

Tidy Towns Competition 2012

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Milltown** Ref: **202**
County: **Galway** Mark: **299**
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/06/2012**
02/08/2012

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2011	Mark Awarded 2012
Overall Development Approach	50	46	47
The Built Environment	50	36	37
Landscaping	50	39	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	33	34
Litter Control	50	41	41
Tidiness	30	17	18
Waste Minimisation	20	14	14
Residential Areas	40	26	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	33	34
General Impression	10	9	9
TOTAL MARK	400	294	299

Overall Development Approach:

Your adjudicator would like to welcome Milltown to the 2012 TidyTowns Competition and your participation is important to the competition. The first point that the adjudicator would like to make is that it is quite amazing how much work has been achieved by the TidyTowns Committee and helpers in the past year. Thank you for the most comprehensive and relevant entry documentation that this adjudicator has seen this year. The entry form and back up document gave a very clear picture of your approach to TidyTowns and the community wide support for the project. Your basic committee of six people is quite small and it is great that you have Green Flag leaders that provide close links with the Schools. The idea of a leader for each road is a sound approach and this adjudicator is a firm believer in individuals having dedicated TidyTowns task responsibilities. Your approach to public relations is comprehensive and obviously successful and the level of community support is enormous. The wide range of annual festivals and events is impressive and these obviously give scope for the promotion of TidyTowns in Milltown. The TidyTowns Plan 2008-2013 while practical was a little basic. It is suggested that you use the TidyTowns adjudication categories as a framework and allocate projects to the appropriate year. It is most useful to indicate the likely supporting group of agency for each project.

The Built Environment:

This section of your entry form identifies twenty three new projects for the year. The liaison with the County Council in respect of the issue at the rear of Millbrook estate will hopefully bring the desired results. The Milltown Signage and Heritage Interpretation Project is really interesting and this could provide the basis for a County wide approach to heritage management. For next year do make sure to let us have an update. A key characteristic of Milltown is that most buildings are very well presented and the owners seem to rightly feel that they have a role in the presentation of the village. This is obvious to Milltown but not so in so many other towns and villages in Ireland. The low profile of the partially stone faced Community Centre sits well on its site and the presentation here was excellent; nearby the GAA property similarly impressed the adjudicator. The 'A'

profile of the Catholic Church was an inspired design for this site and the new roof is weathering to an attractive colour that compliments the overall design of the building. The black and white colour scheme of Finn's caught the eye as did the excellent presentation of Mullarkey's across the road. The fact that this building is built at an angle to the road adds character. Further out Glynn's was quite tidy and the two Sheridan properties at the Dunmore road junction were also examined. The overall visual impact of the shop could be improved but the needs of a commercial retail premises is understood. The use of the Irish language on signage is required under present legislation and this should be encouraged where appropriate. On signage the Irish language must have the primary role.

Landscaping:

Many small landscaped areas have been developed in Milltown and on the approach roads and these add much colour to the village. It was good to read that there has been a reduction in the planting at the base of trees. This adjudicator recommends that this be eliminated totally as soon as possible. The planting of Lime and Beech trees is welcomed. The Fruit Garden is imaginative and most helpful from a wildlife point of view. Indeed the clear understanding that you have of the varied needs of wildlife is commendable. It was fascinating to read that nearly 1,000 trees have been planted in the past twenty years. Future generations will acknowledge your foresight. This adjudicator suggests that the development of future small planted areas might be reviewed. It is critically important that the intrinsic character of Milltown is never overshadowed by planting. Your adjudicator reminds the Tidy Towns Committee that the cutting of roadside banks and ditches in the period 1st March to 30th August is not permitted under Section 40 of the Wildlife Act 1976, incorporating section 46 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Congratulations on the launch of the Biodiversity Plan and this is a logical extension of the work done in previous years. It was great to read in your entry that Phase 2 of the River Walk has been opened and the adjudicator took the walk which was really enjoyable. Congratulations to the farmers whose cooperation made this possible. Along the walk the easily read nature panels were appreciated. It was good to see that this walk has not been over developed and still retains a genuine rural feel without unnecessary adornments. At the Tennis Court end of the walk the white washed circular stone tree surround jarred on the eye as whitewash seemed out of place. The wild Trout and Salmon project has been completed and this has been a great project of future value. The Wildlife / Heritage Park was also visited. This area conveys to the visitor a real genuine sense of village history; one comes away wiser than when one first arrived. The stocking of birds and the Mink eradication programme have been noted. Much as one might not like the destruction of any wild animal, Mink can and do cause so much damage as you have found out to your cost.

