

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mullaghmore** Ref: **315**
County: **Sligo** Mark: **258**
Category: **A** Date(s): **13/06/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	34	35
The Built Environment	50	34	35
Landscaping	50	40	42
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	24	26
Litter Control	50	34	35
Tidiness	30	16	16
Waste Minimisation	20	8	7
Residential Areas	40	22	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31	32
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	251	258

Overall Development Approach:

Your adjudicator would like to welcome Mullaghmore back to the 2012 TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your beautifully detailed maps and entry form – both maps were easy to follow. It is good that you have approached the school - despite the fact that young people are schooled outside of the community, it is vital to have their input into your work and the long term plan. It was good to read that you have such a good relationship with local Businesses, Agencies, National Parks & Wildlife Services, National Bodies such as An Taisce and the County Council.

Your Committee's PRO should be highly commended for their endeavours to update everyone via the wonderful newsletters, your Facebook page which looked well, and your blog. The community noticeboard was up to date and looked very well. This is vital as a community with a high number of temporary residents, you work extremely well to involve everyone with your activities.

The Built Environment:

The entrance gate to Mullaghmore castle looked suitably splendid. The Star of the Sea looked very bright and the flags were flying proudly for the International Eucharistic congress. The School House was admired, in particular the new gate piers - it was good to see this building in use.

The bike stands and seats at the beach car park looked very well. Looking back at the seafront whilst on the harbour, Mullaghmore looked like a lovely coastal community. The proposed works for 2014 on the boat house in the harbour will enhance this area.

Both hotels presented very well and paint looked good. The pier head had small potted evergreens which will look great once grown. The gable mural on the Beach Hotel looked very good and the lovely window boxes

etc showed the effort put in. However your adjudicator has serious concerns about the picnic tables completely blocking the footpath here – pedestrians would have to walk with their back to the traffic. Whilst it is lovely to be able to sit outside, could half-tables be possible to accommodate both or another compromise?

The freshly painted sewer vent pipes in the village looked good and are some of the best your adjudicator has seen. One at the top of Green Road needs some attention – maybe the local residents could be happy to work on this? The village pump and walls looked good on Quay Road.

No toilet paper or soap was provided for in the public toilets – when the facilities are open this should be checked. Whilst sad to see such public amenities lost, this should enhance this area and seems to be your only solution to the sustained vandalism problem here.

Landscaping:

Mullaghmore has some wonderful planted beds and planters throughout the village – there are many green fingers in this community. The flower bed by the sailing club provides year-round structure with the use of shrubs such as fuchsia. Likewise the bed in front of the Peace Garden was lovely with its stone sculpture. The newly planted trees behind the welcome sign at Castle Gate were admired as were the low level flower beds here. The planting along the top of the wall at the first picnic area is lovely and this whole area was very pleasant. The second picnic area was great too – and your adjudicator felt that you didn't need the additional wooden planters here. Your sign was nicely worded - what a pity you have to ask people not to take the flowers.

The peace and reconciliation garden looked beautiful – what a delightful serene place to have open to the public. The pond, wildflowers, and vegetables were all admired here. Your adjudicator would like to heartily congratulate each who manage the 25 separate plots here.

The communal grass area was tightly mowed and strimmed. Your cordylines have, like most, been impacted by the recent harsh winters. Only native plants have fared well whilst also providing great shelter and food for our wildlife. Planting ideas on such can be found on www.heritagecouncil.ie 'Conserving Wildlife in Towns and Villages'.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It was good to see the wildlife updates in your newsletter and your proposed work on dune conservation and marran grass replanting. Mullaghmore is lucky to have one of the best wildlife habitats in Europe (designated SACs). No doubt you know that you need advance permission before doing any action within the SAC. Raising awareness of the special habitats and wildlife that depend on them, could form part of your longer term plan whilst helping you gain more marks in this judging category.

The new information board at the beach entrance looks very good, making the older sign look somewhat tired - though the older one has some great wildlife information, with quite a lot of detail.

A clump of the highly invasive species Japanese knotweed was noted beside the toilet entrance. This needs to be treated with a systemic weedkiller – correct details can be found on www.invasivespeciesireland.com

Sadly you have lost your BlueFlag status due to the communal grazing of cattle on the dunes. Even your adjudicator was quite unnerved surrounded by cattle at the disabled viewing area. Could the appointment of an external negotiator help here?

Litter Control:

Well done on all your actions for this part of the competition. The main thoroughfares were very clean – well done to the daily litter pickers. Sadly cigarette butts were very obvious outside both hotels despite the provision of 'butt bins'. The regular sweeping of areas will help deal with this.

Pooper scooper dispensers were empty at the shoreline. If these are not to be refilled, perhaps the dispenser could be removed. There was some minor litter by the public toilets.

Tidiness:

The new fencing at the back of Pier Head hotel looks very good – well done to all for this good work which really enhances the views from the main picnic area.

There are lots of council signs at the disabled access viewing area of the beach and two unused poles that could be removed. Likewise there are many other beach signs approaching the beach from the footpath. These signs are of many different styles, fonts and each have separate poles or various heights and many are

not straight. Much of the information is repetitive. It would look so much better if a consistent approach of style and font was taken and a hard audit of signs to see which are essential and which could be merged.

As mentioned above, care needs to be taken not to block pavements, e.g. three ice cream signs were positioned outside the shop. Cable ties were noted on the roundabout sign at the bottom of Quay Road – should this not be a stop sign?

An inkwell and quill sign was located near the Castle, but there was no supporting information found on this on-line or via the tourist office, so it is suggested that this be removed.

You will be pleased to note that the massive sign at the harbour 'Funded by the National Development Plan 2000-2006' can be taken down as it is beyond the required time for display.

Waste Minimisation:

Your electronic communications by text and on-line also help cut down on waste and have gained you marks here. Your proposed work with the school will help gain marks here. More marks can be gained here through a range of activities e.g. use of buses, composting workshops, composting of your communal grass clippings for use in your planters. See the Tidy Towns handbook for more details.

Residential Areas:

Most of the homes along the sea front looked very well indeed. The obviously loved home with yellow window frames and bike outside, all with flowers planted, looked wonderful and so suited the streetscape. The new road sign at Quay View was noted – this was a very neat estate. Breffni Road was very nice – there was some dumping at the end but this was work in progress and you have not lost any marks for this. Quay Park also looked good and someone was very skilled to hoopla a bicycle tyre over the lamp post here!

There were quite a few weeds on the private roads Harbour Hill and Barneys Hill.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Arriving at Mullaghmore the revamped welcome sign area and stone wall works well. However, it is suggested that the commercial B&B sign is removed/moved along from this focal point, as there are many other signs elsewhere directing to these premises also.

Whilst on Quay Park your adjudicator had a good look here at the back of commercial premises and was pleased at how tidy it all was – credit to these businesses.

There is a site on the left approx. 40m up on Quay Road where lots of concrete has been left – what are the long-term plans for this area?

The barriers at the beach car parks should have metric height information displayed.

General Impression:

Standing on the harbour looking up at the village, Mullaghmore is a very picturesque village and looked very well. It was a delight to visit here and enjoy the hard work that businesses and residents are doing to further your community.