

# Tidy Towns Competition 2018

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Mullingar** Ref: **206**  
County: **Westmeath** Mark: **290**  
Category: **G** Date(s): **18/06/2018**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2017</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2018</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	40	41
Streetscape & Public Places	50	43	44
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	41	42
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	24	25
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	11	12
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	50	51
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	36	37
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	37	38
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>290</b>

### Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Cuireann an moltoir seo faite roim Mullingar (An Muilleán gCearr) chuig Comortas na mBailte Slachtmhara Super Valu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliuradh 60 Bliain Chomortais

Thank you for the excellent entry form and the supplementary material, which was substantial, in support of your application.

The inclusion of pollinator plan, swift's survey and the excellent town map were much appreciated by the adjudicator.

At this juncture the adjudicator would like to point out that it's not possible to comment on all the information supplied in both entry form proper and the support material.

Feel assured that the adjudication was done in a fair and objective manner and within the official guidelines of the Competition.

This adjudicator has been to Mullingar on more than a few occasions over the last few years and is aware of the positive changes that have been happening in the town and its surrounds.

As a committee you have played a leading role with other organisations and the local authority in effecting many of these changes.

The committee of 15 is sufficient for a large town such as Mullingar and with the volunteer core of an additional 12 volunteers the Town is well served from a Tidy Towns perspective

You're methods of communication are varied from the trusted newsletters and local newspapers to the new methods such as Group Texting What's App and more.

You have an excellent Facebook presence and Credit to the person or persons who have the responsibility for its upkeep.

The number of agencies and other organisations that you have supporting you shows that your work is being valued.

You look as if you have a very positive relationship with Westmeath County Council via the local Municipal structure.

Lots of effort has gone into connecting with the business community and local organisations such as residents association.

It is also noted that you have a very strong relationship with Schools through a Liaison Officer and with the various clubs that serve the youth of the Town.

The many projects that you have listed in entry form, there is no point in repeating them back to you, are impressive and suggest that Town is on an upwards trend in the competition.

Quite a number of these projects and initiatives are of course of a collaborative nature with both the County Council, other agencies and organisations and you have acknowledged this in your entry in this category.

You are fortunate in some respects, compared to other committees, in that you have a resource person available to via one of the state schemes.

Overall the standard is very good and much additional work has been done in the category since last year. You have been awarded an additional mark.

### **Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:**

This adjudicator has witnessed the different stages of the re development of the Courthouse and on the day in question it looks like that the project was near full completion – from the outside at any rate !

It has been a long time from start to finish but worth the wait as it is a very impressive end result.

The adjudicator has linked in to the enhancement of Mullingar Town Centre on the Westmeath Co Co website and is familiar with plans and the timescales involved so there is no need to repeat back what is already in the public domain.

It would have been good though if there was a public realm notice in the Centre maybe near Joes Statue to make visitors aware of what was planned for the Market town of Mullingar.

The adjudicator has more than likely walked a fair portion of the Heritage Trails and whilst on that subject Mullingar is blessed to have so many interesting sections of canal walks.

Yes there are a fair number of unoccupied buildings and shops that have closed and have prenatal signs on them.

In an overall context Mullingar is not as encumbered as some other second county towns with this problem.

More than a few new businesses have been set up to counter balance the above situation.

The following are a number of observations that the adjudicator made on his travels around the town and its extremities:

First off well done for being involved with the Chamber of Commerce in the Best Shop Front Competition

The Town Park in Mullingar is one of the most attractive that this adjudicator has encountered during his travels on this Island.

Much thought has gone into the additional improvements that have been made to the park over the last few years and on the day in question it was very busy.

Public Buildings such as the Fire Station which is on one the Zone areas of Mullingar Business Park, the impressive Garda Station and the Midlands Regional Hospital were all visited and noted as being in a good state of presentation.

Cusack Park GAA Grounds, which is probably one of the more town centric grounds in the country, was also well presented, tidy and free from litter.

The small statue of Micheal O Hehir was in need of cleaning.

St Lomans GAA club on Delvin Road is an example of one of the fine sports and leisure that the town has to offer. The twin steeples of The Cathedral Of Christ the King greet you from any entry point into the town.

The Cathedral is a fine example of an imposing ecclesiastical building that one would see in this Island of Ireland and the refurbished railings were noted

Colaiste Mhuire, as it is known locally, is well maintained as are secondary schools such as the Loreto and the Community College.

A number of primary schools were also visited during the walk about and all had green flag rating status.

