

Tidy Towns Competition 2014

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mullingar** Ref: **206**
County: **Westmeath** Mark: **263**
Category: **G** Date(s): **05/06/2014**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014
Community Involvement & Planning	60	37
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	23
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	47
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34
TOTAL MARK	450	263

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Mullingar is very welcome to the 2014 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your submission and a particular thank you for the map included with projects completed this year clearly marked it made the job of adjudication streamlined and hopefully effective. It is also a requirement for participation in the competition that you provide a plan summary of those projects that you would like to see completed over the next three year period at least, a summary does not seem to have been included however in your submission a reference has been made to ongoing projects and this was a good indication of what you wish to achieve. The size of the committee is appropriate for the Tidy Towns task in Mullingar and it is good to note your monthly meetings, it is also favourably noted that there is a representative of the Chamber of Commerce at the meetings as well as the Area Community and Voluntary Forum and that meetings are attended by representatives of the business community on a street basis (each Street Traders Association sends along one of their members). Well done on the support you get from a variety of agencies, bodies and businesses through sponsorship and other support and your link with local schools is noted favourably also. Your website is also noted, hopefully the Facebook page and Twitter account will be reactivated in the short term future. Mullingar's 30 plus years participation in the Tidy Towns competition is impressive and will no doubt continue to make a significant contribution to the economic life of the town as well as the strengthening of community spirit.

Built Environment and Streetscape / An Timpeallacht Thógtha agus Sráid-dreacha:

The participation of the Tidy Towns Committee in the Harbour Street Public Realm Enhancement Plan at the request of traders and residents of Harbour Street is favourably acknowledged by your adjudicator. This project will hopefully be successful and represent the first part of a planned regeneration of the town including the pedestrianisation of the town centre. We look forward to witnessing the unfolding of this project and its completion and indeed in the roll out of similar works for other areas of the town. Future projects will hopefully see the ducting of overhead service cables along Mary Street and Patrick Street to complement existing streetscapes within the town centre that are wirescape-free. We note your shopfront competition and the role this plays in the presentation of retail outlets in the centre. Sophia's Grill features a very dated large protruding box sign and a jaded-looking Coca Cola sign on each end of its fascia hopefully this will be remedied in the not-too-distant future. Refurbishment is necessary to the upper storeys of Con's and adjoining premises, the Lingi's Take-Away premises which forms a corner of Dominic Street badly needs refurbishment to its gable wall, its upper storeys could be treated also. The Tom Birmingham premises looks well with its many traditional features and the Old Stand enjoys an excellent presentation, the letter 'H' should now be replaced on its fascia board. Both the Ulster Bank and Walsh Jewellers look well, Swarbrigg's fascia and plinth are in need of refurbishment. The presentation of the TL Hutchinson's premises with its long side wall which seems to incorporate residential (to the rear of John Daly's Guest Accommodation) looks exceptionally well, the upper storeys of McDonalds could be freshened, it too is a corner

building. Most premises along Castle Street are nicely presented and the old Church / Restaurant looks inviting. Kerrigan's is an attractively presented corner building. Martin's Lane looks quite well. Encourage shopowners to avoid the use of roller shutters to the outside of their windows as it has a negative visual impact on streetscape. These shutters can be placed inside windows thus allowing an attractive window display outside of business hours, the Just Baked premises features roller shutters. Public buildings are well presented, the Council offices were admired together with the Market House and Plaza and the Garda station, although a few sections of the latter could be cleaned down. Mary Street was admired for its presentation and congratulations on it being a neon light-free zone, that's a 'first' in the experience of your adjudicator.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

Congratulations on the opening of The Tranquillity Park in September 2013 we note this was part-funded by Tidy Towns in Mullingar. It is wonderful to feature a park in the heart of a town and we note its proximity to the banks of the Brosna which provides for wildlife habitats. Your tree survey initiative is exciting and we look forward to seeing the results of this next year. The Marlonstown roundabout looked exceptionally well with the town name planted in box hedging and the tree-lined verge outside of Imperial Tobacco premises was admired also. The Lakepoint roundabout enjoys good maintenance however it had not yet been landscaped. The mature trees and shrubs in the centre of the Ballagh roundabout are well established. Landscaping at the Lynn roundabout was admired also. Landscaping at Valley bungalows on the Ballymahon entrance to Mullingar was truly magnificent with its beautifully maintained roadside green areas. Willow Brook was admired also in this respect. The Mill Wheel Famine Memorial is quite good also however its surrounds should be kept free of cigarette ends, the flower displays noted here looked reasonably well. Flower displays and flags to the roadside elevation of the Grenville Arms Hotel were truly dazzling and indeed flower displays on stands throughout the centre of the town looked well throughout. The recently landscaped roundabout at the Athlone/Ballymahon entrance was also admired, landscaping might now be extended to the corners at this junction. The Irishtown roundabout looked well also. The Cullenbeg roundabout is in need of attention and the nameplate on the town side of this looks poor also. The grounds of the Loretto College were admired. It is good to note the approval for two people under the Tus initiative to take on the work of general landscaping and maintenance within Mullingar.

Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities / Fiadhúlra, Gnáthóga agus Taitneamhachtaí Nádurtha:

We note your lecture by Dr Christie Boylan in June concerning all aspect of the Tidy Towns Competition and the participation of other Tidy Towns committees within Westmeath and we look forward to witness a better understanding of what is required under this heading in particular. Mullingar is blessed in terms of amenities being built both on the Royal Canal and on the banks of the River Brosna. The canal walk appears to enjoy good maintenance and it is a pleasant amenity. The riverbanks appear to be allowed to thrive in their natural state thus providing for the needs of wildlife including bees and other pollinators. The small park at the top of the Longford road and located across from Penneys is an attractive incidental amenity and looked reasonably well maintained on the day of adjudication. The Mullingar Slí na Sláinte at the Penneys complex is noted also and good signage on the canal for the walk and the next centres along the walk are featured; the access point to the canal at the Dublin end of the town and the Delvin junction was admired also and the Town Park entrance looked good too. St. Loman's GAA sports grounds features an attractive entrance however the entrance to Oliver Plunkett burial grounds looks less well. The suggestion made by last year's adjudicator is fully supported this year regarding incorporating an annual event to highlight both the Royal Canal and the river Brosna and their related wildlife habitats by perhaps offering guided walks by experts during Biodiversity week in May or Heritage week in August and linking this with the schools. We look forward to you sharing the results of your research into the natural infrastructure in and around the town and witnessing how this research is being incorporated into your three year plan.

Sustainable Waste and Resource Management / Bainistiú Acmhainní agus Dramhaíola Inbhuanaithe:

We note the page on your website which is dedicated to Waste Prevention and this is of course the ultimate goal to prevent waste from being generated in the first instance; for further ideas on waste prevention you might put the following link onto your website also - <http://localprevention.ie/tidy-towns/> - as this has lots of ideas for projects dedicated to waste prevention and of course don't forget to consult the Tidy Towns Handbook also. We note also your proposal to Green School coordinators your wish to sponsor a school project in the sustainable waste area and you are currently assessing the ideas that have been proposed, we look forward to the outcome here. Your adjudicator was a little surprised to see that neither Coláiste Mhuire Secondary School or St. Mary's Co-Ed Primary School appear to have Green Flag status, flags were not in evidence at the time of the adjudication visit. Some recycling containers were in need of cleaning. It was a pleasure to note that there was no dumping or litter around them.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

A scattering of litter was noted within the general environs of Springfield on the Delvin road. A fair amount of litter was noted on the grass banks and in the canal itself at the top of St. Loman's Terrace (noted looking down from the bridge). Litter bins were in need of attention in many instances, particularly in the centre of the town and one at the Ulster Bank. We note your litter-free zone signs. Tidiness is generally to a good standard however there were too many signs on the Ballymahon / Athlone junction, some of these should be removed, three were advertisements. A billboard looked quite tatty located opposite Gleann Petit, this unfinished housing development enjoys good treatment to its roadside boundary. The gutters of the Hutchinsons premises noted earlier could be cleared of weeds and a few corrugated buildings on the canal bank at the end of Dominic Street could receive attention also. The old HSE premises are currently a problem under this heading. Too many signs were noted on the verge near the Ballagh roundabout. Your participation in the National Spring Clean is applauded especially given weather

conditions and your representations to the Traders Association regarding litter on the footpath outside of their premises is favourably noted.

Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:

A terrace of single storey dwellings at the extension from Dominic Street would be visually charming if refurbished, in fact quite a few terraced dwellings are in need of improvement and some town house residential (with small enclosed front areas) are in need of improvement also. One or two roadside facades at the top of Patrick Street near the canal bridge could look better and a terrace of older dwellings near the railway bridge needs cleaning or at least colourful flower displays (Belvedere Terrace?). Lakepoint Park residential had been beautifully presented with well maintained greens and maturing trees; attractive incidental landscaped areas are noted here also, green open spaces within the Cardinal Dalton Housing Scheme were also admired. Prospect Residential Development is nicely landscaped. Many poorly presented roadside boundary walls and dwellings were noted around Springfield Close on the Delvin Road, We are indebted to those responsible for maintenance at Glenmore Woods which although this development still features a number of unsold properties maintenance is to a high standard especially to its green open spaces. Well done on your 'Best Estate Competition'.

Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:

Road surfaces are reasonably good within the Mullingar Town Centre and road markings are clear, car parking in the main thoroughfare is well defined and well marked out and the directions for Free Car Parking is noted also. Footpaths are reasonably well presented and a nice flagstone-type pavement on Castle Street was admired however a very bad stretch of footpath at the entrance to the Railway Station was noted, otherwise the Railway Station and its curtilage area is nicely presented. Road works were noted along Patrick Street and the footpath was up in stretches, next year's adjudicator will see the benefit of this. Street nameplates and fingerpost signage needs refurbishment in some instances, the Garda 'Video in Operation' sign is in need of cleaning. The Mullingar cycle network is noted favourably. The bridge with the pedestrian walk to the inside is a welcome feature. We note work accomplished for the junction between the old Tullamore and Rochfortbridge roads. Well done on the extension of the footpath here in two directions.