

Tidy Towns Competition 2011

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tullow** Ref: **48**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **283**
Category: **D** Date(s): **07/07/2011**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2010 | Mark Awarded 2011 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 39 | 41 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 35 | 35 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 40 | 40 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 37 | 36 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 30 | 31 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 9 | 9 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 15 | 16 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 36 | 36 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 31 | 32 |
| General Impression | 10 | 7 | 7 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 279 | 283 |

Overall Development Approach:

Tullow TidyTowns Committee is welcome to the TidyTowns Committee for 2011. It is obvious from your submission that your committee has prepared diligently for this event. The adjudicator hopes that this year's experience will be a fulfilling one. Thank you for your clear, concise submission and for your 5 Year Plan. This Plan gives the visitor a picture of the transformation that has occurred in the town in recent years and a flavour of your vision for the next few years. Including last year's report in the plan seemed strange. The preamble to the plan and the specifics of work planned are the central pillars of your 5 Year Plan. Adjudicators, though thought provoking, come and go and their superficial view is as a result of a short visit. It does not compare to your experience of living in the town. Interesting that the TidyTowns is a constituent of a greater umbrella group that focuses on the development of the town. Your own committee seems to be a focused and determined group with a vision of what you wish to achieve in the near future. One of the features of your submission is how involved you have become with the younger generation. This is said while acknowledging the contribution of the Active Retirement Group also. But involving younger people is unusual and is bound to have results in other categories of the competition other than the areas of their immediate involvement. The adjudicator is pleased to read that you are launching your own website. In itself this is a waste minimisation measure but is also most efficient in raising your profile in the community. The website may also explain to members of the public what your role in the town is and may clear up the belief among some of the traders that it is the 'job' of the TidyTowns Committee to clean up outside the shops of some traders. Your engagement with the schools seems directed and meaningful. The adjudicator likes the phrase 'fired up' in connection with your involvement for this year. The very best of luck to you in your wonderful work.

The Built Environment:

A main street on a steep slope creates possibilities and challenges for the generations who have built and run businesses and lived lives on this incline. The adjudicator arrived from the bridge and was astounded. The

real charm of the built environment of Tullow is the chorus of colour of the buildings on this steep main street. The experience created depends on whether one is travelling upwards or coming down. Travelling by car is a completely different experience to travelling on foot. (I am not talking about the potential for a heart attack on foot.) The adjudicator had not read of your work in getting a co-ordinated presentation scheme for the town centre before discovering the delight of main street. It is not as if one is presented with a mild co-ordination of pastels. These colours scream and impact. It is the sum that creates the attraction. In a word the shop fronts create a gorgeous vista. Colouring as in Euroland or Amazing Creations or the Irish Bar, Morgan's Medical Hall should encourage locals to shop local and entice visitors to linger along a traditional style Irish main street and enjoy the picture that has been created for them. One hopes that the A Murphy front survives. Then at the top of the street there are the railings which outweighed monument and all as a living treasure of Tullow's past. Last year's adjudicator listed the buildings of the town. One that was omitted is the Chesire Home, another treasure. Another that lifted the heart is Tots to Teens with its wonderful name stone. This adjudicator loved the steps to the museum. 'Uaineoil den scoth' agreed with the linguist taste of the adjudicator.

Landscaping:

Two florist shops on the main street give an inkling of the Tullow personality. This interest in flowering colour is borne out in the landscaped environment of the town. In the language of the card player landscaping is your strong suit. There is glorious planting all over town that enhances all it touches. Entrances to estates, steep slopes, open spaces attract the towns green fingers and the results are heart warming. To mention any is unfair to the rest of the litany that should get a mention but the shrubberies at Hawthorn Drive deserve to be acknowledged, the lovely island of shrubs in front of the big sculpture, the slope on the Gorey Road. The adjudicator's favourite is at Hillbrook. Then so many houses on the approach roads, on the streets pitch in with their contribution. It is one thing to create a delight and this work is creative and enjoyable. Maintaining the work set in place by others is a challenge, in places.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

By comparison with the detail you furnish in other sections of the competition your descriptions in the wildlife area are more nebulous. The activities in hand at the moment seem delegated. You work with the schools, with the scouts. One is pleased that the younger generation is involved with your work and especially in the wildlife section. But there is a vast world in the wildlife area that is worthy of your attention. Tullow is blessed with mature trees, acres of open space, healthy hedging, gardens and a river. These green links provide natural habitats and a travel network for your wildlife. Yet there is little awareness shown in your plans of these treasure chests. Items 1 to 4 in your 5 Year Plan, though praiseworthy, are also somewhat superficial. Item 5 gets to the core of the subject. Tullow is a landscaping heaven. In devising your landscaping plan think in terms of feeding the wildlife naturally by the selection of flowers and shrubs. What will attract a bee population and a butterfly population? These comments are not meant to decry the value of bird boxes. The Gaeilge phrase 'I dteannta a chéile is fearr iad' sums up the adjudicator's attitude to feeding your wildlife. As a project for the winter get in touch with Birdwatch Ireland. Their representatives will be delighted to assist you with a plan geared to the needs of wildlife in Tullow. The carrot is that your marks will increase also.

