

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Scotshouse** Ref: **1218**
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **192**
Category: **B** Date(s): **12/06/2009**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2009 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 26 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 28 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 27 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 12 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 28 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 6 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 11 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 24 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 24 |
| General Impression | 10 | 6 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 192 |

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the completed application form and welcome to TidyTowns 2009. Your committee of 4 is rather small to cover all aspects of the work to be undertaken under the competition categories. I would encourage you as a committee to try to get other community residents to become involved on a regular basis, as they will bring fresh ideas and also will be able to share the workload.

Do consider a 3 Year Plan which does not have to be complex, all you need is a work schedule and timescale that are realistic and achievable. The Village has far more potential than its present standing suggest, so if you can even get the basics of a plan together, plus augment your group with additional people that would be a very positive step. Good to note that the local Hall Committee and the ICA do give you support in advance of the competition each year, try and build on this and also use your contact with Monaghan County to better effect.

The Built Environment:

St Andrews Church and Graveyard was quite well maintained, it could be further enhanced with simple sand blasting and maybe some supportive resident of the village could be approached to sponsor such work. The other public buildings such as the National School and Community Hall were well presented, one must commend those parishioners that have the responsibility for their upkeep. The Catholic Church and Grounds were quite impressive, fine stone structure with well manicured grounds and easy access for people with disabilities, as well as car owners. The derelict building near the school and across from the Gala Shop is a bit of an eyesore, is it possible for the committee to engage with the owners, if they reside in the village, to see if anything can be done to improve its appearance. Connolly's Gala shop was acceptable and tidy, so well done to the owners for keeping the external frontage free of clutter. Small improvements in a village the size of Scotshouse have a major impact and the upgrading of the Village pump has had that desired effect.

Landscaping:

Trees are important plants in any village and there seems to be a lack of new saplings in the village. In an overall context, the village could benefit from a landscaping plan. It would be a good idea to get some advice from the village planning section within Monaghan County Council or through the Monaghan Tidy Towns Network to assess what is required to enhance the village by way of planting arrangements. There were a number of nice beds to be viewed, particularly the one opposite the Church. These could be supplemented by additional combinations of bedding plants and long life shrubs. The selection of the right variety and combination of plants and flowers is important, and that's why it's important to get the proper advice.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There seems to be no definite plan in this category. I would suggest that the committee seek advice from a local wildlife enthusiast and also from the Wildlife Ranger or equivalent in Monaghan County Council. One appreciates your difficulty with getting additional volunteers on board, but in order to gain additional marks some proactive work has to be done. It is important that the local school children are involved in any wildlife project to give them an appreciation for conservation and preservation, and also to tap into their enthusiasm. There are many areas where a simple notice board depicting local wildlife species can be placed or the idea of a school garden is also a worthwhile suggestion.

Litter Control:

The standard in this category was very good, with exception of a little litter observed on the outskirts. Full marks to the Committee for conveying the message of good litter control to the wider community. The road to the school, which was mentioned in last year's report, was virtually litter free. Just an observation, one or two additional bins would not go amiss in the village. Your efforts have earned the village an additional two marks in this category.

Waste Minimisation:

Good to note that recycling is encouraged. It is important also that the local school will become involved in this initiative and strive for Green Flag status, if not already done. The Bring Bank, ideally situated, was very well maintained and enhanced by two colourful flower tubs. The Committee should consult the Race Against Waste publication, which was included with the original application packet, with a view to identifying some idea that can be worked into a project that would benefit the Community.

Tidiness:

A few of the suggestions in last year's report were acted upon and the pump seemed to be tidied up. The signs were clean, but one or two were obscured by overgrown grass verges and this will be dealt with under the roads, streets and back areas section. Some newly built houses had rather untidy frontages and one presumes that these will be properly landscaped prior to next year's competition. As indicated in the same report, this type of untidiness can detract immeasurably from the appearance of any village. Overall, there seems to have been an improvement on last year, but do keep the effort up to encourage people to keep properties and communal areas tidy.

Residential Areas:

The village has a rural charm that one associates with inner Ireland and this in no small way due to the efforts of residents, who presented the homesteads to a high standard. Examples of this type of commitment is evident all over the village and the two refurbished cottage type residences on the road took this adjudicator's fancy. Both had excellent surrounds with nice post and rail fencing. The small housing development is well presented, but the kerbsides need to be kept free of residue and weed growth.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

While the main entrances were good and surface wise, some of the link roads were a little rough, but it is possible that these had been earmarked for future resurfacing. Some verges were a little overgrown and indeed the Ochadh Na hAbhla (Scotshouse) sign on the Redhills Road was somewhat obscured by overgrowth. Overall, an acceptable standard that can be improved upon by acting on the plans that you have outlined for the future.

General Impression:

It has been a pleasure to pay a first visit and spend some time in Scotshouse. The village has the potential to do a lot better in the competition in the years ahead. Hopefully, the committee will be able to encourage more people to come on board and contribute to the TidyTowns effort. It's important that you sell the concept on the basis that it is for the betterment of the village and the community as a whole. This year there has been a fairly large increase in marks to reflect what you, as a committee, are trying to achieve. Keep up the effort and you are wished well for future years ahead.