

Tidy Towns Competition 2015

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mullingar** Ref: **206**
County: **Westmeath** Mark: **267**
Category: **G** Date(s): **22/06/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	37	38
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	41	41
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	39	39
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	23	23
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	9	10
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	47	47
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34	35
TOTAL MARK	450	263	267

Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Mullingar is welcome to the Supervalu Tidy Towns competition 2015 – a long-time participant in the competition. We enjoyed our visit to your lively town where many positive changes have taken place in recent years. Thank you for your comprehensive entry form. The street map was most helpful for us in navigating the town and well done for numbering your recent projects on it. We were sorry to read of the passing of one of your committee members. Your various photographs gave us an insight into your recent activities. Are you working to a Tidy Towns Action Plan? You might consider submitting this for next year. We would recommend that you lay out your Plan under the eight category headings so each area receives equal focus.

Your active committee is forging good links with outside agencies such as Westmeath County Council. You are well supported by the business community including the Mullingar Chamber of Commerce. You are engaging well with many of your local clubs and have strong links with your schools. You communicate your messages through various channels including social media.

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

The cathedral was one of the highlights of our visit. We admired the impressive grounds here, including the neatly maintained Camino garden. This road consisted of neatly presented schools and the Garda Station with its old/new design contrast. Derelict properties are a challenging issue but you are tackling them in conjunction with Westmeath Co Co. Do continue to update us on how you are engaging with owners and of any successes over the next couple of years. We are glad to note that one such property has been occupied by a retailer since last year. We look forward to hearing more about streetscape improvements for Dominick St. Your shop front competition is a good way of motivating property owners to maintain a high standard.

We admired some many fine buildings on our walkabout including the All Saints church, AIB, Ulster Bank, Market House, Greville Arms Hotel and Rochford's. The Employment Centre looked quite shabby. Smyth's Hardware has an attractive shopfront but the banner detracts from it. The area in front of the Arts Centre was a little untidy and needed sweeping.

Shopfronts that caught the eye included Austin Friar's Pharmacy, Snug Murray's, Credit Union, Tom Bermingham's, Austin Casey's pub and Whelehan's pharmacy. Central Shoes was missing a letter. Some upper storeys need attention.

The Regional Hospital was neatly presented as were Lidl and Aldi supermarkets. All was in good order at the Train Station. The statue at the nearby Marian Shrine looked well but the railings require attention. All was in good order at the playground and we admired the modern sculpture nearby. Cusack Park is centrally located and is very nicely presented.

Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:

The Town Park was one of our highlights where grass areas, flower beds, tree planting and seats were all in good order. The modern County Buildings is surrounded by the lovely Tranquillity Park, where landscaping is maturing nicely. We admired the landscaping surrounding the Annebrook House Hotel, which enjoys a stunning location overlooking the Towns Park. Some fine mature trees were observed at Bellview Clinic.

Roundabouts are a regular feature in Mullingar due to the Ring Road design. They are well maintained by the Council and give a welcoming first impression to visitors.

Flower beds are strategically placed throughout the town for visual impact. Flower planters were in good condition as were the tall flower stands. The area around Market House had some lovely displays. The roundabout at Dominick St was particularly impressive. Many businesses have enhanced their premises with window boxes and baskets, such as those seen at Con's.

We must give credit to the owners of Red Earth Interiors for their landscaping efforts, in this otherwise stark, commercial area of town. We admired the lovely Franciscan Community Building and grounds. You might consider some plant screening at the Ashe Rd sub-station, which was quite untidy.

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

Mullingar residents are fortunate to live beside the Royal Canal, which is managed by Inland Waterways. Your efforts to maintain this special amenity are noted and it is good to hear that canal banks are maintained in a natural state to maintain habitats here. We are impressed that one can walk or cycle 30km along its banks. The Mass Path from the canal to the cathedral is a hidden gem; there was just a little litter here. The Fair Green is another lovely area with access to the canal and lots of mature trees. Do tell us if you are linking up with any schools that are working towards their 'biodiversity' green flag. Well done to all community groups involved in your various projects under this category. Keep up the good work!

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

Mullingar is making good inroads in this category. Your use of river water for your plants is noted. You are using your Facebook page and website to promote various messages about saving resources including waste, water, energy and travel. Do you have any examples of how the children are saving on resources as part of their Green Flag programme or what messages they are bringing home as part of their 'Inform & Involve' step. Please list your schools and let us know what theme each is working on. Well done to the schools that won awards in Westmeath Co Co's Eco Friendly (Pride of Place) Awards. Is Tidy Towns Green Waste composted? Do you have any examples of Reuse within your community, perhaps within one of your more practical groups such as Men's Shed, Scouts or even your CE scheme? Is there any Community Garden or 'Grown your own' group in Mullingar? This would be relevant here as they are reducing packaging, chemicals and air miles. Mentioning any 2nd hand shops or car-boot sales would be other examples of Reuse. Your ongoing recycling activities are noted. Please refer to the 2015 guidelines and pick a few ideas that would work best in Mullingar. Alternatively, visit www.localprevention.ie/tidytowns to see what other initiatives are happening around the country. We look forward to hearing of further progress next year.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Litter control was fairly good throughout the busy town so well done to all involved in your ongoing clean ups. Well done to the scouts for playing their part. Do any other clubs or groups participate? Do you get good participation from various areas for National Spring Clean? There was a little litter in each of the following areas; approach roads, Penney's car park, canal area opposite Train Station, Ashe Rd sub-station. The Town Park was litter-free. Do remember to tell us about your litter awareness campaigns as there are marks going for this. The bottle bank receptacles at the Supervalu car park require cleaning and there was a little litter here.

There were a few minor issues in relation to 'Tidiness'. We would recommend that you carry out an audit of all poles and sign-frames without any signs as there were a few at various locations. Some signs would benefit from cleaning such as the 'Parking' sign at Grand Parade. A parking sign and stop sign were missing from their poles at the junction of Dominick St. We are impressed that you have a Bike Shelter to promote cycling; however the one at Penney's requires cleaning. The green area to the side of Base Computers was untidy. Could any Christmas decorations be removed during the year? (e.g. Supervalu and Jimmy Cosgroves). Wire clutter was evident on some shop fronts, e.g. DNG Auctioneers.

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

Residential areas were well presented overall. Some residences along town streets were freshly painted and colourful; others were enhanced with window boxes or tubs. Castlebar has a large number of housing estates – general well maintained with and litter-free. Some of those included Prospect, Oaklawn, Willowbank and the lovely Abbeyland. We admired the unusual feature at the entrance to Raithin. Some of the name signs were faded and difficult to read. Your Best Estate competition is further helping to keep residents motivated. Please continue to update us on how you are engaging with residents committees and encouraging them to get involved. Well done to all involved.

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

Approach roads were generally well maintained and roundabouts landscaped for visual impact.

Church lane was clean and inviting. Car parks were clearly signposted. Pedestrian access laneways were clearly highlighted apart from the route over the pedestrian bridge from Grove St to the train station. Cycle ways were clearly marked, though some signs did need cleaning. Could the 'Drive Slowly' sign be replaced at the Harbour

Place Shopping Centre? All was in neat order at this vast (Dunnes Stores) car park. Market House Lane looked very well.

Concluding Remarks:

We are delighted to note that Mullingar's participation in Tidy Towns is increasing your community spirit and giving various groups the platform to work together for the greater benefit of the town. Keep up the good work and we wish you well with future projects.