

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Maynooth** Ref: **377**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **271**
Category: **F** Date(s): **14/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	44
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	271

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your comprehensive application and welcome to the TidyTowns competition 2009. Maynooth TidyTowns has a steady set of 16 volunteers, with much shared experience, and new members joining in recent years, although the rate of newcomers joining has slowed. Your set up is well organised and a social event in January starts off the year. Fundraising may be a challenge this year as the local businesses usually donate for the floral displays. Valuable contributions have come from a wide base, notably the Intel community involvement, local Supervalu and GlenRoyal Hotel. There exists excellent partnerships with local schools and the neighbouring town. There is a good rolling 5-year plan submitted with a clear vision for the town. It would be good to include indicative costs of projects listed, to assist with your own planning, and to give an indication of lead partner for projects, although this is included in cases which refer to the various liaison persons within TidyTowns. There seem to be a few instances where conditions of planning permissions are not being applied by developments until the TidyTowns press for it, whereas this should be a role for development control within the local authority. The sewage upgrade works underway is causing huge disruption but it will be worth it and there is huge potential for improving areas through reinstatement afterwards. Well done and keep up the good work!

The Built Environment:

The tree lined avenue of Maynooth is a delight, with the imposing castle and St. Patrick's college at the end, it's a wonderfully planned town. There are some fine buildings in the college, and fine churches. The lovely buildings on the Dublin Road unfortunately have inappropriate signage such as at the row with the Euro saver shop. The solicitor's sign at entrance to town has letters missing which does catch the eye as its in such a prominent spot. The shopfronts on main street are mostly very well presented, with Elite Confectionery, Coonan's auctioneers, Brady's, Caulfield's and the Mill Cellar all worth a mention. The red and white shop at Dublin end has a nice frontage and traditional metalwork in the window, but the current sign does not do it

justice, its possibly a shop for car related products but difficult to tell. Is this the old hardware shop? There used to be an interesting slanted glass frontage along here which is sadly gone. I note the large derelict house at main junction/ Parson St. is to be restored which is good. Larine house looks very well on the square, as does the hard landscaping here. There are a couple of new restaurants which have a classy, elegant appearance – The Avenue and Greene's. Some lovely restored and brightly painted cottages were noted in Leinster Cottages and Cross Lane. It is a pity that a large heritage building going towards Dillon's Row is not looking its best as there are interesting features in the frontage such as railings. While others along here are delightful, and the old stone walls were noted, as they were in many places throughout the town.

Landscaping:

It is a great to see the Mill Wheel retained as a feature in the new shopping complex. An information panel would be appropriate here to inform on its significance. Carton Avenue is a wonderful asset for the town but the notice board here needs some attention as the info could not be seen clearly. The rain may be getting inside. The cottages on Convent Lane were all decked out with brackets for the hanging baskets but no baskets as yet. I would suggest removing the brackets if they are not being used. Otherwise these are a delightful row of well presented houses. The planters in the square were bare and awaiting their plants. The square is a modern feature of hard landscaping that is unusual and attractive.

The trees at the Tesco boundary are good and help to soften and screen the complex. The ground is still rough where they have been planted and it would be good to see this finished off.

Nice job on the grotto in St. Mary's church

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There is a plan for this section which, when put into action should gain you marks. The presentation from the Heritage Officer in 2008 no doubt boosted your understanding of biodiversity and what you wanted to achieve, as did consultations with wildlife expert provided through Kildare County Council. The idea of a panel at the Parson St. river is a good one, as this area could be misconceived as being untidy, whereas the bankside vegetation could be good natural habitat. Some concern was raised over machinery working near the river opposite the manor mills. There was quite a bit of sediment dislodged into the watercourse as part of the sewage works and this was reported to the council at the time as there was potential to impact negatively on fisheries. The canals and rivers are excellent local amenities which can be managed for complimentary multi-purposes of recreation and biodiversity.

Litter Control:

There was no litter on any approaches, very good for a town this size, and none in the residential areas or the main street. There was quite a bit of litter however on the back lanes, mostly of broken glass and a few items which did not appear to have been there a long time. Overall excellent litter management in place. The clean up after dogs signs were noted. Again, the partnership approach of working with neighbouring town and Intel is applauded, as is the linkage with National Spring Clean. The problem you face with bin lids disappearing is a shame and good luck in finding a solution. Hopefully the council cutbacks will not mean illegal dumping response times are delayed.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done to the schools and all involved in the green-schools programme, for achieving awarded flags and for the on-going links with the TidyTowns committee. The university action on waste prevention is also noted, as is the new green waste composting initiative at Rail Park.

Further marks could be gained here by promotion of waste prevention through workshops or seminars, for example, on home composting. There are a host of events and initiatives that could be applied and are described in the Race Against Waste handbook

Tidiness:

Very tidy, well marked roads, paths and cycleways throughout. While many lane buildings have been restored, there are several derelict sites mostly used as parking bays with a profusion of no parking signs and graffiti. Traffic in town is a challenge, and plans for more parking spaces are noted. There are a few unsightly building sites around town, but the leinster arms has made good efforts on effective screening. There's a noticeable hoarding opposite the manor mills complex, and the sewage works underway are causing disruption throughout town. Pity the entrance to the college is blocked. I'm sure all the residences look forward to when they are finished! The plans for old parish hall are noted and welcomed!

Residential Areas:

There are very nice floral displays at entrance to Cluain Aoibhin, and lovely houses and gardens out the front, but the estate in the back looks tired and quite unkempt. This is also the case with Meadowbrook, with some

properties neglected and overgrown weeds at kerbs. This appears to be the challenge of having a large number of rental properties, many inhabited only during the college term. Has there been any approach to landlords to chip in for maintenance of estates? There was some graffiti evident in Beaufield/ College Green but no litter so some progress is being made here! The stream running through Meadowbrook is a good amenity and natural bankside vegetation provides good wildlife habitat. Newtown lawns and Castle Dawson appear well cared for. The profusion of new build, empty houses and apartments, is a sad sight, but a common one throughout the country at this time. Moyglare Abbey is very neat and well cared for, with lovely name signs for different sections within. Pebble Hill has some great natural hedgerows at the back and summer plants along the entrance road add a touch of colour. Lyreen Park also very neat, and the lovely name sign at O'Neill Park was noted.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

All approaches clean and litter free. From the Straffan/ motorway side generally very good once over the bridge with very neat, clean edges and cyclepaths. Marvellous new nameplate at motorway entrance to the town, a nice way to mark the 50th anniversary of the competition.

Coming from Dillon's Row direction, there are so many new builds, not all of tasteful design, but the stone wall in front of charming cottages provides attractive entrance to town. From Kilcock side, the university is a mighty presence and looks very well, with the trees along the entrance and vista into the modern north campus. The new shopping complex is smart and frontage of Aldi screened by lovely old stone wall on this approach.

Resurfacing works needed on the laneways after damage from machinery for the sewage upgrade works.

General Impression:

A fine town, laden with history but with vibrant modern presence. Many excellent facilities and amenities, well integrated town. Challenges are in residential areas with short-term residents, traffic management, and disruption from developments. A strong, well organised committee, should continue to achieve good results in competition. Good luck!