

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **RATHCOOLE-DUBLIN**
County : **DUBLIN**
Category : **D**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 07-07-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30	29
The Built Environment	40	30	29
Landscaping	40	30	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	19	19
Litter Control	40	31	30
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	22	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	28	28
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	212	207

Rathcoole, County Dublin

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Thank you once again for your entry into this year's Tidy Towns competition. It is encouraging to see the ongoing efforts and work in the community continuing for another year. The good support and co-operation that exists in Rathcoole amongst local people, businesses, schools and the County Council is paying off – it is important to develop a good community spirit as it makes working together easier and much more effective. Liaising with the various bodies out there that are willing to help and assist you where possible in this regard is also essential. Your twinning with a French village and your welcome for the visitors from Ecole Valentin is evidence of the great community spirit that you are creating in the area. We were glad to see that you have started to develop a five year plan for the village – you need to expand and prioritise this plan over the coming year. It would be wonderful to see areas such as the Holy Well reopened in the future which is a part of your village heritage. A more detailed map would also be helpful for next year, with roads and streets specifically named.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Rathcoole is a lovely village with a very attractive streetscape that captivates the visitor upon entering it. The buildings are beautifully kept, well painted and welcoming. An Poitin Stil once again stands out as it is always very fresh looking and well painted. The attractive flower baskets hanging from terrace walls beside the litter-free car park all simply serve to enhance the building itself. Great improvements also have been made to Redmonds garage, it now fits in very well with the overall look of the streetscape. The planting in the front of this bright and well-painted building is a lovely feature. Muldowneys of Rathcoole, opposite the shopping centre looks well, as does the Rathcoole Inn and the Credit Union. The Shopping Centre is well maintained and very much litter free. The restoration work completed on the Court of Petty Sessions in the past was undoubtedly worthwhile – this has been a wonderful restoration of a heritage property which provides a great focus for the village. The Spar on the right hand side of the main street as you head towards an Poitin Stil does however need work to bring it up to the standard elsewhere in the village and we would encourage you to develop the neglected area on the road to the left of an Poitin Stil. The neglected building and surrounding area opposite Maple Grove Estate still needs attention and it unfortunately stands out as a particularly neglected part of your village which tends to gather litter – we can appreciate

your frustration with areas such as these. The new benches and matching bins and planters look well in the village and Rathcoole is very well signposted, with good use made of bilingual signs throughout and the wheelchair friendly footpaths are welcome.

LANDSCAPING

It is obvious from visiting Rathcoole that you have paid attention to this part of the competition and this is commendable. Again, the flower planting at the entrance to Coolamber Drive and at the entrance to Beechwood Lawns on the main street are lovely. It is encouraging to see the newly planted trees throughout the village and particularly the new plantings in Rathcoole Park which are visible from the main road. The landscaping features in the Park and the Olympic Gardens are wonderful and the open spaces throughout the residential areas are well managed. There was beautiful landscaping outside the school opposite St. Patrick's Crescent and the planting outside Redmond's Garage is very attractive. We would hope to see this type of landscaping continued year round and not just for the summer months. We would suggest landscaping the area around the shopping centre grounds which would brighten them up a bit and also it would be nice to be able to attend to those derelict and neglected areas in the future, the grassy area opposite Maple Grove Estate for example.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Rathcoole Park, and the Camac River which flows through the park, are natural encouragements for the development of wildlife in Rathcoole - the ducks and the swans to be found here are clear evidence of this. It is also encouraging to see the involvement of the schools in developing wildlife gardens. All concerned obviously put great efforts into maintaining natural features in Rathcoole and it is delightful to see that both young and old take enjoyment out of it. It is important to look after these areas well and develop the facilities further in the future.

LITTER CONTROL

Your control of litter in Rathcoole is very good and the measures that you have taken involving school children, businesses and the residents means that you are successfully tackling the critical issues of awareness, prevention and control. This is the way forward and one that is highly commendable. Your great involvement in National Spring Clean Day and the participation from all areas of the community is praiseworthy. We were happy to see the grounds behind the Community Centre in much better condition than last year but be sure to be vigilant of this area as it would tend to gather litter easily. The car parking areas in Rathcoole were all well maintained with minimal

litter to be seen. It was also good to see plenty of litter bins along the main street, particularly the take away which is most important. The newly installed bruscar bins made from recycled materials are a pleasing addition to the village – however, it was a shame to see that one has been damaged already. The derelict area opposite Maple Grove Estate tends to collect litter and this needs to be watched and some incidental litter was to be found in the residential estates and some side roads.

TIDINESS

The overall impression of Rathcoole is one of a tidy village and the problem of graffiti is not prevalent in the area. Kerb maintenance is good, although some estates need more attention than others. Some side roads need to be watched such as the one leading up to St. Anne's Terrace – more kerb maintenance and litter control is needed here. Last year you outlined proposals for some kerbside recycling – we hope that these plans are still in place and are being implemented. Re-cycling is an important issue for the future and one that must be given due attention.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The residential areas in Rathcoole are very attractive overall, well maintained and nicely presented. The gardens are generally nicely landscaped but it is a shame to then see the odd one here and there rather neglected which brings down the look of the area. The landscaping and flower planting at the entrance to Coolamber Drive creates a wonderful first impression of the estate but incidental litter and kerb maintenance here needs to be watched. The planting on the left of the entrance to Beechwood Lawns is lovely and again enhances the estate. Rathcoole Park looked very well, with no evidence of litter, nice bilingual stone signage and the mature, open green area in the middle a pleasing feature. St. Anne's Terrace was also nicely presented with a nice green area and a lovely selection of mature trees.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The main street in Rathcoole is remarkably well presented and the attention given to it should continue. Approach roads into the village and most of the side roads are also good. However, we did find that it was difficult to identify the name of some roads so signage should be watched. The road leading up to St. Anne's Terrace, off Forrest Hills Road, needs repaving due to potholes and attention to kerb maintenance and litter control are also required here. The road leading to Rathcoole Park was litter free and well maintained and the repaving of Tay Lane is welcome.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Once again, we found Rathcoole a lovely village to visit with obvious community spirit present and growing. Improvements have been noted and we look forward to seeing the implementation of your plans and some of our recommendations next year. Well done on your efforts to date.

SECOND ADJUDICATION (03/08/2000)

There is no doubt that the general impression of Rathcoole is steadily being enhanced. It is some years since this adjudicator last had the pleasure of adjudicating the village. As recommended at the outset of this report you should expand your five-year plan as it would help you to focus on particular areas and aspects, and aid the measuring of progress. One of the aspects to be covered in the plan is the identification of owners of all derelict sites and incidental open areas including roadside verges in some cases. Rathcoole is full of contrasts. Fortunately the areas well presented are becoming more plentiful but quite often a bad area alongside detracts considerably. For example the green at the end of the street in front of An Poitin Stil is well kept but unchecked weeds at the kerbside to the car park were a significant oversight as they reduce the overall effect. Consistency and true coordination is required. Another general example is neglected verges alongside the entrance to manicured estates. Again litter was not a problem in much of the village - a commendable achievement!