

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tullow** Ref: **48**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **285**
Category: **D** Date(s): **16/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	41	41
The Built Environment	50	35	36
Landscaping	50	40	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	36	38
Litter Control	50	31	30
Tidiness	30	16	16
Waste Minimisation	20	9	9
Residential Areas	40	36	36
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32	32
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	283	285

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator welcomes Tullow to the 2012 TidyTowns competition and thank you for your well detailed submission and annotated map. It would be useful if you could indicate on your plan particular projects carried out during the previous year that you especially wish to bring to the adjudicators attention as the annotation on the map was a little unclear. You seem to enjoy a fruitful partnership with the Local Authority and various agencies and bodies in the town. In particular you seem to be successful in liaising with the 33 active residents groups in the town. This is great to see and gives you and the competition a real link to the town's residents, both for support and to advertise your projects. We hope you are successful in getting members of the residents groups to attend your groups meetings.

The Built Environment:

Tullow struck this adjudicator with an impression of being a town of two parts. The old town core leading from the bridge and up the hill to the Town Square and the contrast with the newer developments along side the Slaney River.

As noted last year the vibrancy of the colour combinations in the market square were arresting and how great to see that new businesses have opened up in the town over the last 12 months. The two florists in the square were a delight with floral displays enlivening the footpaths. While the lower street level facades of many of your buildings are well maintained, make sure the upper floors are not neglected, especially on side streets. Other prominent premises admired were the well maintained castellated frontage of Roche and McGuinn solicitors and the delight of being able to see a tailor at work in the window of Johnson's Tailors.

The new Tullow Civic Offices and Library buildings are very impressive and how nice to see that it allows access to the river and a great view of the old bridge. I wonder why seating wasn't considered at the new

riverfront piazza here to allow the visitor to rest and take in the lovely vista. The old Stone Museum is a lovely asset for the town but such a pity it was closed on a Saturday afternoon in the summer. Perhaps a sign could be erected here giving the visitor access to the towns history at times when it is shut? We look forward to seeing progress in your bilingual street signs as this again can help visitors orientate themselves in the town. Well done on the progress in addressing the derelict sites in the town especially the old Post Office on Mill Street, as it is so visible in its elevated position. Your schools were also a delight from the historic St Columbas and the Tullow / Monastery National School to the lovely stone boundary of the Tullow Community School. Well done to all involved in fostering a sense of pride in their surroundings for your younger citizens.

Landscaping:

The new town park is such a lovely asset for your town and well done to all involved in its development. The banks of chives and insect nests were much admired. Some of the trees were showing signs of damage with bark stripped off their trunks. New trees in areas of high activity could have their trunks protected with bamboo wraps if this continues to be a problem. The park is somewhat hidden from view to new visitors to the town and perhaps as mentioned above a town map could be provided at the museum or the town car park opposite the library, to point visitors in its direction?

The river is such an asset for the town and the new bridge allows full enjoyment of its banks. The large sign here announcing its funding must surely have served its purpose at this stage and now only detracts somewhat from the setting as it ages and becomes worn. Talk to Carlow County Council about its removal. The planters along the river were also a distraction from the natural setting. Planters should really only be considered for areas where planting in the ground is not possible. Would they be better located to the margins of the town car park which could really use some brightening up?

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You correctly noted that the river is a particularly valuable amenity for you and the scouts survey should help you advance projects to both protect what you have and encourage new habitats. Well done to all 29 beavers involved and your sleepover and early start were sure to catch all manner of wild creatures before most of the town was awake, as is evidenced by the sighting of a badger which is a creature notoriously hard to catch unawares. The wildlife area is progressing nicely and can be a showcase of best practice with regards to habitat creation. However as you are aware there are many other habitat types present in Tullow which a general survey would identify for you. It should be possible to do a desk study of the towns habitats; aerial photos are a great aid to this. This can help highlight habitat types even in broad categories e.g. –parkland, lawn grass, road verges, hedgerows, graveyards, scrub, estate woodlands as in Mount Wolsey etc. This survey should be a basis for you to preserve the identified habitats in your area and investigate the possibility of developing new ones. We hope to see progress in this category so that you can keep the momentum the beavers have started and continually add to your points here.

