

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Westport** Ref: **366**  
County: **Mayo** Mark: **304**  
Category: **E** Date(s): **19/06/2009**  
**24/07/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	48
The Built Environment	50	39
Landscaping	50	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	39
Waste Minimisation	20	12
Tidiness	30	19
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38
General Impression	10	9
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>304</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Westport Tidy Towns Committee is welcome to the 2009 Competition. You obviously continue to maintain an excellent relationship with local bodies, as well as national ones. The particularly significant factors, in relation to Westport Committee's work, are the unique and special relationship the town has with the local community, the concept of partnership (talked about in your submission) with local organizations and its willingness to share its wealth of experience with other Tidy Towns Committees. Your hosting of the first National Tidy Towns Conference certainly seems to have made an impact, to judge from applications from many of the Tidy Towns Committees around the country! Work with the local schools is particularly important and we read with interest that you extend your work in this area to other schools in the greater Westport area, as well as the schools of the town itself. The Junior Tidy Towns Committee is a very important contribution and the various projects submitted made for interesting reading. The committee members, who visit the schools, obviously have a distinct and positive influence. We were interested to read of the impact Westport's success has had on nearby towns and villages - this is very clear on the ground.

### The Built Environment:

The buildings of the town generally looked well. Those on the Octagon were generally fresh, the Wyatt Hotel looking particularly fresh in yellow, with attractive hanging baskets. The Town Hall sported colourful window boxes. Plans for the future of this building were read of with interest and we wish you luck with this project. Clarke's also looked very fresh and much painting activity was evident throughout the town on the day. The famous Matt Molloy's had also been freshly painted. Downtown Records is an attractive modern shopfront, which sits well with the existing architecture of the street. It sported its original sash windows above, as indeed many buildings in the town do. The Leaping Lizard is an attractive simple shopfront also, on Bridge Street. The church looked well on the mall. Walshe's is an attractive traditional shopfront on Mill Street. Thomas Moran's had a cheerful display outside. Some empty shopfronts were evident to streets and, hopefully these

will be occupied in the not too distant future. The modern Cineplex and Leisure Park was well maintained. Some staining was evident to a frame (missing its signage) at the attractive shop that comprises O'Reilly Turpin's. The railway station on Altamount Street looked quite charming and is an attractive introduction to the town for visitors – the museum in this location is most interesting. The Garda Station looked very fresh on the mall. The pre-planning clinics are an excellent idea and the computer-generated model must be very useful when used as a planning tool. The Town of Tomorrow Competition sounded very interesting, although it is to be wondered how the ideas contained in the winning entry would be received by the Heritage Council! A marvellous idea to get young people thinking about urban planning and their local environment!

### **Landscaping:**

The landscaped areas throughout the town looked as well as ever. New, since this adjudicator's last visit, were the curved bamboo frames on the Octagon, below the marvellous statue of St. Patrick. The stainless steel sculpture celebrating Tidy Town's victory looked marvellous on the sloped grassy banks at the end of the mall, where the fountain in the water played happily away. An unusual sculpture of trees and towers was admired outside the Cineplex. The large green on the Quays area was well maintained. Work along approach roads is most important, as it is the first impression a visitor has of the town and Westport never fails to impress in this regard. Planting of semi-mature trees, erection of stone-walling and sowing of wildflowers, all make a good visual impact. We were interested to hear of your strategy for replacing damaged trees, which is most effective, as these can look most unfortunate. Work in conjunction with bodies such as the Western Fisheries Board is impressive. The floral planting throughout the town strikes just the right balance of creating colour without being over-powering. The involvement with the Limoges gardening enthusiasts in relation to this category is an interesting development! We were pleased to see that you give consideration to hard as well as soft landscaping, when considering this category-all important in an urban environment.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

This is an area of the competition that you obviously enjoy and have a great enthusiasm for! We read with interest of your plans for a floating bed for waterfowl on the Mall and look forward to seeing it implemented in years to come. The bat boxes are another good idea and one that is obviously closely monitored. The wildlife gardens are another important project. Work in relation to extending your bank of existing walks and treks is also an excellent initiative.

### **Litter Control:**

The standard of litter control was very good on the day. The adjudicator spent several days staying within the town and was always amazed to discover how clean and free from litter the streets were in the mornings, after a busy night before! The greatest difficulty seemed to be when bins were full, but there was no evidence of overspill and some shops seem to monitor the bins outside their properties. Now and again, a paper was spotted, but seemed to be picked up just as quickly, a marvellous achievement for a town as large and busy as Westport. The Transition Year Litter Pick-Ups and the litter survey are both excellent projects – getting the young people involved as early as possible will pay dividends in years to come. You would appear to have established exactly where the problem areas and times are, and organised your work around these. The gum pouch is a good idea and one we came across in only one other centre in the area. It will be interesting to hear how effective these prove to be.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The recycling bins at the James Street car park were well maintained, as were those at the quays. The school and Convent of Mercy on Altamount Street proudly displayed its Green Flag. The composting workshops are an excellent initiative and we read with interest of plans to extend this further in relation to residential areas. Recycling of the results of your litter pick ups is a good initiative-congratulations on your Regional Recycling Initiative Award. The success in the Green Hospitality Awards was read of with great interest. The implementation of Health and Safety procedures in this regard is a sensible move. Using text messages and e mail to communicate in an effort to reduce paper usage is an excellent idea. Good luck with your new segregated litter bins.

