

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **ARDCLOUGH**
County : **KILDARE**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 16-07-98

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 1998	Mark Awarded 1997
Overall Developmental Approach	50	26	--
The Built Environment	40	18	--
Landscaping	40	18	--
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	15	--
Litter Control	40	23	--
Tidiness	20	11	--
Residential Areas	30	19	--
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	16	--
General Impression	10	4	--
TOTAL MARK	300	150	--

Ardclough, County Kildare

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Welcome to the Tidy Towns Competition. The adjudicators thank you for your detailed entry form and map which was helpful during the course of adjudication. It is great to see that there was a strong village feel to Ardclough. The adjudicators had some difficulty in locating the village, so, finger post signs on the approach road junctions would be helpful, and might be something you would look at. You are required to submit a 3 - 5 year Tidy Towns plan, outlining practical initiatives, which you propose to undertake, in order to improve in each category in this competition. The Department of the Environment and Local Government can help provide guidance to you in completing this plan, but also, why not try to draw on local experts in your area in terms of the County Council, residents, businesses or perhaps there are wildlife experts living in your locality. Good luck in the competition, you can perform well under certain categories. The adjudicators look forward to visits in years to come, and further improvements.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The church grounds were very well presented on day of adjudication, as were the GAA grounds, and the school and its grounds, but litter was evident around the basketball court, so try to maintain vigilance here. Overall, it was very tidy outside the shop also.

LANDSCAPING

The village green was well presented, congratulations on your efforts in this project. In time, you might try to further enhance it through the provision of a feature, such as a monument, or you might consider selective tree planting that would enhance the area. Congratulations on the efforts on Wheatfield Park with nice landscaping noted, and very nice shrubbery but there is need for a nameplate here. The grounds of the church were also very well cared for.

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 village. 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 village, 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 there woodlands, wetlands, grasslands or coastal habitats, or other habitats such as urban spaces, cemeteries, walls etc? Prepare a survey and map, showing the areas of wildlife importance and areas of future importance, e.g. school grounds and gardens, derelict sites etc. Other steps involved in the preparation of the environmental programme for Ardclough would include identification of species lists 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. The adjudicators noted that there is a very nice walk by the canal, and this is an important amenity, for encouraging wildlife.

LITTER CONTROL

Generally very good. Some sprinklings were noted at the school, which might suggest the need for litter bins. But, the adjudicators commend the fact that you are working on clean-up's and trying to maintain vigilance in this regard.

TIDINESS

There is a very neat and tidy appearance to the village, however, some of the approach roads could be improved, but there are ongoing developments taking place here. Try also to look at the street scape and street furniture that would help improve the appearance. The glass panels at the telephone kiosk had been burnt and should perhaps be improved.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

At Wheatfield Estate, excellent individual efforts were noted here, some of which deserve a particular mention, e.g. no. 1123. The entrance to Lishandra Manor was very nice, well done. Try to watch out for weeds along by kerbs which take from the overall appearance of tidiness. Good efforts were noted. The adjudicators commend your efforts to develop a Tidy Estate competition - good luck in this regard.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

As mentioned at the introduction, there is a need for nameplates at the entrance to the village. The adjudication starts at either the

nameplates or the 30 mph signs - try to work on this for next year. Finger post signs are also needed. Approaching from the canal, the grass verges could be cut back. Approaching the village towards the church, the road was resurfaced but verges had not been maintained. In general, there is a need to improve in this category. As you initially enter the village, negative or positive impressions can be created, so it is very important that you work on this.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The adjudicators enjoyed their visit to the village of Ardclough. You have some nice features and a basis on which to further improve in this competition, for example, the canal near the village, the church and the village green. Try to pay attention to other areas as well, for example, hedges and grass verges. Careful treatment of these is needed in terms of a tidy, neat appearance, while at the same time not destroying potential habitats for flora and fauna. The adjudicators wish your village every success. The ultimate prize is not coming first in the competition but the community spirit and the pride generated by the residents themselves. Well done in your efforts, and good luck for next year.