

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Murroe** Ref: **464**
County: **Limerick** Mark: **250**
Category: **C** Date(s): **24/06/2009**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2009 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 37 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 38 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 38 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 25 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 24 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 6 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 16 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 31 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 28 |
| General Impression | 10 | 7 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 250 |

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome Murroe to the 2009 National TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for submitting your completed entry form and map of the village on behalf of Murroe TidyTowns Association. Your committee of seven holding four meetings per annum have achieved a lot and while it can be difficult to involve people in the effort, it is worthwhile to persevere. The town of Murroe has some lovely features and, as an expanding town, these natural amenities and lovely facilities need to be protected and developed in the appropriate manner. The TidyTowns initiative contributes to this effort in such a positive manner.

It is positive to note that your activities continue to receive support from Limerick County Council, as co-operation with other agencies can provide a very valuable boost to your efforts. The communications strategy of using the Parish Newsletter and also that of holding public meetings is proving of value, as the efforts of local residents to maintain tidiness in their areas is successful.

Your engagement with the school is also of value through the Green Flag initiative and also having a Committee member acting as a member of Board of Management.

The preparation of a Three Year Action plan rather than a five year is recommended. Longer term targets can prove more difficult in these economic times. It's noted that Ballyhoura Development Ltd has commissioned such a plan and that this will be available for next year's 2010 Competition.

The Built Environment:

The small town of Murroe is a nice mixture of the traditional rural village and seven newer housing estates, which has increased the population accordingly. One of the ongoing tasks of all residents is to manage the

blend of the old and the new for the benefit of all.

The Monument in the village centre flanked by two copper beech trees, with well maintained grass area, is an imposing landmark in the town. The black and white painted kerbing surrounding the site is nice and clean.

The School looks to be in excellent condition, with six nicely painted murals on the school building wall, and nicely kept grounds. It is good to see the Green Flag on display here. Some litter was seen outside school grounds though.

Ryan's Pub looked reasonably well with a nice red brick entrance feature. The former "Rent an Irish Cottage" scheme of thatched cottages is a nice feature and adds to the indigenous feel of this mainly rural town. .

The Church, the Grotto and the grounds looked well as ever, with nice lawns, stone walls, gates and flower boxes outside.

The grounds of Murroe GAA Club in Dr. Harty Park, founded in 1887 with the new clubhouse opened in 1997, is a nice facility, well kept and a good amenity for the community.

Londis and S. Reale Butchers looked well, as did the Post Office. The new Crokers Bar and Restaurant in the town is quite impressive, as is the attached Johnny's Cottage. What seemed to be empty barrels outside the pub, don't endear themselves to TidyTowns. The vacant site between Crokers and the Londis is a bit of an eyesore.

The Mulcair Credit Union is in good condition.

The village pump and small landscaped stone area, along with the plaque to deceased TidyTowns Committee's members Mary Holmes and Tim O'Brien is a lovely poignant feature.

BOS Hardware is nicely painted and kept well enough.

The village has a lovely mix of old charm and exciting new developments. The former 'Rent-an- Irish' group of thatched cottages and the village pump nestling peaceful in the heart of the village, that has changed from just a village into a new town, were reminders of times past.

Landscaping:

Nice Shrubbery in front of Garda Barracks, couple of small flower boxes on monument green.

There were some fine examples of good landscaping throughout the area. The first one to catch our eye was on the approach from Limerick. The shrubs, boulders and well cut grass, with the neat black and white kerbing, created a good first impression.

As was stated last year, the trees and green area with Glenstal Abbey etched on the flat stone in front of the entrance to Glenstal was very attractive. The entrance to Glenstal Abbey is 'guarded' by the beautiful gate lodge, and the lovely sylvan scene continues up the driveway over bridges and by little lakes through the grounds of the Abbey. Murroe residents are blessed with the accessibility of Glenstal Abbey and its magnificent estate.

The area known as the Amenity Park offers wonderful potential for the appropriate natural amenities and wildlife development. At the moment, it's a nice walk through the wooded area and, the entrance gates are in need of some identification as the "gate to the Amenity Area".

Glenside Pitch and Putt course was beautifully presented. There were some nice plant containers outside many houses and outside the Church.

The shrubbery near the Garda station looked fairly well. There was a good use of planted containers and hanging baskets throughout the village and the school grounds were well maintained.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The "Silvermine and Slievefelim Mountain's Forest Walking Routes" sign is nice, adjacent sign is badly faded.

