

# Tidy Towns Competition 2015

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Scotstown** Ref: **542**  
County: **Monaghan** Mark: **272**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **09/07/2015**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2014	Mark Awarded 2015
Community Involvement & Planning	60	33	34
Built Environment and Streetscape	50	32	33
Landscaping and Open Spaces	50	36	37
Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities	50	34	35
Sustainable Waste and Resource Management	50	10	11
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	55	56
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	33	34
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	31	32
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>272</b>

### Community Involvement & Planning / Rannpháirtíocht an Phobail & Pleanáil:

Welcome Scotstown to the 2015 tidy towns competition and we thank you for your continued participation. It is noted that you have seven members on your committee and whilst this represents an increase on your membership last year, it would be of benefit to you to have additional members. We see no mention on your entry form of other voluntary sports groups in your village and we wondered if they would be able to get involved in some of your projects? We are pleased to see that your activities are supported by Monaghan County Council and we would encourage you to form links with Fas and the County leader partnership as they may be able to provide you with advice, funding and assistance. Your communication strategy is relatively limited as it is focused on just 2 mediums – the newspaper and parish bulletin. Have you considered developing an online presence (such as a website) or using social media, texts and e-mails to communicate, publicise your activities and showcase your projects? We are pleased to see that you have involved the children of the national school in your spring and autumn cleanups and that a school art competition is held with an environmental theme. This is considered to be tremendously important as the schoolchildren are often a valuable source of ideas and we're sure that they proved themselves to be enthusiastic young helpers! It is great to see that your committee has now been involved in the competition for approximately 50 years and we are pleased to say that the benefits can be seen in the quality of your local environment. Thank you for your completed application form and map as they were helpful during adjudication. Your photographs are also acknowledged. Thank you for your plan which was read with interest. When reviewing your plan next year, it is recommended that projects are identified under each of the tidy towns headings.

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

Scotstown looked well during adjudication and we admired a number of elements in the village. We particularly liked the tree-lined new Avenue leading past the cemetery down to the magnificent Church- which is a most attractive period building with its natural stone finish and distinctive stained-glass windows. The cemetery, which can be found in the grounds of the Church is very well maintained. A little further on, the Parish Hall looked smart with its fresh coat of paint and the National School building nearby is also maintained to a high standard. The sandstone wall leading down to the bridge looked particularly well (following its power washing!) and we admired the distinctive and original natural stone bridge. The commercial functions of the village can be found in close proximity to the green and we were pleased to see that a good standard of presentation was achieved by the majority of buildings. Scotstown Pharmacy stood out while the Barber Shop, the Hair Salon and the Centra also looked well. We loved MacCague's Pub with its traditional shop front but the dated Guinness sign identified by the adjudicator in 2014 detracted a little from its appearance. Moynas bar could be improved by a fresh coat of paint. The village green, with its lovely mature trees, neatly trimmed grass, Failte stone, freshly painted pump and pleasant seating areas serves an attractive focal point for your village.

### **Landscaping and Open Spaces / Tírdhreachú agus Spásanna Oscailte:**

Landscaping schemes and planters are used to good effect in Scotstown. We liked the natural stone faced gravel lined beds that accommodates the 'An Bot' name stone on the Ballanode approach road and the committee is commended on its use of perennials in this location. The colourful rose bed, located on the neatly trimmed verge between the residential area and the Ballanode approach road also looked very well. The colourful planters located in this verge and the semimature trees help to further enhance this approach. The large cream-coloured planters in front of the Presbyterian graveyard looked well as they accommodated a very good range of summer flowering plants. A good standard of maintenance could be observed on the Village Green a little further in and we look forward to seeing the large landscaping bed (facing the Rosslea approach road) completed in time for next year's competition as they were working on it during our visit. The commercial premises of Moynas, the Chunky Chip and the Hair Salon all boasted attractive and colourful hanging baskets. The revamped sandstone bed on the Tydavnet road was admired and we loved the recessed sections that accommodated colourful and brightly painted concrete planters. The Millennium Garden also looked very well and the committee is complimented on its careful and sensitive management of it. The committee is commended on undertaking a number of projects under this category for 2015 including the provision of a low 1 foot high sandstone retaining wall along the perimeter of the village green for maintaining all green areas, tubs, pots and flower towers throughout the village.

