

Tidy Towns Competition 2011

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Milltown** Ref: **202**
County: **Galway** Mark: **294**
Category: **B** Date(s): **23/06/2011**
02/08/2011

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2010	Mark Awarded 2011
Overall Development Approach	50	46	46
The Built Environment	50	35	36
Landscaping	50	39	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	31	33
Litter Control	50	40	41
Waste Minimisation	20	14	14
Tidiness	30	17	17
Residential Areas	40	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33	33
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	290	294

Overall Development Approach:

Your adjudicator would like to welcome you to the 2011 TidyTowns competition. Your participation is important to the TidyTowns movement. Thank you for the Entry Form and support material, and thanks also for the informative map. I note that last year's adjudicator suggested you could draw up a three / five year plan. To make substantial progress in any competition a good plan is required, and thanks you for taking this suggestion on board by providing a plan this year. I read over this plan and it has realistic goals for the further improvement of Milltown. Six are enough people for the committee, and work could, at some stages, be passed on to ad hoc subcommittees. The details of the contacts that you have the various public bodies is impressive, notably with Galway County Council, Inland Fisheries, Angling club, WEEE, Fás plus the others means that Milltown is very well catered for, and progressing. Communication is very good with your community. You have good contact with the schools, notably with the donation of €200 for the new school web page. The Green flag achievement is acknowledged, and the battery collection initiative in co-operation with the schools is excellent. The pictures of the children at the launch of the green flag are a treasure for these children, and thank you for sharing them with us. All of above shows that you have an excellent approach to the competition.

The Built Environment:

The business houses are very well presented and obviously in harmony with the community and the TidyTowns committee. The church looked supreme and I learned that its roof was redone with copper last year. The school on the Tuam Road is very well presented and great to see the green flag there. The Garda Barracks is tidily maintained. The impressive GAA complex caters well for the community, having a few playing pitches, and nice to find that the ladies are well catered for having their own dressing rooms. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed three small bins that I thought were dumped there and I was delighted to find that they were small recycle bins for litter, cans and plastic. The youth are well looked after with the

all-weather pitch and flood lighting. I admired the Jockey's Monument, and you are to be complimented for the restoration of it, especially because it is in that remote area and could have been lost forever. It is good that you got professional advice for this type of specialised work from Mr Hugh Carey. I saw the historical script lettering inscription plaque there and with respect I must caution you in relation to its well being. One could be tempted to clean this most historical plaque and you could contact The Office of Public Works for guidance on best methods of preserving this script. It is brilliant that you have a tracing of the inscription, as it is now difficult to see the lettering. In the little heritage park the thatched house (Dick Dowling's) is set back in a tranquil and serene setting. The thatched roof is a really great reminder of the homes that were all over rural Ireland in the past. I saw the details of some cultural artefacts that are kept in this house in the paper cuttings and photographs, but, with the door securely locked, I will have to wait for a viewing on another date. This is a site of considerable interest and our cultural heritage is respected and augmented. The painstaking effort over the years of collecting the artefacts was an exacting undertaking but the rewards are there for all to see and enjoy where numerous pieces of antique farm machinery are on display. I noticed in particular a device for making concrete blocks. I simply loved the famine poem on the stone by MJ McManus and wonderful to see the antique soup pot there. The children's playground is a great amenity alongside the well maintained tennis court. The many plaques give great local history especially about the astronomer John Birmingham. I visited the industrial site, and whereas it was not a busy location, business was being conducted there from large warehouses. Perhaps you could inform us next year in a brief statement how many are employed there, and what is the main business. Good to see the disused houses had their windows painted and camouflaged.

Landscaping:

Milltown looked supreme, and the fruits of your labour are there for all to see, notably in the extensive park, and the Church grounds were immaculate. The private residents have taken encouragement from your committee and presented their houses and surroundings in a beautiful fashion, with displays of shrubs, flowers, trees and lawns. I note you spent a lot of money on daffodils and summer flowers, and congratulations for this, but I am more interested in the 15 new trees that were planted. These trees supplement the fine array of mature trees that are in Milltown. Landscaping along the river walk is really beautiful and some rare trees were admired amongst the great native Irish trees. I noticed that some trees had identification labels on them and it would be fantastic if name plates could be put free standing near all the trees. The traditional white-washed walls in a few places give a distinctive traditional flavour to the locality. Other neat touches of landscaping are admired throughout the village. I admired the traditional village water pump and it was well presented. I have a preference to have such pumps painted black, and this is not a criticism.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The project undertaking of the work on the Cloondroon Lake, which I presume took a few years of painstaking hard work, is a great effort, and I note you had an official opening last September. Good details of this facility are captured in the photographs supplied, and the cuttings from the paper confirm the completion of the work. The extension of the Clare river walk makes greater access to the open country, and we look forward to its completion when it will join the existing sli na slainte walk. A stroll there leaves the rest of Ireland "miles away" and I could strongly recommend this area to a wider audience. I saw the extension work done and the information on notice boards about the wildlife of the area is impressive in the sanctuary area I admired the Wild Life thatched information board that gives details of birds, butterflies, trees etc and well done for updating this board as suggested by last year's adjudicator. Congratulations for the engagement with the local farmers, IFI and Local Angling club in connection with the Dawros river development and I read the report on the spawning grounds for trout and salmon. Having studied the map in the park for the Sli Na Sláinte I took off for a walk, but soon returned for the car and travelled around this very well presented country lane, and I found it to be a delightful experience, and the garden seating provided is excellent for the weary legs to rest. I admired some attractive beech hedging in a few places around the village.

