

# Tidy Towns Competition 2006

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Swinford** Ref: **361**  
County: **Mayo** Mark: **193**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **14/07/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	32
The Built Environment	50	26
Landscaping	50	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20
Litter Control	50	18
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	13
Residential Areas	40	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	22
General Impression	10	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>193</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Swinford is very welcome to the tidy towns competition. The information supplied on the entry form was very useful in showing the activities of the committee and the proposals for the future. A detailed plan based on the future three to five years would be very useful at this stage as priorities could be established in consultation with all interested parties in Swinford so that a comprehensive and inclusive plan would enable as many people as possible to become motivated and initiate the necessary work or the lobbying to have certain things done. The committee of 10 is a sizable number and that is a good start. The involvement with local schools is valuable and the tidy towns poster competition was a good project.

### **The Built Environment:**

There is a wide range of building styles and forms through the town and surrounds. Many of the landmark buildings look especially well. The Catholic Church with the numerous surrounding school buildings all are in a very good condition and are certainly enhanced by the wonderful landscaping and care of the grounds on all sides. The Garda station nearby also appears well. On the Dublin road the Adult Education Centre looks well and the very attractive (school?) building with impressive gates towards Bridge Street. The Fire station was noted and the range of Health Authority buildings at Hawthorn Avenue – these are impressive and their surrounds appear very well. The Swinford hospital buildings appear well. The Main Street is interesting with so many of the buildings of three storey type and a reasonably good standard of presentation and upkeep. Some do need attention to painting and general décor or upgrading and these tend to become more noticeable as standards around them rise. The main street in general appears well with the absence of overhead cables, attractive lamps, street furniture, tree planting, wide pavements and the detail of the cobble guttering and parking bays. There are a number of derelict buildings around the town and these are very obvious and no doubt well known to the committee. These offer a challenge – whether it is encouraging their owners to improve them or seeking the council to act upon them.

### **Landscaping:**

There are a number of fine landscaping examples through the town and surrounds. The very attractive Church and school grounds occupy a considerable area by the corner site and a marvelous landscaping job has been done in the past to provide the present day appearance of these regions. The areas at Brabazon Heights and the Health Authority buildings are also remarkable with beautiful mown lawns and mature trees giving a simple yet very effective landscape all around this area. Good small features like that at the end of Main Street and at the junction of Pound Lane are noteworthy. The huge range of container plantings through the town give a great sparkle of summer colour through the streets and are very welcome. The landscaping of housing estates is especially important in providing good visual effects in a town and surrounds. In particular, the treatment that the entrances and open spaces receive through the estates makes a clear statement. Encouragement can be given by the committee to help establish residents committees and there then can be some consultation with these associations giving mutual benefit to all concerned. The trees along the main street look well and will give greater benefit as they mature. Any gaps or casualties of trees should be replaced. The dead trees along by the playing fields above the Garda station should be removed as they are unsightly and will not resurrect.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The woodland area offers interesting prospects for appreciation of the natural environment. This is an interesting wood because the trees are broad-leaved trees. As such, they must be very attractive in the autumn. Investigate possibilities for wildlife trails and ways of conveying to people some knowledge about the walkways so they can avail more of this great asset. The small strip of land opposite the fire station may have possibilities too. The walkway through the gate at the entrance to Brabazon heights is a pleasant laneway walk and worth investigating its value as a nature reserve if it is available.

### **Litter Control:**

The litter control through the main streets in particular was disappointing with much litter on the footpaths and road sides. Some dumping was also noted near the gate of the laneway at Brabazon Heights as mentioned above. The weekly litter cleanups as mentioned in the entry form certainly do much to help but a more serious look at preventing the streets becoming littered is needed now.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The segregation of litter from the clean up is very good action and also the creation of awareness of recycling is all important. This aspect of the competition is about concentrating both on the need to choose materials and methods that avoid producing waste and to consider environmentally friendly ways of dealing with the waste that is generated. A campaign of awareness with both homeowners and business people needs to be started to give an understanding of the importance of waste management and recycling. Compost heaps can be made for green materials, avoidance of using materials that do not degrade easily and separation of the various materials so that they can be recycled.

### **Tidiness:**

There is a good level of tidiness through the town. This is greatly helped by the arrangements in Main Street of having an orderly layout of lamps, seating, paving, parking bays and the absence of overhead cables. The premises that need attention to décor take from the tidiness element. Numbers of protruding plastic signs are fairly low but even less of these would be desirable. An unsightly corrugated iron shed on the Circular road needs some attention – these sheds, unless well painted can appear very ugly. Untidy frontages of industrial buildings on the Kilkelly Road give a poor impression on entry to the town at this point.

### **Residential Areas:**

There are many streetside residences through the town and these are very welcome as they create a good spirit of community within the town itself. There are many housing estates surrounding the town and considerable expansion appears to have taken place recently. The standards are good. The formation of a sub committee to deal with individual estates can only be positive and well done for this initiative. The estate at Bollinbrook with the interesting sculpture by the entrance caught the eye as did the railway terrace.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

There is generally a good standard of road surface throughout the town on approach roads. Roadside verges are well maintained on approach roads. The Kilkelly Road with industrial buildings was disappointing. The back streets and laneways appear to be clean and well cared for.

### **General Impression:**

Swinford is progressing well in its development. The plan of action will help to focus on the priorities within

and around the town and lead to an improved situation The resolution of the derelict buildings and those needing attention will go a long way towards raising the overall standards within and around the town