Litter Control:

The expanded Bring Centre in the car park was excellently presented and is ideally located. It has been noted that you use a variety of inter-linking measures to control litter with great success. This indeed is the only satisfactory approach to the issue. Throughout the village and on approach roads litter control was found to be very good.

Tidiness:

Work on the Dunmore road has been noted and well done on the removal of the two derelict properties. Work on the old shop frontage has also been successful. Post and rail fencing at the Park and the Community Centre looked really clean following the repainting. Across the road from the Dawros junction a short concrete road boundary wall needed to be painted. It is suggested that in cooperation with the Local Engineer that all sign poles are painted matt black. At the house beside Burke's a flower tub needed to be treated.

Waste Minimisation:

It is great that low energy bulbs are now being used in all public lighting in Milltown – excellent progress. The battery recycling which presumably also involves the School is commended. The idea of turning election posters into bird boxes and a Duck house must be the most imaginative use of such posters in the country! The new three colour bins using water pipes were examined and they are easily seen and quite colourful. The development of solar panel usage is welcomed. Perhaps for next year you can carry out an evaluation of the success of the various waste minimisation measures that you now have in place in terms of annual savings. We await with interest the progress on the HBF Biofuels project.

Residential Areas:

Millbrook estate was visited and found to be very well presented with appropriate landscaping of scale. A number of houses stand out in Milltown and the green and white house at the Dunmore junction caught the eye. Stone road boundary walls to private houses give a feeling of unity to the village. Many examples of very good private landscaping were appreciated.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approach roads are important as they create a sense of expectation for the first time visitor to any town or village. The four main approach roads to Milltown create such high expectations which are delivered in full on arrival in the village. The Dawros approach road is unusual in that there is a two tier grass verge on one side and an elevated verge on the other. The presentation here is outstanding. The two main road approaches are also impressive and the Galway Limestone walls are very well maintained. New stone walls on the Dunmore approach were admired. The resurfacing project was not before its time. The verge cutting policy on the Tuam road in support of wildlife is acknowledged.

General Impression:

You're Committee and the Milltown community has a very clear and accurate understanding of the true nature of the Tidy Towns Competition and you are commended for this. Good luck in your exciting projects planned for the year ahead when we look forward to returning to Milltown.

Second Round Adjudication:

Milltown a small settlement is located on the famous - and busy – N17 enduring a daily throughput of some 8,500 traffic units. Congratulations to both schools who have secured Green Flag Status. Well done to the 22 householders who are providing bird feeding facilities. Your record over the last twenty years in planting some 1,000 trees and shrubs is exemplary and is a tribute not alone to your prowess but still further to your resilience. . The signage 'beauty dies where litter lies' is a constant but all too necessary reminder of that unpalatable fact.

Full marks and complements to the person or those who first conceived the idea of painting colourful scenes on the windows of shops. This is indeed an ideal method to bring colour to what otherwise might be a serious negative. United Status flags are very prominent in the village to mark the association with Governor Carey. One of the flags, at the school was incorrectly flown while the county flag in this location was secured by one corner only. We admired the townland names, in Irish and English displayed in long lasting stone format.

The low stone wall topped by shrubs was very colourful while the many individual flower beds looked well. The Garda station itself was neat but attention is directed to the traffic spoil at the base of its front wall. The Catholic Church was well presented. Many minor elements contributed to excellent effect. In that connection complements to the individual farmer on the opposite side of Daltons Bridge at the end of the Dorus Village Road

The River Clare walk set out in 2000 and incorporating the Heritage Park and Picnic area is a wonderful additional amenity in the area. We admired the GAA grounds in their white and blue paint while the school also looked very well.

The village would benefit from a clear cut start point especially on the Sligo (north) approach road. This should establish a definite divide line between the urban village and the surrounding, rural countryside. Pleasant to note the Slí na Slánta sign on the approach road from Lack.

The community centre opened in 2005 was well presented. The interesting entrance treatment at Millbrook Housing Estate caught the eye. The recycling bring bank centre was suitably maintained.

The Dorus Village Road linked to the 1840 as part of the family relief works was admired. The recent works commenced in 1998/99 has developed in a splendid manner and the trees progressively give an agreeable sense of enclosure and definition to the short road. The lamp standards in place were admired