The Slí na Sláinte signpost is on display past school, and is an important amenity.

The amenity park, with its lovely forest walk, is an excellent facility with huge potential for the residents and

visitors alike. Your plans to maintain the paths and seating in the amenity park are worthwhile and these improvements will help increase the use of this area. A very enjoyable walk could be made even more so, if some information on the background to the park is made available to the visitor.

It was noted that Glenstal grounds have signs indicating that the area is a wildlife sanctuary and together with the amenity park, there is a great opportunity to broaden the range of birds and wildlife in the area. With the Clare Glens in the nearby vicinity, it's possible to create a network of walks and trails for wildlife and birdlife enthusiasts. Appropriate expertise should be sought in this process.

Litter Control:

Litter was seen on Abington approach road, with bags and newspapers blowing around on street. Some litter was in evidence in parking area in front of school.

Dustbin outside the shop was in need of emptying. Your twice weekly collection of litter seems to be working well.

Litter control in the village was generally fairly good. While bins in the village seemed to be coping well, it is important to ensure regular emptying of bins is organised.

It is good to note that you will be continuing twice weekly litter control evenings for the future.

Waste Minimisation:

As was stated previously, we applaud your endeavours to encourage Limerick County Council to provide a recycling bank in the village and we hope you will be successful. In the meantime, it is good to note that all litter collected under the Tidy Towns banner is being fully segregated on a twice weekly basis and that the national school is also practicing litter segregation.

Tidiness:

The town was generally tidy on the day of our visit. One of the display maps is particularly difficult to view through its Perspex cover and this should be upgraded.

Weed control in the village was generally good, and the efforts of the County Council in this regard are positive. The plans to remove offending fly posting is the correct approach and your efforts to get those responsible to discontinue the practice is good.

Residential Areas:

Approaching the 50km/h zone from Abington side, there are some nice residential houses, nicely landscaped and maintained.

Abbeyowney development is a well decorated nice development with a nice green area to the rear. Nice clean estate, nice paving and sculpture at entrance

Nice individual house was seen opposite the National School.

The new development, past the National School called Glenstal Gate, had a nice attractive entrance, and some lovely copper beech trees along the entrance. However, the common grass area in the centre is unfinished and, therefore not maintained. Here again, it was seen that construction work was unfinished, with machinery and building materials left unused and closed off on site. The areas that are finished and occupied do look well. Nice footpaths are in evidence around this area.

Opposite this development is the new estate called Garanbawn, although the entrance for this is around the corner. This is a nice well maintained open-plan estate, although the green area needs cutting. Footpaths here are well kept with no weeds, and it is helpful for the visitor (and the postman) to see house number signposts. The commercial area looked well, although the car park area needed a sweeping to remove broken glass and litter.

A nice stone sign marked the entrance to Gilmartin Park, which has some nice individual houses; well landscaped. A nice green area is found in the centre, surrounded by some attractive bungalows. The condition of this central green is not great however, with the surface in poor condition. Other grassed areas needed trimming. A bench at the exit was seen, perhaps more could be added.

Rod Fearná and The Meadow estates opposite are very attractive, with some nicely planted individual standard trees on the large green area. Daydreams Crèche is a fine facility, with a nice front and appearance. The stone wall at the entrance to the estate is another nice feature.

Liscreagh is another large development next to the GAA pitch. This is a nice estate, with some nice landscaped areas and well maintained grass areas.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

1km out on the approach road from Abington, the grass verges need cutting back, appear quite untidy.

Sign indication "Murroe twinned with Evry Gregy Sur-Yerres, France" was obscured by overgrowth. The corresponding sign on the National School Road is also obscured by overgrowth.

Ditches need trimming on all sides of Abington approach road. Some hedges were overgrowing out onto the roads. Roads in the area were, generally, in good condition

There were many well built stone walls fronting properties and the amenity park, and they added to the overall presentation of the roads in the village

General Impression:

Murroe is an attractive and expanding village which is experiencing and accepting great change. It's a lovely place to visit, as it must be a pleasant place to live and work. There are some wonderful natural amenity facilities close by, e.g. Clare Glens. The beautiful and magnificent Glenstal Abbey is unique. Congratulations to all involved in the your TidyTowns activities, and we wish you the very best with future plans in the Competition.