

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Scariff** Ref: **87**
County: **Clare** Mark: **238**
Category: **C** Date(s): **07/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	35
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
Litter Control	50	29
Waste Minimisation	20	14
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	26
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	238

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for submitting your completed entry form and sketch map of the area for the 2009 Tidy Towns Competition.

We were pleased to read that your Community Council has managed to retain 12 members and hold regular fortnightly meetings throughout the year and that contact is made with the wider community via newsletter and public meetings as necessary. The contact with the community is crucial to ensure that everyone plays their part in improving the town. We were impressed to learn that you have two Festivals taking place, the Clare Drama Festival and Scariff Harbour Festival. Successful Festivals are good indicators of a vibrant and active community so we wish you well and hope residents and visitors will continue to enjoy the events for many years to come.

It is good that Clare County Council continues to support your activities as much can be achieved when groups approach issues in a co-ordinated way. Another aspect of co-operation which we were pleased to note is the involvement of local teachers on your Council, as this ensures that the Tidy Towns ethos is passed on to the next generation. Your interaction with the school is crucial to ensure that the children – future guardians of our environment – learn to respect and love that environment from an early age.

We noted that last year's adjudicator had recommended that you consider submitting a three year plan and we strongly support that recommendation as it would help the community to identify and focus on the key areas where improvements could be made and additional marks could be achieved.

The Built Environment:

The Sacred Heart Church continued to be well presented and the nearby Scariff GAA grounds were looking good during our visit. The new County Council Offices and Library development was much admired with its attractive use of stone, timber, rendered walls and bilingual signs. The well maintained Market House was a fitting focal point within the Square.

As we strolled around the town we were impressed by many business premises including The Bel Pepper Bistro with its picnic tables, Eve's Beauty Salon, Centra, Banes Gift Shop/Kevin Bane & Sons, Something Else, the Pharmacy and Twin Blades Barber Shop. The Lookout, McNamaras and J Molony's Pubs also looked well on the day.

The property developed in 1998 near the Square was very well presented and its appropriate design has blended well with neighbouring buildings.

Unfortunately derelict buildings continue to pose a problem but hopefully, your endeavours to encourage investment in the area will pay off eventually. It would be particularly good to see new life being breathed into the old Cinema and Scariff Co-Op Mart premises.

Landscaping:

There were some very attractive floral displays throughout the town and it was obvious that they were receiving great care and attention. The Market Square area with its flowerbeds and much admired trees was particularly appealing. The hanging baskets at the bridge between Scariff and Tuamgraney were very eye catching.

Congratulations to all on the development of your excellent Riverside Park with its well equipped Playground, which was being enjoyed by many little residents during our visit. The walled entrance and car park area were welcoming and the grassed areas and shrubberies were generally well maintained.

Unfortunately, one aspect of the Riverside Park area continued to pose a problem during our visit – the issue of overflowing litter bins and discarded litter around them. Although this can prove a difficult problem to resolve, it should be possible through a concerted effort and more regular litter patrols in the area, particularly over weekend periods when usage is probably increased.

We would recommend that fresh plants be installed in the flowerbeds of the excellent County Council Offices and Library premises – the flowerbed near the flagpoles needed particular attention.

Landscaping throughout the town was colourful and appropriate with some excellent flowerbeds, hanging baskets and containers, indicating hard work and commitment by everyone involved, well done.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Riverside Park is a great starting point for the development of a wonderful wildlife and natural amenity area. It is important to attain the right mix of landscaped areas and areas which retain natural habitats likely to attract wildlife. The riverside setting of the park should prove ideal in helping to create suitable conditions and your plans to erect wildlife signage in the park are commendable. It is always advisable to seek guidance from someone with good knowledge of wildlife and natural habitats, in this respect the County Council may be able to help with contacts.

As recommended last year, this would be an ideal project category for the local school children to gain valuable experience, under the guidance of a teacher or wildlife expert.

Litter Control:

During our visit litter was evident in several locations, particularly in the Town Square, where the litter bins needed to be emptied and a few pieces of litter were lying on the ground. The Riverside Park had the same problem with full litterbins and several large pieces of litter in the surrounding area. There was also some litter on the road leading to the Sacred Heart Church.

While litter patrols and reminders in your local newsletter are important aspects to litter control, we recommend that your committee prepare a Litter Control Plan which would help to identify and address the problem areas and key litter generators. Aspects of the plan should include a survey of the problems; a list of solutions – taking account of available resources; a clear list of targets to be met and a suitable method of monitoring progress.

Waste Minimisation:

We were delighted to see that Scariff National School was proudly displaying its Green Flag. This award is not easily attained and great credit is due to the staff and pupils in managing to achieve it.

The Civic Amenity Area is an excellent recycling facility and credit is due to the community for making good use of it and thereby encouraging the County Council to consider its extension.

The key aspect under this category is to aim at reducing waste and there are many projects which could be undertaken to achieve this goal, for example:

- Obtain copies of the Race against Waste booklet, which should be available from the Tidy Towns Unit, and consider carrying out a waste audit
- Individual households could be encouraged to compost grass cuttings and leaves.
- Leaflets with advice on waste minimisation could be circulated to homes, shops and businesses in the town
- A waste minimisation workshop could be organised, with the involvement of the County Council, and this could take place as part of a public Tidy Towns Meeting

Tidiness:

While traffic was very light during our visit, we could imagine that at times, it could be very heavy and it was good to note that there are plans afoot to introduce a one-way traffic system to overcome congestion. Road signage throughout the town was generally clean and in good condition but we did notice that the Lough Derg amenity sign on the Mountshannon approach needed to be cleaned.

There are quite a few overhead wires/cables in the town and we would recommend that you try to encourage relevant agencies to relocate these underground where possible, as it would greatly enhance the overall appearance of Scariff.

There were lovely picnic areas at the Riverside Park but the grass around one of the picnic tables (near the carpark) was seriously overgrown and in need of trimming. The barrier leading to the river slipway would benefit from a fresh coat of paint.

Residential Areas:

It was good to see that the Connaught Road Estate continued to be well presented with beautifully maintained landscaping and its bilingual signs

We had difficulty in identifying one or two housing estates as they did not appear to have any name plaques and we would highly recommend that bilingual signs be erected where missing. The new housing development behind Scariff National School is an attractive addition to the town.

The co-operation between your committee and the residents in the Hillview and Derg View estates is definitely paying dividends and should continue to improve the residential areas well into the future, well done to all.

There were many attractive individual houses throughout the town and we particularly noticed a blue painted house near the GAA grounds which had a lovely garden with a good mix of shrubs and little bird box.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Roadside verges on the approaches to the town needed to be trimmed, particularly on the Mountshannon approach where the Scariff and Lough Derg signs were in danger of being hidden from view. Road signs around the town were generally in good condition but it is important to check regularly that signs are not being hidden by shrubs.

Road surfaces in the area were suffering from potholes and while restricted budgets can delay remedial work we hope that, through your ongoing contact with the County Council, such work will be implemented.

The approach from Tuamgraney with the attractive bridge and hanging baskets was very appealing.

General Impression:

Scariff is an attractive town with potential to improve its ranking in the Tidy Towns Competition if the wider community pulls together and focuses on key areas for improvement.

We appreciate that Scariff Community Council is working hard to maintain and indeed improve the aesthetic appeal of the town but we would urge you to take on board the recommendations of previous adjudicators, eg in relation to preparation of a 3 year plan, using your links with the County Council to progress work on road resurfacing and lobbying agencies for the removal of overhead wires.

We look forward to following your progress over the coming years and congratulate you on what has been achieved so far.