Litter Control:

Well done on your weekly litter picks as the adjudicator was happy to see very little litter in the core town area on adjudication day.

As mentioned earlier in the report, the town park is such a lovely asset for your town. However the adjudication visit took place on a Saturday afternoon and there was quite a bit of litter in evidence here. The park is obviously used as a gathering place at night and this must be a problem for you. It seems as if a bin may be required by the lovely curved bench and fish sculpture at the new footbridge.

A set back area along the Tullow Civic Office frontage to the river seems to be used as an unofficial smoking area, perhaps by workers on well earned breaks? Perhaps a discreetly positioned wall mounted cigarette butt receptacle would be useful here until anti-smoking campaigns become more effective
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Tidiness:

For a town the size of Tullow you have been successful in presenting a very tidy impression to the visitor along your main streets.

We look forward to seeing progress on your anti-graffiti works as this seems to be a problem for you at the rear of Tescos by the New Park. Would perhaps an anti-graffiti mural be appropriate here as the wall really does present a blank canvas? It could perhaps be used positively to present some contemporary artworks by a local artist in keeping with the riverside setting and appropriate for the young visitors to the park? Or perhaps climbers or wall shrubs planted here would avoid this problem in the future? Best practice is to ensure that graffiti is removed as soon as practicable. When graffiti is allowed to remain, it invites yet more

graffiti and may lead to an increase in vandalism and other criminal activity.

Waste Minimisation:

The Green School programme seems to have been a great success for your schools. Have you had any thoughts about joining the Green Homes programme also run by An Taisce. This could be promoted through your network of residents committees and this would be a great way to progress the success of green ideals in the town. Maybe look into this for next year's submission? This is a category where you can really gain marks.

Residential Areas:

Well done to all the resident associations on the hard work they carried out over the year and thank you for including a picture of the winners of your best garden competition. Please indicate the winners location on a map for next years visit to ensure we don't miss viewing the garden on adjudication day. You do not mention if you also hold an annual Tidy Estates competition. This type of competition is a great way to keep the momentum going; healthy competition is always a good way to get residents motivated! We note that about half of the housing estates in the town have Residents Committees so perhaps if a competition was widely advertised more estates may be tempted to take part?

The newer residential areas were maturing well and the planting at the entrance to the Mount Wolsey Village development is filling out nicely. The retained mature trees at Phelim Wood create a lovely setting for the houses here.

Check tree ties and stakes on trees planted as part of open space planting in newer estates. Ties should be loosened or removed as a tree grows as a scar from a tight or rubbing tree tie leaves a tree susceptible to disease. Ties can usually be removed after 2-3 years or once a tree is stable.

The open space at Steeple View Crescent was immaculately kept and the climbers to the roadside walls do much to add to the setting here. We wondered why there was no boulder name stone to Shroughan estate to match its neighbours.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The extent of signage at the bridge detracts somewhat from its setting and we were not sure if this was before or after the NRA removed signs!.

The public parking area opposite the civic offices , even if only a short term facility, was a real let down. The surfacing and signage here really needs to be addressed as does the defunct bollards and broken equipment at its entrance. If payment is no longer required remove the old signs and barriers. As mentioned before perhaps if some planters were located here for temporary colour it would brighten up the area.

General Impression:

Thank you for your submission and the adjudicator really enjoyed their visit to the town. Tullow has such a lovely riverside setting and we are glad that the town is addressing the river banks with all its potential. We thank all involved with this year's submission for their hard work. Best of luck for 2013 and in developing projects and carrying out works on the ground to help gain you that elusive gold medal.