Litter Control:

You are really paying a lot of attention to the control of litter which is very much appreciated and the village looks better as a result
It is refreshing to find that your community took serious action on the dumping of litter by a passing motorist, and resulting from this the offender was identified and fined by the county council. I acknowledge that your committee members and the locals were distressed to find this dumping in your area, especially when all in Milltown are making such a huge effort to make the area a better and safer place to live in. I read the cuttings from the paper and you are heartily congratulated for taking action against the "dumper" described by community warden as a brazen act. The investment of €450 in the Biro / Litter poster competition is money very well spent, and the children will, for the most part, cherish the biro, and we expect they enjoyed the competition, and learned a lot about litter control. Thank you also for the biro enclosed. The many initiatives mentioned in your submission show the sustained effort you are making in this category, and clean litter bins helped to make the town tidy.

Waste Minimisation:

The recycling centre in the little car park at the small park is beautifully presented, so neat and tidy, and adorned with bright summer flowers in two containers. There are outstanding features all around the bins, but the bins are not left behind in the beauty stakes. It is great to learn that many householders are composting in their homes. The WEEE used battery scheme, recycling of electric fence batteries, composting and IFA plastic recycling scheme etc means that waste is handled in a very responsible manner.

Tidiness:

The parts of the village that you have control over was spotless clean and tidy, and had a crisp and fresh appearance. An unfinished housing development on the Dunmore road is most unsightly, but I read three public Co Council notices at the site giving details of the County Council concerns, and hopefully this work will soon be finished to the satisfaction of all. Last year's adjudicator reported that the car park beside Sheridan's shop needed attention with traffic cones and loose cables, and good to see the situation was attended to. I also noticed that a derelict house on the Knock road was being pulled down during my visit. There is another derelict house at the junction for the jockey's monument on the Knock road. Alongside the County Council office a house stood out in need of attention and I was surprised that the owners have not embraced the TidyTowns efforts.

Residential Areas:

The houses in the centre of the village are interesting and very well presented. Some houses on the Dunmore road are splendid. There are some other private houses in really great condition along the Knock road. The Millbrook estate is well developed with spectacular wrought iron railings and piers at both entrances to the estate.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The welcome signs give a good feeling to the many passing motorists, and visitors to the village, and the good hedge and verge trimming enhance the roadsides. Some impressive traditional stone walls were admired. The road surfaces in many parts and footpaths are in good condition considering the very harsh winter weather of the past few years. However, it is noticeable here and there that the excessive traffic passing through on the main road means that ongoing attention could be given to the surfaces.

From the photographs supplied I saw painting being done on field gates which alerted me to see these neat gates for myself – very nice.

General Impression:

The evidence provided, in relation to the dumping of litter in Milltown, shows exceptional effort to overcome this particular problem. The way you have approached some other tasks, such as the restoration of the Jockey's monument, the extension of the river walk and the connection with the farmers in relation to access to the lake makes your entry a very fine effort. Congratulations to all concerned.

Second Round Adjudication:

Having driven through Milltown a few times previously, it was a pleasure for this adjudicator to stop and enjoy your lovely village for the first time. Your entry form and support materials are very comprehensive. The highlight is the lovely park with its neat picnic area, playground and peaceful river walk. The whole village looked very neat and tidy. There was no litter evident and volunteers were out and about keeping an eye on things. Your bio-diversity projects are exciting, it is great to see you embrace this aspect of the competition. The 'dead hedge' and 'bug hotel' were fascinating. The bottle banks and clothes bank were very clean and tidy and your efforts to recycle plastic bottles in the park was noted.

Approach roads look well and are enhanced by some tree planting. Flowers at tree bases look pretty but wouldn't be encouraged by this adjudicator as they can look over fussy in a rural environment and may take nutrients needed by the tree. It would be worth submitting a photo of the roadside daffodils with next year's entry.

The community centre is very neat and has some good tree planting (just be careful that the flags don't get too worn looking). Sheridan's bar/restaurant with its solar panels looks well but the shop though neat, has an air of untidiness due to the quality of signage and car park surfacing. The green house opposite with its vibrant red and yellow hanging baskets was admired. Flynn's bar & restaurant looked well. Local walks are well marked, however signage from the village to the lake would be welcome. Mullarkeys bar & lounge neatly presented, Ryans doesn't look as fresh. Verges are well maintained. It is obvious that you are very proud of the local history/heritage of Milltown and want to show this off to the wider community. The murals on the vacant house depicting local scenes were admired as was the timber litter bin design which blends in well to your rural rural environment. This adjudicator concurs with the views of the first round adjudicator. Congratulations on your achievements to date and I wish you luck going forward.