

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Mountshannon** Ref: **81**  
County: **Clare** Mark: **294**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **08/07/2009**  
**29/07/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	48
The Built Environment	50	39
Landscaping	50	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	37
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35
General Impression	10	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>294</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

The adjudicator would like to welcome the beautiful village of Mountshannon to the 2009 TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for the completed entry form and the really useful map. Your busy committee of 7 people meets on a very regular basis and it was great to read of the very good local support for TidyTowns. You are involved with the relevant agencies also. The adjudicator noted that a 3 Year TidyTowns Plan was not included and perhaps you would include this for next year. It is useful to identify projects by adjudication category and by year that you wish to implement. Congratulations on the great success of the letter that went to all homes in Mountshannon. This is a simple idea but an effective one.

### **The Built Environment:**

On the day of the adjudication visit, work seemed to be progressing well on the Childcare Centre. The area here by the road looked rather untidy but this has been discounted from a marks point of view this year. Hopefully, you will be able to start work on the new Playground in September as planned. Congratulations to the owners of the Market House on the excellent restoration work carried out here. The last time that this adjudicator saw this heritage building the crows were in control! The colour used on the woodwork is excellent. The adjudicator liked how the archway here is used to link the Market House with the stone house next door. The old stone cottage with the millstone was admired though the rusty bicycles here are of doubtful display value. A number of projecting signs were noted on buildings in Mountshannon. Perhaps for next year owners can be encouraged to remove such signs unless they have a necessary and clear marketing function. The stone Parish Hall was admired.

### **Landscaping:**

The relocation of flower beds on the Scarriff approach has been examined and the presentation here is really excellent. First impressions are always so important and the fine grass and landscaping at the road junction

here sets up high expectations of a visit to Mountshannon. These expectations are indeed honored in full measure on entering the village. On the left hand side the continuing well manicured grass strip and fine trees on the left leads the eye into the village. The Aistear Park is a wonderful mature park area where the standards of maintenance are exceptionally high. The landscaping design here is of an extremely high standard. The Maze is an attractive feature with the interesting heritage panels. Moisture seems to be a problem in some of these panels. On the Whitegate approach the excellently presented parkland area within the black timber fencing was excellently presented. At the entrance to the Rent An Irish Cottage development the boat with flowers was admired together with the black bollards along here.

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

At Woodpark the new and enhanced trails have been noted. While the frame for one of the new panels appeared to be in place near the entrance the actual information had yet to be inserted in the unit. Some signposting to the Park from Mountshannon might be considered together with a fingerpost at the Park entrance. The Harbour area is a most attractive and interesting one. The presentation of grass areas here was up to the standard of other landscaped areas in Mountshannon.

### **Litter Control:**

The Bring Centre with the large bins at the Harbour area was examined. Just a little litter was noted here. Litter in very small quantities was noted in a few other areas. At the Park entrance one piece was noted and some litter was seen in the Rent An Irish Cottage development but the problem here was not serious. Overall litter control in Mountshannon was good and well done to the total community.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The attendance at the Composting Workshop held by the County Council hopefully was useful to the community. Well done on the development of the compost bays near the Park. The use of the Newsletter to promote waste reduction is welcomed. Have you considered any other waste reduction or recycling initiatives for Mountshannon?

### **Tidiness:**

The Tidiness Survey is an interesting concept and a most useful one. Work done on the old poles is welcomed. All road signage in Mountshannon was exceptionally presented. Signs were spotlessly clean. On the road to Woodpark just beyond the main road some weed growth was noted at the base of walls. Weed growth was evident in the forecourt of a new unoccupied house on the right after the Harbour turn on approach from the Scarriff side. The rusty petrol pump needed a little attention.