These schools have such impressive facilities for extracurricular activities for students.

Lakepoint Retail Park is one of many business park entities in Mullingar and the adjudicator was impressed with how tidy that area was.

The following commercial businesses appealed to the adjudicator for a number of reasons.

The Spiced Bean Cafe for its unusual and quirky name, R Daly Hairdresser (street name ?) for retention of old shop front lettering.

The premises has a rental advertising sign so maybe a new business might set up there.

Bank of Ireland and Galvins Menswear on Dominick Street, Clarkes Pub and West End Motors were premises that were very well presented on the day.

Weirs Pharmacy and the EBS were also nicely presented and looked well.

Alanna Rose, and Daly's long established Barbers Shop on Austin Friars Street deserve mention for the nice shop front design of their respective properties.

Tatters, Montgomery Milliner, and J Wallace Pub on Mount Street were also admired for design and colour scheme.

The established hotels in the Town Centre – Annebrook, Newbury and of course the Greville synonymous with Mullingar were in fine condition also.

The Greville was a hub of activity during lunch hour and one wouldn't leave this establishment underfed.

I'm sure the same applies to the other two also.

All the main multiples on the outskirts of the town were well managed and busy on the day

The standard of road surfaces, footpaths and street lighting. was good, internal directional and name signs were clean and visible.

Some road markings depiction parking spaces and freeways were in need of re marking.

Maybe a member of the committee could engage with the Roads Section of the Municipal Council to address these.

Overall the standard was very good and merits an increase in marks

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

This is a category that Mullingar has done reasonably well in over the last few years and the Committee has taken on board any suggestions that previous adjudicators have mentioned.

You have highlighted a number of specific projects in this category and the adjudicator would like to know if these are part of a collaborative arrangement with other stakeholders in the town.

It might sound a little nitpicky but it is important to highlight who the partners are that are part of these projects

For instance the Royal Canal Greenway, which they adjudicator has traversed and cycled part of, has the backing of the County Council amongst others.

It might worthwhile for future entries to the competition to state what role if any the Tidy Towns Committee has in the management or promotion of these projects

It is very important to look after the basics on a continuing basis and Mullingar has many fine and open green spaces that are well managed.

The flower beds at Dominick Street, in front of the Annebrook Hotel, the floral arrangement over head Columbia and the street containers on Patrick Street filled with annuals are examples of diverse type of planting seen in the town. A few outstanding public plantings arrangements were observed during the adjudication walkabout – it was good that basics for shanks mare good walking feet prevailed as much of the town and surrounds were traversed by foot. There were one or two green spaces that could benefit with a little planting arrangement for enhancement purposes. It would be remiss of me not to mention the quality of some of the private gardens that were seen during the adjudication.

That same comment applies to a number of the many roundabouts in Mullingar and its outskirts !

### **Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:**

Good work is being done in the area of wildlife preservation and promotion in an overall context and incremental improvement year on year is your objective which is very laudable.

But it is important to state that sustainability is the key and what you are doing under work in progress for this year and what you have planned for the years ahead will cement that sustainability.

Liaising with your Heritage and Environmental Officers as well as the Conservation Ranger of Westmeath County Council is also beneficial to you as it gives you scope to develop more projects in this category.

Well done on playing an active part in the Biodiversity Awareness Programme with the pupils of Colaiste Mhuire.

Following on from the above comment it would be worthwhile to see if this type of initiative, it doesn't have to be on the same scale, could be replicated in other transition year pupils of other post primary schools in the town.

As well it is also important to get all the primary schools in the town interested in your work as a committee and particularly in areas related to nature and biodiversity.

A job for your schools liaison officer.

The Committee has done some remedial work on foot of suggestions in last year's report by laying weed resistant membranes around trees.

The Westmeath Swift Survey has been well promoted within the County and you are one of a number of locations surveyed.

Good to note that you have registered into the All Ireland Pollinator Plan – a plan that knows no Brexit I'm led to believe!

Your work merits an increase in marks.

### **Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:**

The objective in this category has moved on from one of reduce reuse and recycle to one of promoting the concept of reducing the production of potential waste at source such as excessive packaging.

“Doing more with less” is a very apt

Activities that describe how as a community you manage waste and promote efficient use of resources and promote awareness is the key to gaining marks in this category.

The activities that you have listed in the entry form such as stop food waste and the work that the progressive Mens Shed do for the community are very much part of the objectives of this category but they are not new as such and are replicated around the country.

