

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Swinford** Ref: **361**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **207**
Category: **C** Date(s): **21/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	33
The Built Environment	50	27
Landscaping	50	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	20
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	24
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	207

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the comprehensive application form complete with supplementary work plan indicating objectives and actions for 2007 onwards
The inclusion of a map was very helpful in identifying the relevant areas of the town.
The committee of 11 is to be congratulated for its work to date and its ability to harness the efforts of the wider community for the betterment of the town.
There is an excellent relationship with the local authority and other relevant agencies and the committee has been the main partner in a number of projects that impinge on different elements of the towns overall development.
The attached document on work undertaken and planned from this year on is an example of a good straightforward approach and adherence to realistic objectives.

The Built Environment:

It is important that the built environment reflects the heritage of any town such as Swinford which has a rich and significant history.
Your encouragement of local shopkeepers to upgrade their frontages is laudable but do make sure that this is done in a manner in keeping with the original impressive architecture of the town.
Like many towns of similar structure Swinford has encountered problems with dereliction of unoccupied properties and basic neglect,
A number of very impressive structures were noted in varying degrees of disrepair although some were earmarked for remedial work as per The RC Church and its grounds are a credit to those who are responsible for the upkeep of this fine public building and excellent landscaping arrangement.
The Mercy Convent one of the seats of education in the town was also in fine condition.

Scoil Mhuire agus Treasa with its green flag status is a very large school on Station Road. Both parts of the school are extremely well managed and cared for so credit to everybody concerned teachers, pupils and caretaker.

The following business premises appealed to this adjudicator and these were observed in various parts of the town; O'Connell's Pharmacy which was very well refurbished, The Gateway Hotel with its stone frontage, Quinns Bar, the premises that houses the very attractive gift shop Presents.ie and Mellets Bar a well run establishment with its very fine frontage.

The Community Hospital on outskirts of the town is nicely presented with fine grounds that brighten the grey stone.

Dereliction has been already dealt with but ESB buildings that were examples of acceptable design at the time of building now look dated- Swinford is no exception.

Quite a lot of these are of course closed and it might be worthwhile if the committee could find out the fate of the building in Swinford.

Planning notices and some others had for sale signs up; let's hope all are restored in keeping with present structures.

Landscaping:

The idea to tag trees at the Brabazon Park Trustees planting place on the Kilkelly Road was an excellent idea at the time unfortunately this area has become overgrown and a planning notice, that seems slightly controversial, has been vandalised.

No comment except to say that it is a pity that this area was not retained as a town amenity, cleaned up and presented in an acceptable fashion for the local residents.

The flower beds on the cobbled area at the junction of Brookville Avenue and Main Street were very well cared and provided good colour to that part of the town.

The overall quality of planting arrangements large and small seen all over the town is very good and these were complemented by a number of features such as the excellent sculpture and polished stone seating. Significant voluntary effort has gone in to caring for these areas so well done to all concerned.

The trees in Main Street will mature with years but they need to be properly cared for and protected. It is noted that the committee has a good relationship with the Horticulturist from the local authority and an assessment of the condition of both recently planted saplings and more mature trees is to be undertaken before the season is over.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The awarding of grant from the Neighbour Wood Scheme should serve as catalyst to help develop a significant wildlife project for the town.

Your idea to develop trails in the Brabazon Woods and to add information signs depicting the fauna and flora of the area is certainly on the right course of action and the area selected is synonymous with the historical past of the town.

Maybe the area that was mentioned under the landscaping section could be included under this initiative or is the development proposed on the planning notice inevitable?

Seek advice from the Wildlife Ranger or equivalent from Mayo County Council on issues such as how to go about a wildlife survey. Invite both primary and post primary school children via relevant teachers to become involved and make it a true community project.

You are wished well with your endeavours.

Litter Control:

The litter control was acceptable but there is room for improvement, comment was made in last year's report about the litter in the core area in the town, the position this year has improved somewhat but still it needs constant attention.

One appreciates that you as a committee are doing your utmost to spread the message of good litter control and the actions such as weekly litter pick rotas are certainly helping.

Be aware that outlying areas are also targets for littering and this was evident on both the Kiltimagh and Dublin Roads.

It is important to continue to come up with measures that will get the community as a whole to row in behind your efforts to make the town and its environs litter free.

Keep encouraging people it will come right.

Waste Minimisation:

The emphasis in this category as outlined in the excellent Race Against Waste booklet is concentrating on methods that avoid producing unnecessary waste and promote more environmentally appropriate ways of

dealing with general waste.

Your initiatives under this category are within the guidelines you have embraced the concept of waste minimisation as promoted by the campaign management team.

Keep informing the community of the importance of the Race Against Waste initiative and in time consider inviting some one from the programme to come and give a talk on new initiatives in the scheme.

Do consult the excellent race against waste web site for ideas also.

Tidiness:

The work undertaken since last year such as new path and repair to broken lampposts and signs has helped to give the town an ordered and tidy look.

The under grounding of cables, as is the case in other towns that have had this done, makes a major contribution to the general tidiness of Swinford.

The volunteer kerbside weeding has been a success as kerbs and footpaths even the notoriously difficult to maintain cobble lock were weed free.

Like other similar sized towns Swinford has a certain level of derelict buildings that could become worse if not addressed but efforts are being made to make good some buildings and to camouflage others appropriately.

Finally the one real negative was the condition of the Bring Bank area, far too messy with one of the receptacles moved out onto the car park proper, this kind of wanton idiotic carry one is beyond comprehension. Advise the council that this area needs to be managed better.

Overall good work being done by the residents to present the town in a good light.

Residential Areas:

The standard in this category was quite good and the housing developments visited were presented well. Larch Hill on the outskirts was indicative of the good standard of newer developments although the road surface in parts was a bit patchy.

The Orchard on the Park Road was very well maintained with basics such as boundary walls attended to. Sancta Maria Terrace and Sycamore Terrace are of an older vintage were a little mixed in terms of standard of presentation, some homesteads were excellently maintained but part of the communal green areas need to be properly maintained.

It would be worth appointing a representative from these estates to a sub committee of the main tidy towns committee.

Some fine premises with mature and colourful gardens were viewed on the Circular Road near the Council Office.

The standard of link roads and back lanes in and around the town was good and credit has to be given to homeowners that keep these areas tidy.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The entrance from Ballina was complemented by excellent footpaths and beds with colourful nasturtiums as one enters, it was noted that Baxter Healthcare had their gardener/maintenance man working on the green mound area in front of the building.

The Westport Dublin entrance was also quite attractive, good sweeping road with nice failte sign, good street lighting and directional sign near garage very visible and clean.

The Kiltimagh entrance had the verges treated in a manner conducive to good wildlife conservation but this was one of the areas that had too much litter strewn around.

Old Castlebar road a little over grown and needs to be cut back at the outer verges.

General Impression:

It was nice to visit Swinford and appreciate both its historical past and also the development work being undertaken.

The town has had some significant improvements over the last few years and despite the increase in volume traffic flowed reasonably easily through the centre.

It has some very impressive feature including the railway bridge.

Keep up the good work and one looks forward to seeing the Town make further progress in the competition in the years to come.