

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **RATHOWEN**
County : **WESTMEATH**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 08-07-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	11
Landscaping	40	26
The Built Environment	40	23
Litter Control	40	26
Tidiness	20	13
Residential Areas	30	18
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	20
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	300	171

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

While many of the problems mentioned in last years report remain nevertheless the overall standard of presentation has improved; especially noticed were the closely cut grassed areas in the village centre, the attractive shrubberies, the well planted hanging baskets, flower tubs all of which indicate a continuing high level of individual and community commitment, The comments regarding the derelict buildings were noted by the adjudicator. As mentioned in previous reports you should seriously consider the preparation of a Plan which would play an important part in generating and focusing community activity as well as being a valuable aid in seeking assistance from various state agencies.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

This is a new section in the competition which in the past has not featured prominently. Rathowen has particular problems located as it is on a major national route with large volumes of passing traffic; however, hedgerows, well planted gardens, trees etc. are important wildlife habitats. In your work programme for future years you should seek advice on identifying appropriate habitats and how best they can be developed.

LANDSCAPING

The landscaping in the village centre with its closely cut grass, shrubberies and trees is very attractive and adds enormously to the appearance of the village. The many well planted and colourful window boxes, hanging baskets and flower tubs are also important in this respect. The amenity area in front of the Local Authority houses is satisfactory with its well maintained wooden fence, short grass, trees, etc.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The condition of most of the business premises is satisfactory although some require painting and in general there is an excessive amount of unsuitable display signage. The wood work at the Garda Station requires painting as do a number of iron entrance gates. The school is acceptable. The village is unfortunate in that it has an above average number of derelict buildings, however you have made considerable efforts to camouflage these. The imaginative murals and the shrubbery in front of derelict building adjoining the Rathowen Inn is a good example. The adjudicator has taken into account the difficulties in dealing satisfactorily with the derelict buildings and also notes that a number of these have been purchased with a view to carrying out improvements. There are also too many large display hoardings in the village - you should attempt to have them removed.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control is good and on the day of inspection no litter was present in the village centre, approach roads or the side streets.

TIDINESS

In spite of the derelict buildings the village has a tidy and well cared for appearance. This impression is generated by the well presented grass areas, footpaths, and well maintained buildings, etc.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Most of the residential houses are in a good condition, however a number of wooden boundary fences at the Local Authority houses at the School road junction need painting.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The Longford road is the best presented with its closely cut grass, trimmed hedges, etc. The school road is also satisfactory; however where possible cut dead grass should be removed. The school road and junction area with the main road needs to be upgraded; potholes and loose gravel are unsightly. The side road at the derelict house is also attractive with its shrubbery and impressive stone walls; however long dead sprayed weeds are unsightly on stretches of the footpath. As mentioned in previous reports the Mullingar road is not up to the same standard as the other approaches, and while your frustration regarding the delays in carrying out the road improvements is understandable, nevertheless the grass verges should be cut on a more regular basis. Dumped road material is also a problem particularly in the vicinity of the school junction and the footpath kerbing at the Local Authority housing is weedy.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Rathowen still has many problems to overcome. You have reached a good standard and continue to improve. A planned approach is recommended. You must also pay increasing attention to detail and the finer points of presentation.