

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Swinford** Ref: **361**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **209**
Category: **C** Date(s): **13/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	33
The Built Environment	50	28
Landscaping	50	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	19
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	209

Overall Development Approach:

Your adjudicator would like to welcome you to the 2008 TidyTowns Competition. Thank you for your detailed report on the 2007 TidyTowns work programme. The adjudicator notes that a 3 Year TidyTowns Plan was not submitted with your entry. It is suggested that you try and prepare this for the next three year period. It will be a great help in guiding your work from year to year.

The Built Environment:

Work on the Playground was underway on adjudication day and this will be a great community facility when finished. The adjudicator likes the Mother & Child sculpture and what a sad time in the history of the town it remembers. The town has a number of derelict buildings and it is encouraging to see that you have approached owners to see what remedial action can be taken in the short term. Again this year the Baxter entrance area was superbly landscaped with manicured sloping lawns. The Catholic Church is beautifully located above the well landscaped tiered lawns. At the Garda Station it is suggested that the road boundary wall be painted. Likewise at Scoil Mhuire the wall needs to be painted and also the railings and gates which were quite rusty. As you drive down Circular Road towards the Ballina road the large rusty roof visible to the left would be greatly improved if painted a dark green and thus become less obvious. The AIB premises stands out with the colourful window boxes as does the Credit Union. Is it really necessary to have four overhead lights for this premises. Some plastic signage on retail premises was noted and a campaign to have these replaced with more sympathetic materials might be considered. The Groake's premises retains some traditional features as does the Douglas Kelly building. Market Street uses strong colours that work well. The Library building needs to be repainted or power-hosed and a little graffiti was noted on some window ledges.

Landscaping:

Landscaping is a strong performance area for Swinford and you have done really great work in preparing the

many flower beds in the adjudication area. For example the landscaped area near the Bring Centre looked really colourful on a sunny June afternoon. The lawns noted on the road to the HSE Supplied Depot were really excellently presented and this should be the standard for everyone to follow. The adjudicator reminds your TidyTowns Committee that it is illegal to cut vegetation between 1st March and 31st August each year in a hedge or ditch or on lands not cultivated. The legislation that covers this is in the Wildlife Act and the reason is to provide protection for birds. Hopefully the trees that you replaced in the Square will thrive. The NeighbourWood project is a really excellent one and the planting of the 3,000 trees was a great investment in the natural environment of the future. On completion the adjudicator looks forward to visiting the project. Near the Ball Alley the new flower beds are coming on well and compliment the excellently presented large grass area at the nearby estate. At the junction near Shell the area with the trees looked in need of some attention as weeds were taking over the landscaped area here.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The NeighbourWood scheme will give great potential for you to develop this aspect of your TidyTowns programme. The stream that flows past the Ball Alley may have some wildlife potential also. It is suggested that you talk with Mayo County Council in regard to potential wildlife development in Swinford.

Litter Control:

Unfortunately on adjudication the Bring Centre was very poorly presented with a lot of litter, bottles and boxes on the ground. Graffiti was present on the nearby wall. This is rather an isolated location for this community facility and a more public location might be considered by your Committee. Much litter was noted in Bollingbrooke Drive and along Main Street and Market Street.

Waste Minimisation:

Congratulations to Scoil Mhuire on achieving their second Green Flag Award – well done to all the pupils! This aspect of the competition is about steps that can be taken to minimize waste and put as much as possible of the remaining waste into recycling. Your committee might give this category extra attention for 2009 though your mark in 2007 was quite high by national standards.

Tidiness:

The Annual Spring Clean is a great idea and this gets the community further involved in TidyTowns. Hopefully the ESB will be able to carry out the maintenance and cleaning of the streets lights in the town centre without delay. On the Ballina road a number of long road boundary walls need to be painted and on the Aclaire road the untidy site by the bridge needs to be screened from view. Along Brookville Avenue some untidy areas need a clean up. At the Adult Education Centre the road boundary wall was in poor condition and needs painting, and at the Community Centre the white entrance barrier needs to be painted also. Graffiti was noted on one or two litter bins and projecting signs are an unfortunate development.

Residential Areas:

A number of the estates were visited and at Cois Abhainn grass growth at kerbing was a problem and individual houses needed to be landscaped. Weed growth on the Sancta Maria Terrace approach road needs attention. The decorative stone at the entrance to the Orchard was much admired and the trees at nearby Brabazon Heights provide a rural feel to this estate. Good use of colour is a characteristic of St. Ita's Terrace. Opposite the Gateway Hotel a beautifully maintained house and grounds caught the eye. Individually sited houses were generally well presented through some road boundary walls needed attention especially on busy roads and streets.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Some of the approach roads were excellently presented and the Ballina road was especially pleasing with the combination of good grass areas and trees. On some other roads verges were uncut and this was the situation on the Dublin road and the road by Meadow Park. The Kiltimagh road created a good first impression of Swinford with neatly kerbed well cut grass areas.

General Impression:

It was a pleasure for your adjudicator to visit Swinford for the first time. Good luck with your TidyTowns projects for 2009 when we look forward to visiting you again.