### **Residential Areas:**

The circular to every house in the village appears to have brought the required results. The houses in the village were well presented with good attention to detail. Private landscaping complimented that in public areas. The houses in from the Catholic Church on the right fit well with the village. Mountshannon Court is attractively set back from the main road and good landscaping was noted here. On the road towards Whitegate the infill houses on the right blend very well with the ethos of the village and successfully extend the village in that direction. This is so much more satisfactory in design terms than the traditional housing estate. The Rent An Irish Cottage properties have matured well into their attractive setting. On the road from the Harbour up to the side of the Market House well presented private houses caught the eye.

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

The Mountshannon approach roads are most impressive and of excellent standard. Artificial landscaping has been skillfully combined with natural landscaping to create a great first impression of the village.

### **General Impression:**

Congratulations to the Mountshannon on your good work this year and we wish you well with your projects for 2010 when we look forward to returning to you.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

Approaching Mountshannon from Scarriff there is a nice welcoming experience with the Fáilte signpost and we are now in a well kept area with neatly trimmed grass and a variety of mature trees. St Camin's church is beautiful and I loved the stone wall outside it. I had to enquire from a local man the name of the church and perhaps you could consider putting a signpost there. Around the church there is a lovely lawn and this looked like a great place to take photographs of different occasions, and I felt the place could be further enhanced with the putting in place of a few shrubs to blank off the oil tank. The small school is attractive with the flowers and vegetable patches and I noticed that they are doing some composting there and there are some great

mature trees to the left of the school. I admired the newly grassed area at the back of the school and the fine tarmac yard. I trust they are pursuing the green flag status. The pre-school building is taking shape and we look forward to its completion.

There are some great traditional stone walls in Mountshannon and perhaps the ivy could be removed from these walls where possible.

Aistear Park is a splendid facility with the arched gateway, where the keystone is dedicated to the late Paddy Bugler MCC, and from this park there are superb views of the Shannon. The selection of old farm machinery is educational and most interesting and a reminder of a bygone day in Irish farming. The seating is superb in the park and the grass was manicured to a high degree. I admired the sundial but had to rely on my watch to check the time as the rain was pouring down from a dark afternoon sky. The panels of the stone ages are interesting, and there is great stonework here. There is an array of different shrubs all around the park which give distinctive colours and freshness to the setting. This park links down to the park at the waterside, with great picnic facilities, Mountshannon 250, well manicured grass, sturdy seating, a number of ducks and swans swimming along in the Shannon, the Sheedy oak tree and all of these plus other items makes this a pleasant area to visit. I felt like hopping on to one of the Holy Island ferries to get away from it all, but duty beckoned. The bring bank was well serviced and I felt a few tubs of shrubs could adorn this area. There is good detail of the local area and the islands on a well presented notice board and the publication of the public and social services such as telephone numbers for the fire brigade, the ambulance service, Garda etc is a well thought out idea. The sign Leave only your footprints says it all. The toilets on the quay were clean and tidy inside and outside.

The lawns outside the park with great trees and arrangements of flowers is supreme.

The old petrol pumps, outside Callura Pottery place, on the main street have outlived their usefulness and could be removed, but the old school now a residence is attractive. The entrance from the Portumna side is a well maintained area with the timber railing to the front of the green open space with a backdrop of mature trees making this a most picturesque location. The side roads are in good condition.

There is a distinct pride of place attitude by the residents to be seen all over the village, and their individual efforts at landscaping and attractively coloured houses plus the TidyTowns works give a distinctive flavour to Mountshannon.

The adjudicators of 2008 and 2009 recommend that a three to five year plan should be provided, and I agree with this suggestion. I know that you have outlined Projects Planned under some of the headings, but entrants are advised to submit separate plans that need not be prepared professionally, and can be drawn up by entrants themselves. They should try to get the views of the community when preparing their plan, and take into account any other plans for the area such as Local Area Plan by the local authority.

I thoroughly enjoyed my trip to Mountshannon and you are maintaining the proud history since 1981 earned by former TidyTowns committees whose "footprints" are all over Mountshannon, especially in the great array of mature trees and shrubs planted years ago.

Congratulations on a great effort.