

# Tidy Towns Competition 2012

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Sligo** Ref: **731**  
County: **Sligo** Mark: **243**  
Category: **G** Date(s): **18/06/2012**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2011</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2012</b>
Overall Development Approach	50	39	39
The Built Environment	50	37	37
Landscaping	50	39	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20	20
Litter Control	50	22	25
Tidiness	30	11	13
Waste Minimisation	20	7	8
Residential Areas	40	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	26	29
General Impression	10	7	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>243</b>

### Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the TidyTowns competition 2012. Thank you for the many documents you submitted in addition to your application form as such. Thank you especially for the Sligo Venue map which was most useful on the day of adjudication. We also read with interest the Irish Times supplement on Sligo, your three year action plan, while the Nature Trail of Doorly Park, Sligo Walking Guide and sign posted Walking Tour of Sligo City were all of considerable interest. Thank you for including them.

In respect of your well thought through three year action plan, for optimum effect do ensure that a 'with who' i.e. the lead agency is identified for each project. It is desirable to put a specific start date and a concluding date for each. This helps to ensure that the necessary degree of urgency is implemented in some cases. There is nothing like a deadline to concentrate the mind.

The one-way traffic system, while necessary, takes a little while to get used to for the non-native. We wondered at times if the traffic lights sequencing might be looked at again as it did seem to be out of kilter with the main traffic flows in some locations notable Upper John Street junction with Adelaide Street. The general presentation of the streets were delightfully clear of traffic spoil and general litter and compliments to all for this achievement. We admired the many glimpses and imposing views of Ben Bulbin available from many locations.

While a number of shops have shut it is pleasant to record that graffiti was substantially less than in previous years. Some outside the convent buildings on Church Hill was observed and minor outbreaks elsewhere. The Court House is a very splendid building and well presented. In Castle Street many of the shop fronts, too numerous to list individually, were admired.

### **The Built Environment:**

St. Johns Co-Educational School was colourful, freshly painted and looked well. The long stone wall on Church Hill was greatly admired as was the substantial church, closing the view at this point. Our Lady's of Mercy Primary School was well presented and the historic Ulster Bank building commemorated by W. B Yeats in Stockholm continues to be an imposing, impressive building dating from 1863. The building is well set off by the bronze image of W. B Yeats and it is fitting that the link between them is retained. In O'Connell Street the traditional shop front of Hargadon Bros. impressed as did the splendid shop front of Mullaney Bros. in the same street. The Tourist Office incorporating Sligo Heritage and the Genealogical Centre was greatly admired and busy on the day of adjudication.

The extensive Sligo General Hospital in its well tended grounds was noted. The Sligo Institute of Technology also with extensive grounds which were well presented. We admire the E.J. Menswear in the former Bank of Ireland building which has retained its delightful shop front on Grattan Street; the Veritas shop caught the eye as did the Sligo Warehouse, Henry Lyons and Co. Ltd. The Social Welfare Office, Department of Social Protection had an imposing garden display with was greatly admired. Sligo has a great perfusion of imposing public and ecclesiastical buildings which were greatly admired. It has not been possible to list them all here.

### **Landscaping:**

Great efforts have been made to enhance the sizable city of Sligo by both large scale and small, incidental landscaping. The GAA Club grounds were very well presented as were the extensive green areas surrounding St. John's National School and the Bishops Palace. On Chapel Hill the sports pitches, Mercy College and their associated sports courts were well presented with a desirable extent of mature trees. Pride of place goes to Doorly Park overlooking Garavogue River. This is a delightful development justifiably popular. The Organic Garden adjacent to St. Michael's Family Centre is an interesting development which will be watched with considerable interest. We admired the statues and the open space at the end of Market Street which looked very well. The long raised flowerbed looked excellent at the junction leading to the Radisson Blu Hotel. However the lengthy raised flowerbed opposite the General Hospital on Molloway Hill would benefit from the installation of more colourful shrubs.

You were alerted to the growth of some ivy on a number of your mature trees. While there are (at least) two schools of thought in connection with ivy on buildings, informed opinion universally agrees that ivy is very detrimental to tree growth and accelerates their rotting at trunk level. A programme of eradicating is called for in this location and elsewhere. An early survey to identify and plans to eliminate ivy should be implemented. The work done on the Carraroe Retail Park roundabout has greatly lifted that area. We admired the small scale Grotto at Temple Street. The lay-by at the end of Ballydoogan Road was very good while Pearse Street, wide and inviting, was well swept, neat and orderly. A major undertaking of yours, the planting of a bed of roses on the railway bridge embankment on Strand Hill Road is applauded. This will undoubtedly enhance even further this location in future years as they get bedded in, grow and develop. The most colourful mural as a backdrop is most spectacular and eye catching.

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

It is strategically a very wise move to concentrate on the Doorly Park area. It is certainly one of your major amenity assets, both in conception and execution. The Cleaveragh Leisure Trail is a triumph and compliments to all involved. The development of a nature habitat at Hazelwood Canal must be seen as a long term project. Birds and wildlife will only be attracted when their priority - plentiful food - has been established by appropriate planting. The food chain is vital in this context and may take a number of seasons to fully establish. Do not be discouraged at the absences of "instant results". It is equally important to raise awareness for and appreciation of wildlife among the upcoming generation. Areas should be sought within school grounds, with the cooperation of the school authorities where modest sized habitats would be developed, ideally these would be maintained and looked after by the students themselves under supervision.

