

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Tallanstown** Ref: **852**
County: **Louth** Mark: **304**
Category: **B** Date(s): **09/06/2009**
25/07/2009

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	47
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	38
Waste Minimisation	20	16
Tidiness	30	21
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	304

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the 2009 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your application form and accompanying detailed application; your Tidy Towns plan charting the way forward over the next five years; and other comprehensive supporting documentation, all professional in appearance and content. The size of the committee (30 members) is very impressive given the size of the village and it is encouraging to hear that your membership has increased significantly since your successful participation in the Entente Florale last year. The level of voluntary commitment is excellent and shows the amount of hard work and dedication needed to be successful in this competition. Given that this year Tallanstown is celebrating twenty five years of active participation in the National Tidy Towns Competition it comes as no surprise that you liaise effectively with a large number of agencies and bodies. Your experience in this area has been demonstrated in your ability to raise €10,000 from the Irish National School Teachers Organisation towards your new Vere Foster sculpture and you are commended on this achievement. You also have a skill of communicating well and engaging with the local community including the schools. As a first time visitor to Tallanstown it is very apparent that many of the villagers including the younger generation subscribe to the village motto "Pride In Our Place". The adjudicator was pleased with the Tallanstown Tidy Towns information sign near the Bring Banks. Your enthusiasm to the competition is outstanding and you have embraced all categories of the competition with open arms extending to your work programmes in each category year upon year so it is good to highlight work areas to villagers and public alike via this means. You will see as you read down this report that your endeavours are reaping rewards.

The Built Environment:

The Vere Foster sculpture, although not quite complete with regards to landscaping around it, is a lovely feature and its location framed by the two trees with the cottages as a backdrop is ideal. The Water Feature is also an attractive focal point and the adjacent Old School was immaculately presented as was the Church.

During adjudication day work was being carried out to the Louth Arms and the signage was being replaced. It is good to note that the proprietor has taken professional advice in relation to the property as it is among the key buildings in the village. Could some landscaping works be carried out outside the Centra shop to soften its appearance? The Glyde Rangers clubhouse was well presented with a combination of floral displays and original paint work (including the windows and curtains included!) The Louth Hall crest is now in a more accessible position on the Ardee Road. Standards are high throughout the village and care of heritage buildings and the heritage trail is noteworthy. You realise that improvements can be made in relation to commercial buildings and it is encouraging to see that you have gained the support of the owners in doing this.

Landscaping:

Landscaping is at a high standard and the number of carefully landscaped areas is extensive throughout the village offering colour and high visual impact. The traffic island at the centre of the village and the Water Feature are well landscaped with a contrast of high colour from the marigolds in the beds compared to the use of stones and grasses at the Water Feature. It is an innovative idea to use the crushed recycled glass for landscaping purposes at the water pump outside the Centra shop. Maguire Park and Mount are extremely well maintained and once the archway is finished it will work in drawing visitors from the Old School House to the Park and vice versa. The herb garden is a pleasant addition to the park and it may be an idea to include some small wooden plaques detailing herb names. Furthermore a small sign to highlight the herb patch might be beneficial. Flower tubs on footpaths and hanging baskets were all very co-ordinated and in outstanding condition. The 2008 Entente Florale sign is nice to see on the other side of the bridge.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You have a detailed works programme in relation to wildlife and natural amenities and your Wildlife Action Plan is a good reference guide. The new butterfly garden in Maguire Park was noted and your ecology trail is excellent, is the Information Leaflet available from the Centra shop? The adjudicator in particular liked the Willow Chair, the Trap Door and your new Insect Hotels on the Glyde and Reaghstown Roads, which greatly increase the biodiversity of the areas and also look so well.

Litter Control:

Litter management is currently at an extremely high standard as no litter was noted anywhere in the village on adjudication day. The very enthusiastic junior litter patrol team kitted out in their Tidy Towns uniforms were out in force on the day we visited looking very professional indeed. The work they are doing is proving to be invaluable and from an onlookers point of view they seemed to be very dedicated to the job. They deserve praise and hopefully with continued encouragement will continue with their Tidy Towns endeavours over the next few decades. The adjudicator also has to comment extremely favourable on your Bring Banks, they are an excellent facility and great praise is deserved to all involved in the decision to move away from the normal receptacles to the "Molok" design. The adjudicator believes that the work on the information banner and signage is among the best seen in Ireland.

Waste Minimisation:

You are very busy in this category, and have embraced it well. Having now established first class recycling facilities in the village recycling rates should continue to rise. You have started to aim your efforts further up the waste management hierarchy away from disposal and recycling towards waste minimisation, which is focused on prevention and actions that reduce or stop waste being created, such as reuse, repair and refurbishment. Your awareness campaigns are excellent and the Follow Up Household Survey regarding the home composting initiative must give you first hand results to further improve waste management in the village. Your home composting initiative shows that home composting can work with an informative and effective awareness campaign. This a project that could be replicated in many rural villages throughout the Country; benefiting not only householders by reducing their overall waste charges and providing a source of compost, but also benefiting local authorities by diverting biodegradable municipal waste from landfill sites. The "Can Man" shows how materials can be reused to great effect. Continue your efforts in this category in consultation with professionals such as the environmental awareness officer from Louth County Council and the staff from the Dundalk Recycling Centre as you are already on the road to greater success, but remember, you need to keep the momentum up in order to achieve recycling increases and waste minimisation results on the ground.

