

"Caring for our environment"

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

Results

Date of Adjudication : 07-06-2000

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2000	Mark Awarded 1999
Overall Developmental Approach	50	30	29
The Built Environment	40	26	26
Landscaping	40	32	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	11	11
Litter Control	40	30	29
Tidiness	20	13	13
Residential Areas	30	19	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	21
General Impression	10	6	6
TOTAL MARK	300	192	182

Rathowen, County Westmeath

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Rathowen is very welcome to the first Tidy Towns Competition of the third millennium. The village is developing well and this is reflected in a significant increase in marks. Well done!

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Both the Post Office and the Garda station are nicely presented and the shrubbery at the latter premises is appealing. The plastic signs on the 'Village House' are totally out of place and should be replaced with non-plastic, non-neon signs of appropriate scale. Another sign which should be removed is the 'Richies' plastic neon sign. A roadside boundary featuring a shrubbery might be considered for the car park of 'Richies Lounge'. The 'Rathowen Inn' looks well. The school and its grounds look well, although the boundary wall will need a little attention soon. A co-ordinated colour scheme is suggested for buildings in the village centre.

LANDSCAPING

The newly planted saplings on the verge inside the footpath on the eastern side of the village will make a significant contribution to the overall appearance of Rathowen as they mature. It is good to note the planting of hedgerow along the concrete post fencing on the western end of the village. Seated amenity areas on the main road are an attractive feature of the village also. Within a few years both entrances to the village will feature handsome stands of trees and stretches of hedgerow.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Your application form refers to 'wildlife thriving'. Have you undertaken a survey of wildlife? If so, could we have some details of this? The ultimate goal of this area of the competition is to create an awareness of wildlife and also to protect wildlife from threats posed by on-going development. If you have taken steps in either of these areas, we would be delighted to hear about them. The small shrubbery around the waterfront is a nice touch, the derelict pole lying on the ground nearby should be removed.

LITTER CONTROL

Litter control is very good, well done! Do you have a litter management programme of activities? If so, send in details next year, we would love to hear of them.

TIDINESS

Derelict buildings are, of course, a problem as you are aware. However, given the recent large increase in property values, these probably won't remain derelict for an indefinite period of time. It is good to note the development of public housing on a derelict site. Your task then will be to ensure appropriate development in terms of sensitivity to the existing built environment. The shrubbery and other planting at the derelict house across from The 'Village Inn' softens its adverse appearance significantly. Weed growth along the footpath down to the school should be eliminated. Weed growth along the kerbs and footpath down a side area behind the Garda station are a problem.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

It is good to note that the village will soon be increasing its stock of buildings and, in particular, residential properties. Hopefully these will be developed in a style that complements the existing character and ambience of Rathowen. A freshly painted residential property together with its associated outbuildings on the western end of the village are a marvellous introduction to the village centre. Window boxes here are charming also. Some fencing to properties near the school need to be upgraded.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

The new footpath on the eastern side of the village looks well. Do try to keep the new traffic island free of weed growth. Congratulations also on your cycle path in addition to your new footpaths and other safety measures. The road to the school needs to have its potholes treated. The ducting of service cables in the village will be a welcome development.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

The overall impression of Rathowen is good and given extensive landscaping at both entrances along the main road it can only improve over the next few years. Well done!