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

We note your entry form that problems emerged with the 10 bird nesting boxes installed last year and that they have now been modified (with larger openings for the birds). We are also pleased to hear that they have been well received in the millennium garden as they currently accommodate blue tits. Your entry form also states that you mowed a swathe of grass along both sides of the millennium garden pathways and around the trees and we wondered if this was to facilitate access? Given that the Millennium Garden is fully established, we wondered if it is time to undertake a wildlife survey in order to ascertain what birdlife and wildlife it is attracting. Perhaps the school would like to get involved in this project? It is suggested that you involve the school where possible as one of the key aims of this category is to encourage groups to raise awareness of biodiversity at a local level. The 2014 adjudicators report was read with interest and we note the suggestion that a Riverside walk or wildlife area be considered. This sounds like a good idea as a riverwalk could be enjoyed by locals and visitors alike and it could also be used to raise awareness of biodiversity – by including interpretive signage along it. Other ideas for projects under this category can be found in the tidy towns handbook.

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

It is stated in your entry form that the school are leading by example under this category by engaging in composting and by undertaking other actions that minimise waste – such as using plastic reusable boxes for lunches. We agree that these actions are commendable and worthwhile but we are interested to know what the committee is doing to promote sustainable waste and resource management. Don't forget that this category has increased in importance in the competition and that it now attracts a total of 50 marks – the same number as the built environment, landscape and wildlife categories. We would love to hear about what the committee is doing to minimise and eliminate waste when carrying out its day-to-day activities. Practical actions include making your own compost, harvesting rainwater, growing your own plants (or seeking donations from keen gardeners in the village) and using waste or unwanted materials for your planters and other projects. Please keep it up-to-date on your actions under this category in 2016.

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

We are pleased to report that the village was virtually litter free during adjudication and we're sure that this is the result of the diligent approach of the committee and other volunteers when carrying out their regular litter picks. No doubt that the Spring Clean Event has also contributed to this success. A high standard of tidiness was also achieved – particular in relation to weed removal as colourful plants, road verges and roadsides seem to be weed free and cleanly swept. However, the signage was considered to be problematic in a number of areas. We were surprised to find a road sign outside the Presbyterian graveyard that was in such poor condition that it could not easily be read. It is recommended that the sign is either cleaned or removed as a matter of urgency. Other signs appeared in poor condition in prominent locations – such as the yield sign on the Rosslea road junction and the black and yellow road sign at the factory end of the sandstone bed on the Tydavnet road. Some of the black lamp stands in the village looked untidy and they may need to be washed or painted in time for 2016 – the lamp stand on the Tydavnet road between the bridge and the Centra and one of lamp stands on the village green needed attention. We are surprised to see that the uprights and railings surrounding the pump on the village green were not painted along with the pump itself and two of the white seating benches in the village green – particularly the one nearest McCagues Pub – will need to be repainted in time for next year. The discarded round concrete planter on the village green close to McCagues Pub should also be removed.

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

The standard of presentation of residential streets and housing areas is the village was recently good but the adjudicator had difficulty identifying them without the aid of your map. Is estate name signage provided or is it proposed? St Dymnys Terrace on the Ballanode road achieves a high standard with its neatly trimmed green verge alongside the road and attractive landscaping schemes. The Ferns on the Rosslea road also looked quite well and their work on weed control appears to have paid off. The unfinished estate on the Smithborough road is generally untidy looking and we hope that this residential area can be improved or finished in the near future.

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

The approach roads into the village are generally good and we liked the standardized An Bot name stones. In some instances (for example, on the Rosslea road) there are opportunities to provide landscaping at the base of the name stones and it is recommended that this idea is considered by the committee as it would help to further enhance the approaches to your town. The speed limit signage was generally in good condition but it was surprising to note that the 80 kmph signs did not achieve the same standard as the 50 kmph signs.

**Concluding Remarks:**

Scotstown is commended on another good performance in the tidy towns competition and you are encouraged to keep up the good work and we look forward to seeing further progress next year.