

Tidy Towns Competition 2013

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Delvin** Ref: **1113**
County: **Westmeath** Mark: **203**
Category: **B** Date(s): **11/06/2013**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2012	Mark Awarded 2013
Overall Development Approach	50	29	30
The Built Environment	50	26	30
Landscaping	50	26	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15	15
Litter Control	50	25	27
Sustainable Waste And Resource Management	20	3	6
Tidiness	30	13	13
Residential Areas	40	23	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25	25
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	400	191	203

Overall Development Approach:

Delvin is most welcome to the 2013 Tidy Towns competition. Many thanks for your completed entry form, hand drawn map and additional information. You are certainly making great progress in the contest and the momentum you have built up is certainly paying dividends. You have good organisational structures in place including a decent sized committee and contacts with Westmeath county council. Are there sporting associations or businesses that could be added to this list? Communication is key to gaining broad support so it's great to read about your various media outlets. Have you tried social media such as Facebook or Twitter? This could engage younger people and spread the message more widely.

Your map is very clear and shows all the principal features of the town. Whoever do be sure to mark clearly where works have been carried out since the last adjudicator's visit. The adjudicator is looking for these so that he/she can award marks. Your list of projects for 2013 for instance could be a list of projects completed, with numbers and a reference to the map for ease of discovery. As a further step you are encouraged to develop a three-year plan. This would help you think about the broader aims of your group and set a vision for Delvin. It would identify actions to be completed under this period under each of the contest headings. Do consult the excellent Tidy Towns manual for hints and tips on how to do this. Also, feel free to include photos of events or 'before and after' shots when doing works. It gives the adjudicator a good feel for the impact of what you are doing.

The Built Environment:

Last year's adjudicator recommended that you take conservation advice prior to any works on your graveyard. Was this advice taken? Under this heading the adjudicator is looking at how you are dealing with derelict premises. Have you made an inventory of these? Work with Westmeath county council to develop your options. The school's wall painting is judged under this heading. What a beautiful feature that really livens up the small park, fantastic artwork well done!

The treatment of derelict buildings through the use of murals and fake windows etc is excellent. The castle ruins are magnificent and add a wonderful sense of history to Delvin. The interpretive panel is informative but a bit worn.

Commercial signage in the town would benefit from standardisation to encourage handpainted signage that adds rather than detracts from the streetscape. The grounds of St Mary's Church are very nicely maintained, well done on your work here.

Landscaping:

The beautiful natural setting of Delvin is its greatest landscaping feature. This includes the many mature trees that provide year-round attraction. These should be embellished wherever possible, trying to use native trees species for added value for wildlife.

The small park with the playground is very clean and tidy. The tall trees here are beautiful but the margins could be cleaned of some debris, for example dead branches, bricks etc. The displays of summer flowers along the main street add a welcome splash of colour. Is there scope here for more permanent installations? E.g. of trees or shrubs? The small square at the Delvin handball club is excellently landscaped with trees and shrubs (however oak were a poor choice as they will grow too big for this location). Some of the birch trees meanwhile are not doing so well and need to be replaced. The church looks fantastic but was a lot of grass to be mowed! Could areas of meadow be allowed to grow during the summer months? This would reduce resources and give some space for wildlife.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This category is about your appreciation of the town's natural heritage. Starting off resist the temptation to do something in favour of researching the habitats in your area. These may include mature trees, hedges, small streams or rarely cut meadows. Your pond is another example but do take advice before creating access. How will this affect the wildlife that is there? How will it be maintained? Holding heritage events is a great way of raising awareness for example by running guided walks, dawn chorus or bat walks.

Make sure to get local schools involved. Each animal and plant has its own fascinating story to tell, a rich mine for projects, art and investigation!

Litter Control:

Congratulations on participating in the national spring clean. This is a great event to blow away the cobwebs at the start of the year. Along with your Monday litter picks and reporting of illegal dumping this is a good strategy. Do your volunteers wear high-viz vests when litter picking? They should have tidy towns across the back to better promote the work that you do. Litter control on adjudication day was to a very high standard, well done! Some old litter has accumulated in the windows under the '1828' building across from Delvin tyres.

Sustainable Waste And Resource Management:

The projects that you have listed are all good examples of how to eliminate waste. Your challenge here is to continuously add to this list and encourage participation by the whole community. Don't forget that the adjudicator is not only looking at waste but also water and energy as these are increasingly precious resources. Do not prioritise recycling as such facilities are standard across the country and do not assist in the elimination of waste. Your school's green flag is a vital element of this category. Do remember to give them a name check! They will be creating innovative ways to reduce resource use and many of these ideas could be applied across the community. Ideas include organising a 'reduce food waste' event, learning about home composting or using perennial planting schemes over annuals.

Tidiness:

The town is generally very tidy in its presentation. No doubt the upgrade of the N 52 will enhance the town further. There are a small number of suggestions however that require remedy. Christmas decorations on the Blue Hackle and the Greyhound Bar should be taken down after the festive season. An old pump outside the youthreach building needs restoration. More Christmas decorations need to be removed at McCormick stores. An ancient bin outside the wall of St Mary's needs to be binned. The old Burmah sign is an eyesore, could be taken down?

Residential Areas:

Delvin has a number handsome states including Castle view and the neighbouring Lacorna Glen. These are greatly enhanced by their attractive stone boundary walls. Cois Caislean is also present is to a very high standard. The neighbouring small cluster of homes has no name however.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Best of luck with the planned upgrade of the N 52. The approach from Athboy has a clean name sign but one that possibly lacks any character. Perhaps the committee could look at something more distinctive to give people a sense of what Delvin has to offer. Road markings along Main Street are very clear with the result that parking is ordered. Delvin has a large volume of heavy goods vehicles going through the town, many at high speed! Is there anything that can be done to slow them down?

General Impression:

Delvin has a lot to offer and the presentation of the town was to a high standard. Continue to build on your achievements in 2014 by preparing a three-year plan and getting rid of Christmas decorations after the festive season. Best of luck!