### **Tidiness:**

There was some dereliction evident, noted in the vicinity of the Cedar Park development. Industrial buildings along the Ballinrobe Road were neatly presented. The tin shed adjacent to Emo Oil should be repainted in its traditional red or green colour, as should a stepped gabled building near the Garda Station. The absence of election posters in the town was a fact that gained national interest. We were pleased to hear of the success that the FAS scheme has been in relation to this category of the competition. The dog litter stations are an excellent idea and certainly one that would be useful in other centres. The removal of weeds from gutters and chimneys is very important and we read with interest of this early morning project.

### **Residential Areas:**

Cedar Park is a dramatic apartment building, and one of many which have sprung up around the town. These look well for the most part and cleverly use appropriate materials in a modern way to blend in with the existing fabric of the town. The charming houses of Peter Street step up the sloping street and looked well under their canopy of trees. The well kept houses and open space off the James Street car park were admired. The many B&B's on the road to the Quays contribute well to this category of the competition, as did the many hotels such as the Westport Woods Hotel, the Castlecourt Hotel, the Knockranny House Hotel etc. Ashwood estate looked well with its render and stone houses, as did adjacent Ashwood Glade. An attractive terrace of houses on Altamont Street were admired, one in particular with clematis growing around the front door. This is an area of the competition that you obviously feel is important to your work and the efforts you make in this regard are very important.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The car park at James Street was well maintained with map, tubs of pansies and information board. There was evidence of maintenance to it on the day. It also sported an interesting sculpture incorporating tree and stone towers. The car park on the opposite side of the road at Lime Court wasn't as attractive, and some properties here were for sale or development. Hopefully these will be developed in as a sensitive manner as the rest of the town. The landscaped bed at the entrance was admired, however. The Quays area was well presented, although many of the shops appeared to be for rent. We read your comments in relation to this and hope that you succeed in our efforts in this regard. Approach roads were generally well maintained. The Ballinrobe Road was admired for its well cut verges, floral displays and welcome sign with stone planted bed. The various medal, international and national award wins were proudly displayed. The relatively new ash trees were coming along well on this road. The roadsides were very neat and relatively new lamp standards were admired.

### **General Impression:**

It has been many years since this adjudicator first had the pleasure of visiting Westport, both as a visitor and in capacity as an adjudicator of this competition. It looked as well as ever on the day. Congratulations on the hard work conducted by all over the years – achievements to be very proud of!

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Your adjudicator was delighted to have the opportunity of returning to Westport, a town that has given so much to the TidyTowns Competition in national terms. Your approach to TidyTowns is innovative in many respects and the Junior TidyTowns Committee is a great and worthwhile concept. A close examination of the town reveals that there has obviously been a creative Town Architect at work together with developers, who could see beyond the routine and mundane in design terms. A key aspect of the built environment in Westport is how successfully modern buildings sit alongside more traditional structures. This balance is not easy to achieve and is frequently unsuccessful. The Quay area is an interesting part of Westport in that it has its own village atmosphere that has been successfully preserved. At Roman Island, the old Mill building still continues to be a problem in presentation terms and hopefully there is a resolution not too far away. At the Tesco development on Altamont Street, the curved wall at the roadside was admired that uses good stone wall techniques, combined with more modern materials on top. Modern shop fronts in Westport coexist quite happily with more traditional facades. Westport is good on the issue of detailing in terms of the built environment and this can make so much difference to the visual impact of a new development. The very good murals at the Gaelscoil were very much admired. The landscaping in and around Westport continues to be excellently designed and maintained, and at the Octagon the planting for year round colour and texture was much appreciated. The work of TidyTowns and others has made the river a key feature of the town and the presentation here is excellent. The flowers along the stone walls, that contain the river, added just the right amount of colour. At The Quay, the large lake was much admired; the overall presentation here is superb and the landscaping, and well kept grass areas make this a real feature of Westport. In terms of litter, some dumping was noted at the Bring Centre in the Quay area. Three cardboard boxes and one timber container, together with broken glass was noted here. In the town centre, the street cleaning was underway early in the morning. Occasional littering was noted in other areas, but was not considered serious. The display of retail goods on the pavement was noted in the Octagon general area. In the view of this adjudicator this is most unfortunate. The situation, as observed, reduced the effective width of the pavement here quite considerably and could cause problems for the disabled. At Scoil Phadraig on Altamont Street, the rusty roadside railings needed to be treated and repainted. The adjudicator would like to wish you well in your work for next year, when we look forward to returning to beautiful Westport.