

Tidy Towns Competition 2003

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ratheniska**

Ref: **408**

County: **Laois**

Mark: **196**

Category: **A**

Date: **24/06/2003**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2003 | Mark Awarded 2002 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Overall Developmental Approach | 50 | 35 | 34 |
| The Built Environment | 40 | 26 | 26 |
| Landscaping | 40 | 25 | 25 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 30 | 19 | 19 |
| Litter Control | 40 | 24 | 24 |
| Tidiness | 20 | 14 | 14 |
| Residential Areas | 30 | 18 | 18 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 40 | 28 | 28 |
| General Impression | 10 | 7 | 7 |
| TOTAL MARK | 300 | 196 | 195 |

Overall Developmental Approach:

Ratheniska is an attractive little village, the centre of which comprises church, school, GAA Sports Ground and a small number of houses. Its community is spread around natural countryside in a radius of about 2 miles. Its developmental approach, while centred on the environs of the church, takes into account items further afield.

The Built Environment:

The church with its yellow painted walls and boundary wall with grey base and capstone looks well. It is attractively presented with well maintained grounds and new headstone. The community hall looks fine, its frontage dressed with barrels of flowers and seating. The small car park is neat and tidy with some newly planted shrubs to screen a brick wall close to its entrance. The school looks well. Grass is trimmed and the bright colours on its out buildings and oil tank are attractive. The gardens are nicely maintained. The nearby GAA Sportsfield has an impressively constructed entrance, newly built changing rooms/clubhouse which includes wheelchair access. The trees and shrubs introduced last year are maturing nicely.

Landscaping:

The grotto at the church car park entrance has been repainted and looks fresh and tidy with an

attractive display of potted plants and flowers. It is very colourful. The church car park looks fine, surrounded on three sides with hedging. The water pump feature could probably be given a colour lift but its presentation is clean with a potted plant under its spout. The little amenity at the well caught the eye and has been imaginatively developed.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This is natural countryside with mature hedges, trees. And a natural wildlife habitat. The GAA football ground and new club house is excellent. The grounds and car park are tidy. The disabled access to the club house is good although hard path strip rather than chipped car park surface would provide easier wheel chair access to the pitches. The completed stone entrance looks well with its memorial plaque to Billy Conroy.

Litter Control:

Ratheniska is virtually litter free. Well done in this aspect of litter control

Tidiness:

The approach road from Portlaoise has some good stone walls and hedging. Signposting is required for Dysart Enos. The main gate close to the roadside has fallen into disrepair. There are a couple of isolated problems such as the traffic damaged verges.

Residential Areas:

There are some very attractive private gardens and recognition is given to the part individuals play in contributing to the overall appearance of the village.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The beautiful Tocker duck pond at the Stradbally Road junction has matured and is supporting a healthy family of duck. It is both interesting and colourful with a wide array of wild flower and grasses.

On the approach to the village there are village name signs set in stone. These look very attractive particularly the stone set as part of the well feature. Restoration work has been done to the verges at the GAA ground and opposite the church. Some damage to the verge adjacent to the well feature.

General Impression:

Ratheniska has a wonderfully natural habitat for wildlife. It is hoped that a project could be undertaken to list all species which live year round or are seasonal visitors. As already mentioned, the duck pond development is most interesting. A public information map/notice board would be a welcome addition.