

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Mullingar** Ref: **206**  
County: **Westmeath** Mark: **244**  
Category: **G** Date(s): **07/07/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	33
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	21
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	29
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>244</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Welcome to the 2009 Tidy Towns contest! Congratulations on your continued participation in Tidy towns. As you have recognised your committee is small in relation to the size of your town. It is hoped that you will be successful in substantially expanding this to include a representative cross-section of the community.

A town the size of Mullingar really needs a 5-year development plan in order to have a coherent approach to this contest. This would systematically examine each section the contest and identify actions as relevant.

### **The Built Environment:**

This adjudicator, on his first visit ever to Mullingar, was pleasantly surprised at the well presented town centre and abundance of heritage architecture. Market House Square is a wonderfully presented civic space and the statue of Joe Dolan adds greatly to this. The adjacent 'Canton Casey' pub looks exceptionally well. The 'Greville Arms' hotel was once again festooned with flowers and flags and made a great impression. Mount St. looks very well leading to the Court House and Arts Centre – which are themselves fine buildings. The new council buildings look exceptionally well – congratulations on this fine addition to your architectural heritage! Some dereliction, as you have recognised, is a problem and it is hoped that this can be dealt with in time. The numerous small businesses in the centre add great vitality and many have attractive frontage e.g. 'Days Bazaar' and 'Sambodinos'. The visitor information sign is clean and well presented. The Cathedral looks well as does the modern Garda station across the road. The Eircom building need attention.

### **Landscaping:**

Street summer landscaping throughout is very effective with numerous colourful displays admired. However some additional trees would provide greater year-round effect (e.g. Birch or Rowan). Street landscaping on

Dominick St. was of a higher order while the space in front of 'Cosgrove's' is excellent. New bicycle parking was noted throughout and it is hoped that this will encourage people to avail of this sustainable form of transport. The canal banks were littered while cable ties on the metal bridge sides look untidy.

#### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

It is excellent that you recognise the importance of the canal for local biodiversity. Will you be sharing the results of the National Parks and Wildlife Service survey with the local community? In a town of your size there will be lots of opportunities to enhance wildlife – particularly within the green spaces of housing estates. You should carry out a survey of the whole town that would identify the habitats and species of important and suggest actions to enhance, and raise awareness of them.

The route of the new Western Bypass is currently a bare wooden fence. Planting a native hawthorn hedgerow along this would be of long-term benefit for wildlife and landscaping alike.

#### **Litter Control:**

Litter was a minor problem all along Oliver Plunkett St. Mount St. was litter free while Dominick St. was also slightly littered.

Your programme of awareness raising is worthwhile however and it is hoped that you can keep this up.

#### **Waste Minimisation:**

As mentioned in last year's report it is important to remember the 'reduce-reuse-recycle' hierarchy when approaching this issue. As such, focussing on recycling will only get you so far. While your recycling initiatives are excellent they need to be coupled with a plan that encourages local businesses and residents to cut down on the level of waste generated.

How many Green Flags are there in the town? This is a major component under this category and the children's achievements can act as an inspiration to the town as a whole. The Green Flag flying in Scoil Mhuire was noted – well done here  
!

#### **Tidiness:**

Well done on your anti-graffiti initiatives. The town centre is very tidy in appearance with well finished footpaths and an appropriate level of signage. While it appears that some wires are underground it would be a great project to make the town centre and overhead wire free zone. The occasional sand bag on Dominick St. should be removed.

#### **Residential Areas:**

Your initiatives to encourage pride in residential areas are most welcome. Why not encourage residents associations to become members of the Tidy Towns committee? The numerous housing estates visited on adjudication day all looked well. It would be an idea to audit green spaces here to see if planting could result in lower maintenance, greater amenity and benefits for wildlife and landscaping.

#### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Roundabouts on approach roads were beautifully planted but perhaps are quite dull in winter. One solution for big roundabouts is to plant a selection of Irish trees such as Rowan, Birch, Cherry, Alder or Scot's pine, which are low maintenance, provide year-round landscaping and can be good for wild birds.

This adjudicator found approach roads to be below par with poor verge maintenance, no welcome signs and extensive hedgerow loss.

Back streets near the town centre all seemed very clean and well presented.

#### **General Impression:**

Mullingar looks extremely well and it is hoped that the completion of works at the park and along Dominick St. will provide new features of attraction. You should concentrate on preparing a 5-year plan and completing a few projects under the waste or wildlife headings.