Litter Control:

Your group continues to make progress in this category. Your litter control strategies, actions and events are also creating litter awareness among the population. Residents Associations are an important element in this work. Green Flag Status status of schools is also a key element. One hopes that your members wear high visibility vests when out on litter picks with Tullow Tidy Towns emblazoned on them as another litter awareness strategy. Those vests might just prick the conscience of offenders. The most depressing comment in your submission was the one regarding some traders' perception that cleaning their fronts is the responsibility of the Tidy Towns committee. That attitude needs to be knocked on the head, preferably with a sweeping brush. The levels of litter noticed were not as great as seem to have been found in earlier years but one or two estates need assistance.

Waste Minimisation:

This is another section of the competition that is challenging your committee. You mention litter and residents associations. Litter belongs to the litter section but the segregation of that litter and the recycling of the litter belong here in the waste minimisation section. Recycling is but one leg of the waste minimisation section. Reusing and reducing are important legs also. A specific area that could be investigated and promoted by you would be the reduction of food waste in the home. Visit the website on food waste to prompt ideas. Both the youth and the Active Retirement group would love to get their teeth into stopping food waste. But they will need your direction. Achievement of Green Flag Status by schools ensures that up to date thinking on waste minimisation is being brought home to parents who are being educated in good practice by their children.

Tidiness:

Tidiness relates to general appearance. One reads of the projects that you have undertaken already this year

and all are admirable. All improve the appearance of their surroundings to create the image you wish for Tullow. Tullow is generally litter free, graffiti free, kerbsides are weed free and acres of the sky are cable free. A great start. There are challenges. You are aware of some sensitive fencing in areas of the town. Debris develops in places. Where a shrubbery has been overlooked for a time it detracts from the surroundings it was meant to enhance. If you are replacing shrubs in trying to create a tidy image remember the birds and bees. Advertising hoarding in one area needs to be challenged.

Residential Areas:

Tullow is now a densely populated rural town, a town experiencing both the positives and the negatives of the Tiger years. One cannot appreciate the transformation in a town like Tullow over recent years if one has never seen the town before. But one can see the traces of modern Ireland in the buildings styles and in areas that have obviously been regenerated. Hopefully it is the view of the native population that the experience of living in Tullow has improved as a result of the new developments. There is much to denote improvement. And still older local authority estates, terraces of housing, help to retain the traditional character of the town. The high proportion of estates with Residents Association is a promising sign. For one thing those associations will help integrate the new residents into the Tullow community as well as imbibe the ideals of the Tidy Towns Committee in Tullow.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Arriving into Tullow on most of the approach roads the appearance of the roadsides is dominated by the residential areas, the dwellings adding colour and texture to the roadsides, well maintained walls giving definition to the surroundings. Generally fine foot paths lead the pedestrian. No matter what route one takes, the steeple of the church dominates the skyline. On the route with the Par 3 golf course there is a wonderful welcome stone to greet the visitor. In places the appearance disappoints if the grass margin has not been treated or, in some cases, poorly maintained timber fencing is the problem. Arriving from Carlow one encounters the fencing of the various enterprises on the road and one wonders if it is possible to improve on the presentation. The Tullow name sign is beautifully presented on the Enniscorthy Road. The shrubbery at the business park enhances this approach road to town. Well done on the presentation of the shrubbery that seems to continue forever but looks well. Off main street the old residences, many beautifully presented, create the atmosphere of the traditional Tullow.

General Impression:

Not only did the adjudicator enjoy the experience of being in Tullow for a few hours but the adjudicator is also taken by the determined tone of your submission. This is an ambitious group with a vision for Tullow. Do not let the glitter of gold blind you in your aspirations for the town. You state that action 'needs to be based on community involvement'. Community involvement is what has brought you to the standard you have now achieved. The new community will encompass the views, the values and the aspirations of the new arrivals bringing fresh visions for Tullow. Encouraging the establishment of Residents Associations is a way to create the community involvement you wish for. The results will be golden.