Tidiness:

The standard of tidiness is excellent and it was admirable to see a number of ladies out sweeping the pavements during our adjudication. No election posters or unsightly advertising hoarding were noted in the village or on approach roads. The big banner, wheeled bin and cages outside the Centra shop are not in keeping with the village

Residential Areas:

Individual houses and residential estates were well presented and maintained. The adjudicator particularly liked the quirky fox at the entrance to Cherrywood Park. Residences on Glyde Road, Cherrymore Park and Castle View are noteworthy for their effort in presentation. It was thought that areas of Glyde View could benefit from more landscaping.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads were all well maintained with items adding interest along the way, such as the picnic area on the approach from Ardee, the Louth Hall arms, and the insect hotels. The Tallanstown Litter Free sign was noted on approach roads and it is a good means of communicating your litter standards and expectations to the visitor. The welcome signs were well presented and give a co-ordinated approach from all directions and provide the visitor with a good sense of arrival. The adjudicator also liked the pathway from the Old School to the Church.

General Impression:

It was the adjudicators' first visit to Tallanstown and it certainly won't be the last. On the day we visited Tallanstown the sun was out, flowers were blooming and the village was gleaming. The junior litter wardens were on patrol, footpaths were being brushed, the Bar was replacing its sign and people were painting and doing odd jobs outside their houses - there was a buzz in the air and a real sense of community spirit and pride of place.

Second Round Adjudication:

To do justice to the exquisite village of Tallanstown in adjudication terms and to acknowledge the efforts of the tidy town committee and the greater community it was necessary to spend a fair portion of time just engaging in a leisurely walk to embrace the ambience of the village.

It was then much easier to have an understanding of the magnitude of the work that the committee has undertaken over a number of years to get Tallanstown to the level of achievement that it is at today.

Interesting to note that Tallanstown is the youngest village in County Louth.

It is to the eternal credit of the Committee that it has succeeded in ensuring that basic works under each of the competition categories are completed to a very high standard. This is the platform for your continuous high rating in the competition.

On the day of the 2nd adjudication a number of people were observed at intervals collecting the odd piece of litter and disposing of it appropriately.

This is the type of cooperative spirit that prevails in the village

Your overall developmental approach is very detailed and forward thinking but most importantly the set goals are very achievable.

Of course success breeds success and the exposure gained in Entente Florale the year before has resulted in more people becoming more actively involved in Tidy Towns related work.

The Village, particularly the extremities, looks exceedingly colourful on what was a relatively fine and sunny afternoon. This adjudicator has not seen such a colorful array of double begonias anywhere in his travels to date.

The core area of the village is compact and well maintained helped in no small way by the excellent road surface, footpaths and the designated walk way cum cycle way at the narrow bridge.

The village is also free of untidy overhead wires and this makes a positive contribution to its overall look Both Smyth's Louth Arms and P J Lennon's further down at the Catlebellingham/Dundlak Road junction have been recently refurbished and looked extremely well on the day.

Other commercial properties and private residences were very well presented some freshly painted in bright colours with many complemented by hanging baskets and other forms of planters.

The sculptor of philanthropist Vere Foster, who had a strong association with the area, is very well sited in a central part of the village.

The water feature is something that in time will become synonymous with the village.

The quality of landscaping arrangements viewed in the village proper and its extremities was of a very high standard.

A few very unique planting arrangements were observed in Maguire Park ,most notably the creative sensory garden.

Basic maintenance procedures such as the thinning of shrub beds, treatment of trees and bases are being undertaken on a regular basis as evidenced by the adjudicator on the day.

Plans for the "greening" of the centre of the village, by providing trees in containers, is an excellent idea and it will certainly enhance that immediate area.

Work being done under wildlife and natural amenities is top class especially the creation of the various ecology trails, compliments on providing both informative and attractive notice boards.

Litter was not an issue and this is due to the local population buying into the concept of "Keep Tallanstown Litter free. Good to note that there is a very active involvement from the junior population of the village.

The Bring Bank is both one of the most unusual and well managed centres of its kind observed by this

adjudicator on his travels.

The Legends of Louth mural on the screening hoarding at the building site on the Dundalk Road is a very effective way of camouflaging what could be a very visible untidy area.

The back area across the road from the excellent Church and Grounds is by Tallanstown standards more than a little untidy.

Some very nice housing estates were viewed on the day and even at the risk of offending others I have to pick out 1- 6 Glyde Road and also the residents of the Chestnut Grove on the Reagh Road for the due care given to both individual properties and communal areas.

The entrances in to the village were very well presented and so inviting that no further comments is required. Your committee is a very proactive, progressive and hard working group that ensures that the village stays at the top echelons of the competition.

The top national prize is certainly an objective you aspire to.

It is very much on the cards that in the near future you could achieve this ultimate honour with a continuation of the same formula that has brought you success to date.