

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Millstreet** Ref: **480**
County: **Cork(North)** Mark: **295**
Category: **D** Date(s): **01/07/2012**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	43	43
The Built Environment	50	37	38
Landscaping	50	40	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30	30
Litter Control	50	35	35
Tidiness	30	24	24
Waste Minimisation	20	11	11
Residential Areas	40	31	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32	33
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	400	291	295

Overall Development Approach:

Millstreet is welcome to the 2012 TidyTowns competition! Thank you for your comprehensive application along with excellent map and additional information. The 'before' and 'after' photos were particularly helpful. The suggested town tour route was also appreciated. You have an active committee of 21 members and obviously good support from all sectors of the community.

It is vital to have good working relationships such as you have with Cork Co Co, FAS, Coillte and IRD Duhallow. Well done to the schools and local business community for supporting your efforts. Well done on using local newspapers, parish newsletter and your town website to relay your message. This has worked to your advantage in increasing involvement. It is great that you have a 3-year plan but you might consider expanding on it a little. Try to keep your actions as specific as you can so that you can use the plan as your 'checklist' as much as possible. Use the competition categories as your headings and designate a group/individual responsible and rough timeframe for each action.

The Built Environment:

The secondary school looks well although the concrete fence in front could be painted. It would enhance this lovely road if a hedgerow were planted along the back mesh fence in time. There is a disused pole at the junction near the school that should be removed. The green glens arena is well presented although the Station Rd entrance is a bit drab and would benefit from gate painting and maybe some landscaping. Scoil Mhuire School is neatly presented and the window boxes add a splash of colour.

Coleman's shop/petrol station is neatly presented and the public car park up the hill behind the credit union is maintained to a high standard. The old fire station on the Macroom Rd is well maintained but two disused poles here should be removed. The Motor Factors building looks relatively ok considering its status and doesn't detract from the streetscape. The AIB is a fine building.

The church and grounds/railings looked well and the lovely school entrance next door was admired for its colour, flower boxes and murals. The lovely grotto on the Clara Rd was admired, as was the nearby 'Cilín' cross. The Council buildings and adjacent car park were well maintained with good tourist information and public toilets provided here. The Council Clubhouse and dressing rooms were presented to a high standard, as was the playground. The high mesh fencing near the town park entrance doesn't look great and could be repaired in places. The prominently located Centre Shop is very well maintained. The entrance to the pitch and putt course was neat and colourful. You have some lovely traditional shop fronts around the town, some with lovely signage (e.g. Healy's, Corcoran's, Cronins, O' Byrnes). Unfortunately many of the original sash windows have been lost but those at Padraic McCarthy's House and Craft Butchers were admired. Many premises were looking well including Corkery's pub, Wallis Arms, R Barretts, Aidain McCaul's, Nibbles, Murphy's Furniture, An Siopa Deas, Pat & Ann's salon. The Supervalu Building and car park was maintained to a high standard and litter free so well done to all involved in this large area.

Landscaping:

There is a lovely landscaped area just past the back entrance to the school; it looks like it might be privately maintained. There is an attractive flowerbed at the junction of this road and the main Rd. The new fire station looks well and has some new tree planting. The nearby Civic Amenity Site is very impressive with its fine stone wall and excellent landscaping. The hanging baskets concentrated around the Square highlight this area as a focal point of the town and are well placed. The picnic area near the entrance to Mt. Leader was admired. You might consider painting the small entrance gate here. Work on the new flowerbed was noted at the Council car park and we look forward to seeing the results of this clever change next time. The GAA grounds is the best I have seen to date and is beautifully integrated into your Town Park with its excellent walks/facilities/landscaping to be enjoyed by all. The water feature opposite the church was admired. The colourful flower tubs throughout the town blend in well – it's hard to believe anyone would want to cause damage to them!

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Well done to all those involved in the creation and signposting of your lovely walks, in particular the Clara loop walk. The entrance to this walk is well marked. It is great to hear of the success of your walking festival. Further in towards town, the planting, information panel and seating at wildlife area at the Finnow river are well maintained. Have you considered running any guided nature walks in conjunction with local expert or Birdwatch Ireland? Are any of the schools working on their biodiversity green flag? If they are, they would be carrying out surveys etc and you could work together on a project.

Litter Control:

Well done on your litter picks and rotas, also to the transition year students for helping you out. There was minimal litter evident on the day so you obviously are getting people to take pride. Awareness is a significant part of this category so please provide details on your ongoing school awareness project and any other information campaigns you are involved in.

Tidiness:

There is a disused pole around near the soccer field on station Rd. These and other such poles should be used or removed as they give an untidy appearance. You have a surprisingly high number of hanging basket brackets erected on many properties along the main street. These are considered clutter if not being used and should be removed asap. There was a Christmas decoration outside one property on the main street, this should be removed ASAP (or at least for next year's adjudication!). If you have derelict houses with boarded up windows, you might consider painting in the 'windows' for next year as it makes it more aesthetically pleasing (see your TidyTowns handbook for guidelines). The clean signs and fingerposts were noted.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done on your contacts with the school. Next time you might mention the status of each of your schools in terms of the green flag programme. The first green flag theme is on the reduction of waste and litter. Under this category please also mention if you segregate your clean up materials. Keep in mind that the main aim of this category is about more than recycling, it's about reducing the amount of waste created in the first place. I'm sure there is a lot going on in the community to Reduce Reuse and Recycle (e.g. home composting, reuse of school books or other items, a shop/business making small changes to packaging etc to minimise waste) so be sure to mention them. You might be able to host an event in conjunction with Cork County Council Environmental Awareness Section. There is also some good information in your TidyTowns handbook.

Residential Areas:

All residential areas were presented to a high standard and generally free of litter. Woodland Drive and Drishane View were neatly presented, however the roadside fence at the latter should be treated. Tanyard Wood Estate is finished off very well with excellent open areas, signage and landscaping. Could the poles at the entrance be removed? Murphy's Terrace is well presented, although a disused pole at the main road should be removed. There is a nice row of bungalows further out this road. There is a row of charming old cottages along the Macroom Rd despite a few being unoccupied or work in progress. The estate beside the wildlife area on Clara rd is neatly presented, however the large shrubbery bed further into this housing estate (no name) needs attention. Drishane Castle has a fine entrance on the Mallow Rd approach. It would be great if the entrance walls could be painted and weeded. There were some well-presented houses along the main streets. Well done for assisting the 4 housing estates. Do all these areas have residents committees now? In a town your size, it is important to have strong links between these committees and yourselves, maybe a representative from each area could be invited onto the committee.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads are very good, in particular the Mallow Rd with its wide verges, large beds and colourful picnic area. The Station Rd has a lovely leafy approach and good extensive footpath. The approach would be improved if the Soccer Club wall were painted. The industrial estate was surprisingly neat and tidy, credit to all the businesses there. There are attractive street name plaques throughout the town in both English and Irish and very good signposting of various points of interest. The Eurovision Wall was admired, as were the various historic plaques on buildings throughout the town. The vibrant fisherman mural at the Community Gym brightens up this area. The lane in front of the public car park was very impressive, as there are many back entrances here.

General Impression:

This adjudicator had the pleasure of visiting Millstreet for the first time. Yours is a town of great character and beautiful surroundings. There is an air of energy and enthusiasm for TidyTowns about the place. Well done on getting the wider community behind you. I get the impression that all residents have serious pride in where you live and so you should! You are tackling projects in a planned and structured manner. Well done to all involved and we look forward to hearing of your further progress next year.