

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Inniskeen** Ref: **556**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **257**
Category: **B** Date(s): **04/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	21
Litter Control	50	38
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	257

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the excellent application and the supporting supplementary material, which gives a great insight into the work being done by both, the TidyTowns Committee and the Local Community. You have fostered strong links with both, the Local Authority and the Monaghan Partnership, and this type of relationship has obvious benefits for the village of Inniskeen. I have to admit that this was my first time visiting the birthplace of Patrick Kavanagh and indeed it was my loss, as it is far from the place often portrayed by the celebrated poet. I am sure that he would have been impressed with the village as it is today and particularly with the wonderful facility that is Inniskeen Grattans GAA Club, a far cry from those bleak days of yore. It also helped that the village was at its best on what was a truly pleasant summer's day. Last year's adjudicator suggested that the village would greatly benefit from a 3 Year Plan and I am glad to see that you have taken the advice and furnished one with your application. Inniskeen has the potential to achieve an even higher standing in the Monaghan TidyTowns ranking and a basic 3 Year Plan with realisable actions and timescales will help in achieving this objective. As regards your concerns that the judging takes place too early, you are not alone in expressing these views. Unfortunately, there are a multitude of centres to be adjudicated within the given timescale and the deadline for first adjudications has to be adhered to.

The Built Environment:

The new works outlined as being complete in your application were visited and noted with the refurbished McNello's Bar taking centre stage as one of the focal points in the centre of the village. Choice of colours in a building conveys different messages, the vibrant red and white of the Community Centre give the impression of an active place. The parking area in front of the building was neat and tidy, maybe the County and the local club flags could be replaced as they looked a little jaded compared to the rest of the building. The other civic

amenity building that appealed to this adjudicator was the Credit Union Office. Public toilets need to be maintained at all times as they can easily become grotty, the condition of the toilets in the village was not up to the standard expected. It is something that the Committee might address with whoever is responsible for their up keep. The Church of Mary Mother of Mercy, relatively new in design terms, was well presented, so credit is due to those entrusted with the task of maintaining it.

Similarly the National School was in tip top condition, with an excellent playing pitch at the rear. The grounds of the wonderfully restored old Church house, the remnants of a monastery and round tower, are probably the main historical focal points of the village. An open pitch and putt competition was taking place at the local club and attracted players from around the vicinity and from the North; they had to be impressed with the condition of the course and ancillary facilities.

The only downside was the closure of the river walk due to the proximity of the course and the possibility of some big hitters getting out of hand! The core area of the village is very inviting with good road surface, well signposted local historical places of interest and the unique sculptor of Patrick Kavanagh. The owners of McNello's are to be congratulated for the manner in which they have revitalised the premises, other commercial concerns Magee's and Duffy's were also in good condition. Mention also of Angelo's Take away and the excellent Tea Room housed in the old style cottage building across from the Pitch & Putt Course. It's a pity to see that An Troscairn is closing down, as it has a very distinctive hand painted sign, but new owners may revitalise the premises. Overall, a good standard was observed in this category and areas of concern, such as dereliction and untidy frontages were few in number.

Landscaping:

The standard of landscaping was quite good, as you have succeeded in getting the mix of trees, shrubs and annuals in balance.

Green areas were very well maintained and the core village area has now been further enhanced by the excellent features mentioned in the previous section. It might be worth considering having one or two additional planters in that area which would make it even more inviting. The variety of trees to be seen in the village and its environs was quite striking from sycamore to hornbeam. A number of private gardens were very attractive and it would be unfair to single out one above the other, except to say there were examples of ones with an abundance of colour and some of nice low maintenance design. Some nice window boxes were observed throughout the village and these were effective in that they were not too obtrusive. I note the plans you have for landscaping over the next three years, but may I suggest that you might get an independent assessment to help decide what is best for the Village.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Fane river walk was closed to coincide with the Pitch and Putt competition, so my access was limited to area near entrance gate.

Good to note that you intend to have an explanatory wildlife sign erected on the banks of the river and to make a wormery, and plant scrubs to attract insects and, especially, different species of butterflies. The siting of nesting boxes around the village is a worthwhile contribution to the preservation of wildlife. You have many wildlife habitats in the immediate countryside and perhaps the committee might consider approaching the school principle to ascertain if the school children could become part of a specific wildlife project. Making contact with the County Wildlife Officer is another option that you could pursue, whereby he/she could come and advise on the appropriate school project under this category. Any such project would be a legacy for future generations to come.

Litter Control:

Litter control was very good, given that the village is a little scattered, its obvious that the residents are conscious of keeping Inniskeen litter free where possible. Regular picks on approach roads and in the main village are the key to maintaining a high standard. Keep up the good work and do offer encouragement to school kids to be aware of litter in the village and the need to bin it.

A similar message can be given to the local adult population as well. One or two additional bins would not go astray and I would suggest that you have one style of bin, the stone variety being the one most in keeping the street scape.

Waste Minimisation:

The Bring Bank, which is in an ideal location for accessibility, is a good example of how such a facility should be maintained – no plastic bags at the side, as can be seen at many similar banks. Waste Minimisation is about how to avoid creating excessive waste where possible and then considering environmentally friendly ways of dealing with the waste created. There is no mention of any specific project in your application that

would benefit the village under this heading. The Committee should consult the Race Against Waste publication and the website to see what actions would be beneficial to Inniskeen. It may be worthwhile to invite a representative out to talk to the group in order to impart knowledge that would help you put a project together pre next year's competition.

Tidiness:

Farming activity often creates road side residue, especially during the summer season when such activity intensifies. The road verges and kerbsides were pretty clean and tidy, and it looks like any residue is cleaned up regularly. The river bank, from what I could observe, was relatively tidy and no residue was visible in the river itself. Signage is clean and visible, and there was very little fly posting, election posters aside, to be seen on commercial properties. Speed limits have helped to slow down the through traffic and that was noticeable on adjudication day. A few things that might be addressed are as follow: previously mentioned flags at the Community Centre, also the Monaghan Leader notice board at the pitch and putt course has faded badly and needs to be replaced.

Residential Areas:

The village in essence is a residential area and for the most part all homesteads were well maintained, with adjoining areas and boundary walls in a very presentable state. The three estates, especially the older St Daighs, a most unusual saint's name, were well maintained. Very little else to be added here, except keep doing the basics well as you have done to date. The people of Inniskeen do have a strong sense of Pride of Place judging by the way they keep their residences.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Entrances into the village were quite good, hedgrows and verges treated in accordance with recommendations for the preservation of wildlife. Road surfaces were good and signs, with the exception of a few that were obscured from view, were clean and visible.

New footpaths make an inordinate difference to any entrance and Inniskeen has benefited in terms of appearance from the provision of some new footpaths, as well newly resurfaced roads.

General Impression:

It has been quite a pleasant experience for this adjudicator to visit the Village of Inniskeen for the very first time.

For a committee of eleven you have succeeded in achieving quite a lot and can be well pleased with your performance.

Good to note that you have taken on board the suggestion from last years adjudicator to put in place a 3 Year Plan, this will give you focus over the period in question. The village has potential to do even better in the competition, but this takes a little time as well as the small matter of accessing additional resources to do the work outlined in the plan. You are wished well in the competition in the years ahead.