

"Caring for our environment"

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

Results

Date of Adjudication : 11-06-2001

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2001	Mark Awarded 2000
Overall Developmental Approach	50	31	30
The Built Environment	40	27	26
Landscaping	40	32	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	12	11
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	11	13
Residential Areas	30	19	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	25
General Impression	10	7	6
TOTAL MARK	300	194	192

Rathowen, Co. Westmeath

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Great strides are being made by Rathowen in improving the structure of the village. New developments both on and behind the main street have added to the village amenities. Its main difficulties arise in maintaining a village character while accommodating high levels of through traffic, including heavy goods vehicles, often at high speeds.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Buildings which attract are the Garda Station, Tormey's Post Office and the new housing development on the north side of the main street. The new housing, construction work still in progress at time of inspection, is built to village scale and adds a refreshing brightness to an otherwise understated presentation. The centre of the village is somewhat 'gapped' by large entrances to public house car parks on both sides of the street. The new community centre is complete and no doubt landscaping of the land and car park will be undertaken in the near future. This will be a fine village amenity. St. Marys Church, though some way from the village, is well presented and grass trimming was taking place during inspection day. The Church of Ireland looks a beautiful structure but entrance and surrounds overgrown. Plastic signs on some of the main street buildings are detrimental to the visual quality of the village. The school is presented very tidily and the access road re-surfaced.

LANDSCAPING

Considerable landscaping work has been undertaken with tree plantations and grass margins at both ends of the village. Grass margins and trees are maturing along the south side of the main street. There is an attractive display of shrubs at the Garda Station, and potted plants at the roadside parking in the area of the Post Office. The new shrubbery plantations at the entrance to Feericks car park is welcomed and it is hoped more 'on street' developments of this nature will take place. The large lamp standards, timber poles with metal conduits are out of keeping with village ambience. There are still problems with kerb side and wall weed control.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Wild life developments took place on the Corry Donlon Bog, River Inny to Lough Iron Walk. No doubt excellent work has been done here but unfortunately no signposting or other information was available in this regard. This is particularly relevant as the bog road access is at some remove from the village and continues for some distance without any wildlife or other information supply. However it has brought access to many rare bog plants and bird life along the Inny River and to the sanctuary at Lough Iron. You might consider identifying projects by seeking the advice of ENFO - a public information service established by the Minister for the Environment and Local Government or contact your area wildlife ranger.

LITTER CONTROL

There was little evidence of a litter problem apart from builder debris from the new housing development. Clearly the community's anti litter efforts are being rewarded.

TIDINESS

Some problems with aftermath of referendum with a number of posters tied to lamp posts. The use of bunting across the main street should be discouraged particularly when there is no obvious purpose. The temporary sign to the new community centre should be replaced. There is a proliferation of sandwich boards outside public houses which should be discouraged

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Residential areas are reasonably well maintained. However, the movement of articulated trucks on wet days tends to leave a residue of road spray which is difficult for street front buildings to manage. The estate at the entrance from the east end of the village is generally well presented with one or two exceptions. The green amenity in front of these houses is well maintained and is a well used children's play area. Unfortunately a amenity seat is vandalised with graffiti.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Road and path conditions are good, and the cycle path between the village and the Church a safe facility with its own lighting. The Community Hall Road is subject to further development. The Car park at Feericks is well developed and the adjudicator looks forward to seeing further development of shrub beds to 'soften' the entrances. The pub car park on the north side of the street requires attention, weeding around telegraph pole etc, and the removal of the "chipper" van.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Excellent work being done but more attention might be given to establishing a village ambience rather than a service facility for passing traffic. The number of sandwich boards and advertising signs on commercial buildings does not give the best impression and with a little attention can be overcome.