Managing these projects and ensuring that sustainability is a key component of your work under this heading

As you have stayed on the same mark for a few years this year an additional mark is warranted for additional work on a number large projects.

To get more out of this sector in terms of creating even a greater awareness of all things that contribute to a more sustainable environment consider looking at the following websites for idea generation

[www.localprevention.ie](http://www.localprevention.ie) , [www.greenhomes.ie](http://www.greenhomes.ie) and [www.sustainableprocessing.ie](http://www.sustainableprocessing.ie)

Also something that this adjudicator became aware of during last year's adjudication is the circular economy.

It is a bit too long to explain the concept in detail in this report, but if you access the following [www.dccae.gov.ie](http://www.dccae.gov.ie) you will get a pretty good idea of what it's all about.

The idea of what is called a linear economy of “take, make and waste” is now being seen as not sustainable and alternatives need to be found.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

You have an excellent litter management programme in place and its paying off as the town, which is a large urban area, has a reasonably good record on litter.

There were a places where litter was obvious and these are well known to the committee.

Mullingar is a very large town and has a myriad of external walks along various parts of the canal and the River Brosna which rises in Lough Owell

It is hard to litter patrol a town and its extremities of this size.

You have done well with your litter picks on Captains Hill and other parts of the town and overall the standard was good.

The adjudicator did see litter dumped in a few unlikely areas such as out the Ardmore Road where the very large new primary school is under construction.

There are a few other areas and side lanes in the Town that had cigarette butts and few wrappers strewn in kerbsides.

Weed control was good and it was noticeable that the use of chemical weed control was limited.

General tidiness was good and overall properties both commercial and private had frontages and side areas clean and tidy with a few exceptions as one will find in any village or town.  
Dog Fouling notices could be increased around the periphery of the town as a few instances were noted on the outskirts on the day in question.  
Do continue to keep the message of Mullingar Litter Free and Tidy to the forefront as part of your communication programme.  
Just to note that the entry related to the inhaler case and other plastic waste should be included under the previous section as well.

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

The positive work undertaken under this heading has been noted and the adjudicator took time to visit a number of housing developments on the day in question.  
Ardmore Road where the new school is under construction is a nice residential area but one wonders will the additional traffic generated from this school cause problems as the road is very narrow.  
Millmount and Sundays Well areas are well established and many homesteads had lovely and colourful front and side gardens.  
Grange Cottages long established on the other side of the town were tidy and well maintained as well.  
Hillside Drive, Ballinderry Road and Lynn Heights further out were visited and had some fine homesteads with well maintained communal green areas.  
Brookfield is a development of large detached houses that is very well presented and the area has a number of green communal spaces which were cut or should I say parched because of the unprecedented dry spell.  
Dalton Park is a large housing development and the residents there are doing great work in promoting the positives of this estate as it looked well on the day.  
Carra Vale and Green Park Meadows are relatively new developments that are now maturing.  
Pride of Place is a key component here and your involvement in helping residents in all these estates is paying off.  
A good overall standard achieved in this category and again it merits an increase of an additional mark.

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

The internal streets and lanes were of a good standard of presentation and may have been commented upon in some capacity in another section of the report.  
The adjudicator is aware of your numbers limitations to carry out additional work that Westmeath Co Co are not in a position to do.  
Mullingar has a lot of entries into the town and some side roads connect to other parts of its outskirts.  
The following are a few observations:  
Entry in the Lynn Road between the "Bloomfield Roundabout" and O'Brien's is slightly overgrown and signs a little dirty.  
Could there be some planting arrangements put on the Joe Dolan Bridge incidentally the longest bridge in Ireland?  
Mulready's Cross to the Midlands Hospital is also a bit overgrown.  
The link road Robinstown to the Delvin Road had a bed ready for planting but no plants in Mid June!  
Some confusion with speed signs on the Ballymahon Road with 50km and 80km within short distance of each other.  
On the positive side the many roundabouts were well managed and in the case of some aka Irishtown very colourful.  
The main entrances off the N 52 on both sides and the M4 Sligo and Dublin were in very acceptable condition.  
The main requirements of good signage and roundabouts free of advertising placards that distract drivers were adhered to.  
Overall the standard was very good and merits an increase.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

It is always a pleasure to visit the market town of Mullingar and sample its hospitality.  
Change for the betterment of the Town has taken place over the last few years and the positivity of the place is palpable.  
The Town has improved its ratings in the competition year on year.  
You are wished well for the future.