

Tidy Towns Competition 2010

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Swinford** Ref: **361**
County: **Mayo** Mark: **226**
Category: **C** Date(s): **16/06/2010**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009	Mark Awarded 2010
Overall Development Approach	50	35	35
The Built Environment	50	30	32
Landscaping	50	30	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23	23
Litter Control	50	19	23
Waste Minimisation	20	11	11
Tidiness	30	14	15
Residential Areas	40	23	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	24	25
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	400	216	226

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the filled up entry form and the detailed map provided. We did not find a 3-5 year plan in the entry. Planning is vital in all walks of life and you could set aside a meeting on a winter's night to write down some possible actions that could make Swinford an even better place to live in. We note you have a committee of 5 and perhaps this is too small an amount to cover such a large area. We also note you are holding monthly meetings – well done on this. It is positive to liaise with Mayo county council and the other agencies – you are getting your message across well to the local people. Well done for maintaining contact with the local schools and the green schools initiatives are very positive. We are pleased to find that the competition gives a focus to you to further enhance Swinford. The Siamsa Sraide is a good way to get people to interact.

The Built Environment:

We travelled around the streets of Swinford - the main street was well presented and the trees softened the impact of the buildings and was commended. We admired some very nice traditional shop fronts and there are a number of newer businesses that blend in well with the streetscape. At the T junction - a yellow building is badly in need of attention and stands out for the wrong reasons in this prominent place. Some buildings were well maintained such as Heerans electrical shop and Campbell's lounge bar. Carmel's café was presented in a cheerful fashion. Your adjudicators admired the flower baskets at Davey's bar and Millet's bar with its overhead clock – as in many other premises. The hanging baskets at the Gateway hotel were nice to see. It was lovely to see many owners take some pride in their premises with fresh paint and hanging baskets. We felt that the substantial AIB and Bank of Ireland buildings could be freshened up with the addition of hanging baskets or window boxes. Sculptures were admired in the town commemorating the Convent of Mercy and mass migration of the 1950s. We felt that a few trees could enhance the Dublin road Bilingual street signs were commended. Swinford library could be made more cheerful but it is noted that a

new library is proposed.

Landscaping:

The landscaping on the main approach roads is noted. We were very impressed with the landscaping at the catholic church, the garda station and the parochial house. Neat landscaping was also noted at the entrance of Baxter's factory. Generally speaking we were a bit disappointed with the landscaping of Swinford – it was disappointing to find where existing flower bed areas were in place, some with nice stone enclosures, and they mainly contained weeds notably near the fire station and near the entrance to Mellett's car park. We felt that the business houses could be brought more into play to assist with the landscaping and to generally present the town in a brighter fashion with some displays of shrubs and flowers. We met two men working in the rural social scheme and they were doing good work in mowing the grass. Some nice areas of green spaces were admired.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

There is an abundance of wildlife in Swinford in the many mature trees, stone walls and water courses. Your adjudicators felt that much could be done to enhance this area of work – perhaps some survey work with the local schools that are all working on their green flags. You could enlist the assistance of some local people – BirdWatch Ireland or the NPWS Ranger may be able to provide a free local talk to raise awareness of local wildlife. Some interpretation of the wildlife would be helpful in the areas of the stream by Santa Marie Terrace, free posters from ENFO could be laminated perhaps?

Litter Control:

We applaud the spring clean at the start of June. We are pleased to find that the 3 schools provided 40 pupils to assist with litter control. Do you take part in the national spring clean up? This is a wonderful initiative put in place by An Taisce. It will be great if you can provide the new hand held motorised sweeper. To reduce the amount of drinks bottles dumped near the hand ball alley, your adjudicators suggest possible provision of segregated litter bins – in particular ones for plastic drinks bottles. In the interim could plastic recycling bags be provided by the handball club during matches?

Waste Minimisation:

It is delightful to hear that the national school has received their third green flag this year and this will make the teachers, pupils and parents adopt an even more responsible attitude to the local environment. Hopefully you can adopt the policy or reduce, reuse and recycle. It would be very positive if some composting could be promoted. We inspected the bring centre at Mellett's car park but this was presented in a very disappointing fashion – plastic bags of rubbish, cardboard boxes and other materials strewn about. We read the notice warning of CCTV cameras and the prospects of a €3000 fine but these have not deterred the culprits. Your adjudicator suggests you approach the Mayo County Council litter warden for their possible surveillance of the site.

Tidiness:

It was pleasing to note that there were few overhead cables. We found quite a bit of dereliction in Swinford, we recognise that this is a national problem and all you can do is bring it to the attention of the county council engineer and perhaps have discussions with the owners of the properties. The little river by the fire station is a wonderful feature in Swinford, it could be cleaned up as some bottles and cans were dumped in it.

Residential Areas:

The estates and back roads visited were generally well presented with nice landscaping and a number of traditional town houses were admired.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The main roads around Swinford were in good condition with good road signage. It was pleasing to find that most of the back areas of the town were well presented. The back of Davey's pub was nice and bright and cheery painted red and white – simple and effective.

General Impression:

We appreciate fully that you have a lack of funding which puts a limit on what you can do. We feel that you could involve more of the business houses and other agencies in Swinford to come on board and assist you. The achievements by the church and school committees show what can be achieved with energy and

leadership. Your adjudicators recommend you contact these active bodies and encourage them to compliment your work thus enhancing the work of your small committee.