

# Tidy Towns Competition 2003

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Knockbridge**

Ref: **123**

County: **Louth**

Mark: **251**

Category: **B**

Date: **05/08/2003**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2003	Mark Awarded 2002
Overall Developmental Approach	50	44	43
The Built Environment	40	32	31
Landscaping	40	32	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	30	30
Litter Control	40	32	29
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	27	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	31
General Impression	10	8	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>244</b>

### Overall Developmental Approach:

The committee is thanked for their entry into this year's Tidy Towns Competition which contained a very well completed Entry Form with additional information and a well thought out three-year Programme of Development. Well done. Your liaison with Louth County Council, FÁS, East Tourism, the International Fund for Ireland and other statutory bodies, and in particular, the pupils of the local school, is excellent. This involvement serves to focus your committee members on the proposed works and in particular involve the local community in the spirit of Tidy Towns. Possibly the town map could be developed better and then enlarged and new development filled in.

### The Built Environment:

The population of Knockbridge is between 200 and 1000 - Category B. Knockbridge developed at the junction of the R171 and a minor road adjoining the Fave river. The church and grotto is the focal point of the village. The church is a very fine building with its very well kept grounds, new seating arrangement and the two magnificent Harry Clarke stained glass windows. Around the Church - St. Mary's - is a car park, community centre and schools. A large section of this presentation is the Stephenstown Pond project some kilometres outside the village.

### Landscaping:

The big project in this presentation is the Stephenstown Pond Nature Park and Playground, funded by the International Fund for Ireland. This is an outstanding job in its planning, building and completion. The walk around the pool, with its bird life and the many plant forms, is very beautiful. The committee is to be congratulated on this work and in the perseverance to see it completed to a most high standard. The nearby community building was being used on the day of adjudication for a meeting on the footsteps of Cúchulainn which is involving this Pond project under wider ramifications, such as the Táin and the pillar of stone where Cúchulainn is supposed to have died. The village green with its mature trees is very fine. More trees could be introduced around the playing fields, the school grounds and the community centre. It is suggested that the committee organise a tree planting programme for these areas, involving the pupils of the schools. The trees should be either berried or some other form of fruit bearing trees in order to attract birds. Trees suggested could include oak, ash, rowan, beech, chestnut or thorn.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The Stephenstown Pond Natural Park, now completed, is a wonderful project. In the walk around the pond, many different habits for fauna were seen and the myriad of ducks in the pool was a delight. All the natural flora that existed around the pond, and some others introduced, are havens for both flora and fauna. An excellently conceived project. However the Pool should not detract from the flora and fauna within the village. The many specimens of trees and shrubs existing and a tree planting programme of berried and other fruit trees will guarantee a diversity of bird life.

### **Litter Control:**

There was no litter in the Stephenstown Pool area, and around the village itself there was only a small amount in and adjoining the G.A.A. grounds. This is more an oversight than any carelessness and can be tidied up with the next litter trawl. The committee is to be congratulated on this achievement considering the amount of visitors that come to the Pool area. The adjudicator was particularly pleased with the emphasis not only on litter but also recycling.

### **Tidiness:**

Except for a general untidiness around the filling station, which could easily be rectified, the village was very tidy and was a credit to the work of the committee. During the school holiday period there is a tendency to neglect the school grounds. It is important that some pupils should keep the grass cut and pick up windblown litter and also keep the adjoining verges, kerbing and bases of walls free of weeds.

### **Residential Areas:**

There are some excellent gardens, both on the approach roads and within the village. All the owners of these gardens are to be commended for their work as the gardens give an air of welcome and care. Possibly the committee could consider organising two competitions, one for gardens (for both existing gardens and gardens being newly developed) and another for housing estates. Both of these actions should lead to a big improvement to some of the housing areas and in private houses. Also, it will entice people to join the committees or sub-committees. It is also suggested that the committee could create a mulch or composting bank for the collection of grass and leaves. The compost can then be used in various locations in the village for planting beds, hanging baskets, etc.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The adjudicator suggests as an important project within the three-year Development Programme, to create a better physical and visual link between the village and the Stephenstown Pool area. The verges need not be cut for the entire length, but in certain strategic locations. Indeed there is no need to cut more than one metre, leaving the rest as uncut verges of grasses and wild flowers to blend into the adjoining hedgerows. Possibly gates to be all of one colour, trees of a certain similar

species and more information boards. Signage should be increased in number and should be kept always clean. The adjudicator may have missed the warning signs for the school, if they are not there they should be.

### **General Impression:**

Knockbridge is a very charming well maintained small rural village. Some more attention should be given to gardens of some of the newer homes. More trees are needed in the grounds of the school and community centre and a better visual and physical link between the village and Stephenstown Pool. The adjudicator will look forward to the committee's work on some of their projects.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

The tidiness of the area surrounding Knockbridge demonstrates good rural husbandry. It also presages that the visitor is approaching somewhere very special. On the second adjudication day in early August litter control was even better than on the first. Of course, the great success is the Stephenstown Pond/Burns Cottage project: the suggestion by the first adjudicator on how this area could be integrated with the village should be studied - there is nothing to tell the visitor that these developments are part of an initiative centred in Knockbridge. A few small points noted: the pavement opposite the Granary is in need of repair; the concrete wall at the entrance to a newish housing estate next the Granary is obtrusively dull and might be painted or planted with climbers; this housing area should be given a name; the rust from the metal coverings of the old school windows is beginning to discolour the walls. These are small matters indeed, but attention to small details can add up very significantly. A very fine entry: congratulations to all the residents.