### **Litter Control:**

There was considerable improvement generally in the litter management, which has been reflected in your marks. We welcomed the many 'Anti-Litter' signs noticed in numerous locations throughout the town. Sadly there was a sizeable falling from grace along Markievicz Road in the area leading to Hugh's Bridge. The delightful Pearse Road was also slightly marred by disfiguring litter. The approach roads in general seemed free from litter. The parks and the areas around St. John's National School were also free of litter and full marks to the students and all involved here.

Securing the engagement of 155 volunteers for your Sunday morning rota is a splendid achievement. Your view to keep going during the winter is important if only to ensure that the enthusiasm and sense of

engagement becomes a year round reality. We welcomed your "No Butts" campaign as very largely litter problems are due to carelessness and thoughtlessness rather than any deep seated anti-social intention. Your efforts through team leaders to keep in touch, keep motivating and keep engaging the interests of your many volunteers is greatly applauded. A very wise and old member of the Tidy Towns movement once said "To succeed you have to keep on, keeping on". We were delighted to learn of the engagement of those presented in Globe House in the ongoing task of keeping their own area clear of litter. Establishing your own date for the 'Spring Clean' that is Good Friday is proving a tremendous success and well done indeed for this initiative which is now firmly bedded in to your annual programme.

### **Tidiness:**

The absences of weeds at the base of front facing walls especially on the Ballydoogan Road was noted and applauded. The new wall in front of Merville Youth and Community Centre is a distinct advantage. There seems to be a quite a clutter of Television reception dishes in Temple Street, perhaps the television change-over in September will make these no longer necessary. All the horizontal bars in the low level fencing on the Manorhamilton Road are missing. The Sligo Champion Office looked very well. The only serious location of graffiti was on the wall opposite the Cadbury National School entrance area. Well done to the many students who were busily engaged in painting a lengthy mural on the sizable timber hoarding in this area. Please audit your directional and speed limit signs, quite a number are becoming progressively obscured by encroaching vegetation. We were delighted to notice the absence of wirescape on many streets and hopes this programme will continue. We welcomed the progress on the refurbishment of Ozanam House; the fine wrought iron railings at the back of the cathedral are showing advanced signs of rust and should be repaired before next year's competition. Your efforts to remove fly posting is commendable and continues to be successful.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

It is important to emphasis to you and through you to the community at large that the primary objective of the waste minimisation category is to inculcate a change of mindset in respect of the use of scarce resources. Encourage individual householders and the community at large to audit their use of water, energy and food and examine ways in which, without affecting their lifestyle, material reductions can be achieved. If we take the parallel of the highly successful removal of plastic bags; once there was a very modest charge of just 15cent imposed, we all found alternative methods to do without them. It is calling on that same ingenuity to reduce our use of water and of energy that is called for in this section of the overall competition.

This involves a three part approach; first and foremost reduce, secondly reuse and only then recycle the remainder. Well done on the 'Green School Day' before St. Patrick's Day and congratulations to the Mercy National School on securing their Green Flag status. The Recycle Facility at Heat Merchant car park, the large one on Enniskillen Road and the Bring Bank on Dock Street were all noted. All of these areas were being well respected. A campaign aimed at increased use of composters and wide adoption of water butts is recommended in addition to exploring the establishment of a "previously loved" clothing facility. This has proved very beneficial, and profitable, for some Tidy Towns groups.

### **Residential Areas:**

The Marymount gates were greatly admired and congratulations to all involved in this very successful venture. Retaining and enhancing an important item of local social history dating back to the 1840's was a commendable achievement. The excellent state of the Manorhamilton Road was a delight as was St. Bridget's Place being very well presented. The individual houses on Rosehill were admired. The residences of Markievicz Heights are to be applauded for their attempts, by the installation of a wild flower meadow, to attract and protect the bee population. It is widely agreed that these are under threat and all plans and projects to help their survival and well being deserve our unreserved applause.

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

Full marks for the great improvement around the Market Square. This significant and central element of your presentation is now greatly enhanced. On the approach roads, verges have been suitably cut back for a considerable distance. This make for a delightful introduction to the city. Roads generally were well swept and clearly marked. The view from the Markievicz Road over the river is a delight. The Letterkenny/Derry Road featured the grasses cut very well back for a considerable distance. No weeds outside the curbs were noted, while the trees and shrubs set a very high standard. Rosses Point Road was very well swept and we admired Duck Street and the area leading to the Canal. Manorhamilton Road was ideal and the FAS grounds along here added greatly. The Strandhill Road (R292) leading to the airport was very well presented while the speed limit signs on R294 were neat, clean and easily read.

### **General Impression:**

Sligo is a very large, busy and bustling centre in which your committee has successfully motivated an equally sizeable contingent of volunteers, enthusiasts and supporters in your ongoing tasks. It was a pleasure to visit your centre again to see the improvements that have been achieved. Full credit to all involved, the Borough Council, the Committee themselves, your growing body of volunteers and all who have helped in any way. All should be proud of their achievements and of the standards secured in this year's competition.