

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Swinford** Ref: **361**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **216**
Category: **C** Date(s): **14/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	35
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
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	216

Overall Development Approach:

Swinford Tidy Towns Committee is welcome to the 2009 Competition. On first impressions, your application form seemed to suggest that you had little support from the local community, but as your form progressed, a more positive picture emerged! We were glad to hear that you have received support from Moran's and that they will be promoting Swinford. We look forward to seeing your website next year, many committees find these very useful to their work! The participation of the new residents will also swell your numbers, which is more good news. We were pleased to hear that Mayo County Council supplied you with topsoil for your projects. You would appear to have a good relationship with them, the Rural Social Scheme (whose workers must be most beneficial to your work), IRD Kiltimagh and the Chamber of Commerce. The schools appear to have a good level of involvement with you also. Perhaps for next year, your map could be a hand-drawn one indicating clearly areas of interest, where work has been completed and where there are problem areas.

The Built Environment:

The commercial properties of the town generally looked well on the day. There were a few properties that looked neglected in comparison. The Post Office was quite fresh and the banks made a good aesthetic impression. The library building was very fresh. The credit union looked well and the garden centre had a cheerful appearance. The stone church looked marvellous and majestic, set up on its grassy bank with marvellous grounds. The nearby school and grounds was well maintained and the associated monument to the Sisters of Charity was admired. The railway bridge forms an attractive gateway to the town. The old stepped gabled garage was admired, although its canopy was in bad order, would it be possible for this building to be retained and restored to its former glory? The VEC College was fine, but its boundary wall should be repainted before next year's competition. Streetscapes were generally of a good standard. One or two plastic signs were evident and should be replaced with timber ones. The mural at the Sheepwalk Bar was admired. The Fire Station was very fresh.

Landscaping:

The landscaped areas you have created around the town create a good impression, that at the Sisters of Charity has been mentioned elsewhere in this report. The trees marching up Main Street are coming along well and create an elegant vista to the Mother and Child statue at the end, which terminates it. The dished planters here had yet to come into their own. The lovely planting at the Riverside makes a good impression, although the mural was a little neglected. The Handball alley was also in need of painting. The amenity field had work progressing on the day. Presumably its block-work wall will be stone faced in time? Planting by Swinford Garages is most effective, some work seemed to be in progress on the opposite side of the road. Some marvellous planting was noted at Railway Terrace. We were pleased to hear of the proposed input received from a horticulturalist regarding seasonal bedding.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Work at the woods is pleasing to hear about and the nature trail with signage for trees, flora and fauna will be marvellous. We were sorry to hear of problems regarding litter in this location and hope it will be resolved in time. Some weeds were evident on the Dublin Road. We were pleased to hear of the future involvement of Birdwatch Ireland at the school and the provision of bird boxes.

Litter Control:

We were pleased to hear that you participate in the National Spring Clean and the participation of 40 people including schoolchildren was most encouraging to hear. Some litter was evident on the Ballina Road and at the Bollingbrook estate. There was also evidence of litter along the main street on the day.

Waste Minimisation:

We were pleased to hear of your involvement with the school in relation to participation in the Green Flag programme. The participation of businesses in this regard is pleasing to hear, particularly the baling of cardboard boxes. Have you looked at the idea of composting your own cuttings and the idea of conducting workshops in composting for the local community. There was evidence of dumping at the recycling area.

Tidiness:

We were sorry to hear of the broken lamp post incident and hope that it will be replaced in time? Weeds were evident on kerbs at the Bollingbrook estate and at footpaths on the Ballina Road.

Residential Areas:

The houses and gardens of the town were generally well cared for on the day. We were pleased to hear of your efforts to help local estates maintain their open spaces. Participation of new residents associations in your work will be a great boost. Have you considered the idea of having an estates competition of your own or a garden competition? Some of the boundary walls on the Dublin Road were a little neglected. The Bollingbrook estate looked well, although its open space was in need of trimming and its sculpture of colourful musicians was in need of repainting. Its houses and gardens were well maintained. Individual houses on the Ballina Road were good, although one or two boundary walls appeared grubby in comparison to the majority.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

We were pleased to hear of the new bilingual signage. The road from Dublin appeared somewhat overgrown. Do discourage advertising hoardings, as these can give approach roads a rather cluttered appearance. The Pound Lane area has great potential, it could be redeveloped as a mews-like laneway. Baxter Healthcare sported some very attractive planting to its fronts.

General Impression:

It was a number of years since this adjudicator had the pleasure of visiting Swinford and it was impressive to see how well it is being cared for. It is a lively, vibrant town with much to offer.