interested in the outdoor pursuits. I headed down towards the water and came to Bailick Park and the potential here is enormous for the study of various types of wildlife. I feel a study of the wildlife of this area should be undertaken and the results of it could be published on a suitable notice board in this park. Different types of birds were coming and going and I noticed that some of them appeared to be feeding on something in the mud along the river. It was great to see some fish there and this tells us immediately that these waters are not polluted, although some materials were dumped there as I will refer to this later under tidiness. As I headed up towards the SuperValu roundabout I admired some young people fishing in the river and it is great to see this. I looked down the Abhannacurra River and there was the wonderful sight of two swans leading out four cygnets as they swam up along – a truly great sight!

Litter Control:

For the most part, the control of litter was good and this tells us that your weekly litter picks are good. There was bits of litter in a few locations on the main street and some of this was been thrown there by two young men who came out a pub in joyful mood but their exuberance was controlled at the arrival of a Garda car. The national problem of cigarette ends and chewing gum residue was in evidence in Midleton, but some of the publicans were vigilant and kept their shop fronts in good condition.

Waste Minimisation:

I am very pleased to find that some of the schools have achieved the green flag status and this means that teachers, pupils and their parents are now well aware of the correct treatment of their local environment and enticed towards the reduction of waste by composting it. I inspected three recycling depots, firstly at the back of Distillery Lane – around 17 bins – well kept area and well serviced bins and I was pleased to see a notice for CCTV cameras, the next I saw was at Market Street – around 17 bins – well kept area and well serviced bins, and finally I saw a small recycling depot at the back of Four Homes – there were approximately 9 bins in a tidy place with well serviced bins, but unfortunately some other rubbish was dumped there in a black plastic bag.

In the vast majority of places around the country as well as in Midleton nearly one hundred per cent of the people treat these recycling depots responsibly, but just a very small amount of people will dump there. For this reason large built up areas like Midleton could have CC TV cameras and the law could be rigorously enforced.

Tidiness:

The town centre and many other areas were in an orderly fashion and particularly the new developments business places. However I was most disappointed to find early on in my visit the condition of the waters edge along the mud in Bailick park, as a number of items were dumped there, especially a large tyre of a tractor

which appeared to have been put there a long time ago plus a shopping trolley etc. To leave this place in that condition sends out the wrong message to locals and indeed to visitors like myself. The seats and table combination had been damaged and broken grass was strewn on a nice walkway in the fine small park.

Residential Areas:

The housing estates are well maintained and there are impressive displays of landscaping in them. There are some very nice mature estates that show that the residents have a good pride of place attitude. The traditional town houses were decorated, for the most part, in a variety of good colour schemes and a lot of them had bright floral displays of flowers in hanging baskets, window boxes and pots. In other areas there are some great private houses that had impressive displays of lawns, shrubs, flowers and hedging and these complimented the public landscaping to give good freshness and colour to the town.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The roads that I travelled on are in good condition and Midleton is set back well from the main Cork road. The road signs are clean and distinct. There are some very good stone walls on some of the approach roads with lots of mature trees. Appropriate footpaths make for relatively safe walking in the surrounding areas of the town.

General Impression:

It was a pleasure to stop off for a few hours in Midleton and admire some very interesting areas. I got the impression that great attention is paid to planning matters in this area. You have an important role to play in the maintenance of this progressive town to maintain it in good condition and indeed to improve it in some places. Well done.