

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **RATHDRUM**
County : **WICKLOW**
Category : **C**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 10-07-97

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1997	Mark Awarded 1996
Overall Developmental Approach	50	21	21
The Built Environment	40	21	21
Landscaping	40	23	22
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	17
Litter Control	40	26	26
Tidiness	20	12	11
Residential Areas	30	18	17
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	14	14
General Impression	10	4	4
TOTAL MARK	300	158	153

Rathdrum, County Wicklow

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Welcome to the 1997 Tidy Towns Competition. The adjudicators were disappointed not to have received a more detailed entry form and work programme this year even following a reminder from the Department of the Environment and Local Government, This gave the adjudicators very little to work on.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

There is room for improvement in this category. Waterford Co-op is very untidy externally. It would be great if that mill could be developed. Statoil was being renovated at time of adjudication. Flowers were noted at T. McNabbs. Kellys Garage was neat and tidy. The wall leading down to the railway station was collapsing on the right hand side, and nothing had been done to the building in the car park. The platform area, however, was looking its usual best, congratulations. In addition, the footpath leading out here needs repair. The Garda Station would benefit from a painting. St. Xavours School is a very well maintained school, well done. The area around Avon Motors was well presented, and this was one improved landscaped area also noted by the signs. T. McGrath had been painted and the restaurant was looking well at time of adjudication. There is somewhat an overuse of bunting at The Woolpack. Try to remove this as it could be a more attractive building without it. Weeds were noted at the car park by the church, and the right hand side of the church grounds needs resurfacing; the left hand side of the Catholic church was very well maintained, with attractive lamp posts. It is disappointing to see the burned building where roadworks are taking place. The Cartoon Inn was very well presented, as was the hospital and the Community School grounds. Try also to paint up the library. It is nice to see the development of a new caravan park. The area could be complemented through the use of flowers.

LANDSCAPING

The adjudicators noted a good presentation of the grotto this year but grass verges were generally very bad. At the triangle, nothing has been done here again at the entrance to Avonmore Caravan Park. Within Parnell Memorial Park itself, was very well maintained, congratulations in this regard. Try to minimise the use of weedkillers, as it takes from the overall appearance. Grass verges had been roughly cut back on the approach road from Avoca. The rosebed was overgrown by the grotto within the church. There is a need for landscaping by the steps at the entrance to the church also. On Fairgreen, some sprinklings were noted on the grass but it was nice to see that the grass was nicely maintained. Outside the entrance to the hall, a good presentation was noted on one side, however, the rocks/boulders on the other side are a bit off-putting.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Conserving nature is a new venture for many towns and can appear daunting at first. The adjudicators recognise that environmental programmes can take time to get up and running and even longer to assess their success. This section of the report requires an involvement of all groups, including schools in the town. The emphasis is on the conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats and the environment. Woodlands, rivers, ponds, hedgerows, open spaces, graveyards and walls are important habitats. The committee needs to identify the habitats in their area and then determine the appropriate actions to conserve and enhance these habitats. Guidelines in the Tidy Towns book offers other suggestions as to the type of initiatives you might undertake. Is there a local wildlife expert, or a member of the community with experience in this area, that your committee can draw on? In preparing an environmental programme for the town, there should be a year-round participation in environmental protection and promotion involving all members of the community and providing access for all. The next step is to identify what habitats are in your area - are these woodlands, wetlands, grasslands or coastal habitats, or other habitats such as cemeteries, walls etc. Prepare a survey and map, showing the areas of wildlife importance and areas of potential importance. Other steps involved in the preparation of the environmental programme for Rathdrum would include identification of species list of the flora and fauna in the area; preparation of a wildlife management plan as part of the area development plan; work to be carried out including conservation projects, wildlife gardens, areas of conservation, access, tree planting, information areas etc. This must be carried out in sympathy with the local landscape and must not be overwhelming visually, or environmentally. In this regard, the river provides greater opportunity for expanding wildlife appreciation. There is also greater attention to detail needed, for example, in verges, instead of giving it a rough cut, why not introduce a strict mowing regime, whereby, the outer edges could be neatly trimmed, allowing for hedgerows to grow.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter was noted outside the Woolpack, as well as being outside Waterford Co-op. The bin was overflowing at St. Xaviers School, and the litter bin by the church needs painting. The Main Street up from McAdams was litter free. Some litter was noted around Cahills, as well as near the fire station. Outside Flemmings was quite bad also, and some litter was noted on the Fairgreen. While this might sound negative, overall, it isn't very bad but more attention is needed. The number of places where it is located suggests that there is a need for more efforts; particularly, try to get the school children involved.

TIDINESS

Weeds were noted opposite to the entrance to the church. Generally, the approach roads could be neater and tidier also. Towards the back of Parnell Park, the bollards need painting, small amounts of graffiti were noted. Weeds were also noted growing at the base of the wall outside the hostel. There was a very neat and tidy appearance within the Parnell Park amenity

area and along the Main Street wasn't too bad. The appearance of the town could be improved through better presentation of buildings and approach roads.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

One good residential premises noted on the Main Street was a yellow newly painted premises up from Mick Kelly's Garage, well done. The house opposite McAdams was also very good a good effort was noted with flowers here. There are good individual efforts on the way to the hospital, well done to those involved. Within Parnell Park, there are also some good individual efforts. Improvements could be made within this area, for example, graffiti on the phone kiosk. The left hand side of the park was quite good with sweeping taking place at time of adjudication. A nice house was also noted opposite the Church of Ireland; it would be nice if resurfacing could take place outside here.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The advertising display at the Dublin sign near the co-op should be taken away. The Wexford sign needs to be replaced. Generally, approach roads could be much better presented. On the ring road, near the Garda Station, weeds were noted by kerbs and by the wall leading up to the Garda Station. The Rathdrum sign needs to be replaced on the approach from Avoca. Illegal sign posts were noted for the circus here also. A new junction was being developed at the turn off to Glendalough. Try to replace the Glendalough sign. On all approach roads all verges had received a rough cut but there is no follow through, or attention to detail on the approaches, either from Avoca or from Glenealy, and there is very little evidence of any improvements made in this regard.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Rathdrum could do very well, with some effort, in this competition. There are some very nice features in the town, including the Parnell Memorial Park; the Avonmore River, which could be developed for wildlife. Improvements could be brought about, for example, more traditional lamps along the Main Street and within the square. Without any further information from the Tidy Towns Committee, it is difficult for the adjudicators to commend or reward. The adjudicators look forward to the submission of more detailed information for next year. If you require further information, the Department of the Environment would be delighted to give advice.