

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Raphoe**

Ref: **230**

County: **Donegal**

Mark: **232**

Category: **C**

Date: **05/04/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	40	39
The Built Environment	40	30	29
Landscaping	40	30	29
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	25	24
Litter Control	40	32	31
Tidiness	20	16	15
Residential Areas	30	20	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	30
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	232	224

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for submitting your Tidy Towns Application for 2004. Your colour coded hand drawn town map and other correspondence aided adjudication greatly and your hard work is very much appreciated. It is clear that Raphoe nurtures good community co-operation with a large number of community groups helping to contribute to the maintenance and development of this lovely town. The Raphoe 3-5 year development plan is well under way with an impressive amount of work completed in 2004. It is however important not to become complacent and to continue progress with the same vigour and obvious enthusiasm as in 2004.

The Built Environment:

The diverse combinations of old and new buildings make for a very interesting walk around the town. Completion of the new Cathedral Hall and near completion of the new Congregational Hall is impressive, however, the Tidy Towns Committee must ensure that any remaining debris or building materials are removed by the builders before they vacate the site. The plans for the site at Sheeplane look very interesting and should really benefit the future of the town. Progress made on the sale of a number of derelict sites is noted and is commended. Some attention to painting is required at the Central Hotel and the Royal & Prior School, although the commencement of painting along the school wall in front of the school building was noted. Same comments as last year apply to the Scottish Church, which has plenty of potential. The old ruined castle reflects Raphoe's steep heritage and makes for a very interesting tourist attraction.

Landscaping:

The Diamond area has been excellently enhanced by the development of semi circular stone shrub beds and repainting of street furniture. The general car park area is maintained to a very high standard and reflects extremely well on those involved in its maintenance.

The newly updated car-park at St Eunans Church is a credit to the Committee with lovely displays of shrubbery and areas of landscaping. The car-park opposite Raphoe Livestock Mart requires some landscaping and repairs. Some lovely landscaping is also evident along Castle Road.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Wildlife is obviously something the Tidy Towns Committee take very seriously with a wonderful presentation of Raphoe's wildlife and heritage information submitted as part of the Tidy Towns Application. The CD submitted on 'One year's life in a Donegal Hedgegrow' is to be highly commended. Perhaps display boards could be developed annually to document Stuart Dunlops efforts and progress in brief. Nature signs were noted throughout the town and at all wildlife 'hotspots'. The wildlife map at Volt House looks well and is probably a very helpful guide to the tourist. The Wildlife Park and Diffin Lake at Oakfield is a great asset to Raphoe and is a credit to the Robinson family. Perhaps more signage in the main town area would help increase awareness of this idyllic nature reserve.

Litter Control:

On the day of adjudication there was very little evidence of litter and the presence of a litter warden was noted. The murals painted at the Central National School and on Castle Road are wonderful ways of creating awareness, especially to the future generation. Another interesting and clever idea was to camouflage a derelict building in the town centre with a mural displaying more litter awareness slogans and pictures. The activity cards are another super idea helping to make litter awareness more of a fun exercise for children.

Tidiness:

There is a general tidy appearance to the town and this is helped by the new provision of window boxes at Volt House and the Garda Barracks, which give these important buildings a colourful lift. There is varying degrees of presentation along the shopfronts with some shops still displaying some of their produce on the pavements, which creates an untidy affect. Some attention to paint is also required. Some old unsightly agricultural machinery ought to be removed outside Henderson's Garage on McBride Street. Good use of street furniture throughout the town.

Residential Areas:

The new housing developments around the town are in their early stages of development as regards green areas and gardens. The Tidy Towns Committee should encourage residents to think carefully about what shrubs and plants to use and give appropriate advice accordingly. Some of these new estates still have curbing and other finishings left to complete. It should be ensured that builders remove any left over materials before vacating the sites, to reduce the chance of unwanted eyesores.

Discussions between residents and Donegal County Council to develop the landscape at St Eunan's Terrace will hopefully develop soon as there is a need for improvement in this estate. Developing a children's play area here would really benefit this estate. Some more planting and attention to paint is also required at Meadowhill Estate. Beechwood Avenue Estate is well presented with an attractive stone wall fronting the estate.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

In general, the approach roads are in good condition with work being carried out on the Derry Road on the day of adjudication. The removal of overhead cables on the Derry Road would be welcome. Reiterating last years comments some back roads and lanes are in need of resurfacing, especially along McBride Street. While it was noted that hanging baskets were not visible on approach roads due to lack of funds, it is felt that are necessary to create a welcoming and positive affect on entering the town.

General Impression:

There is an overall strong level of commitment and dedication amongst the many community groups involved with the Tidy Towns community, and the progress of Raphoe is reflected in the marks that have been awarded. The Committee should take on board the recommendations and marks of this and the previous years reports to help further progress the town. The development of St Eunan's Terrace, the proposed re-surfacing throughout the town and the plans for the derelict site at Sheeplane are all exciting prospects for the future of this compact town.

Second Round Adjudication:

The adjudicator was pleased to note that road re-surfacing is planned for Raphoe, as this is quite badly needed at the moment and will make an immense difference to the town! The Congregational Church was stained and will need attention before next year's competition. The Comprehensive School, on the other hand, was quite fresh. The area in the vicinity of the Mart was quite rough and would benefit from some landscaping to soften its harsh effect somewhat, as would the car park area opposite. The Diamond looked well - all the buildings around its perimeter looked well. An empty site just off the Diamond, on the way to Castle Road however, created a bad impression, as it was rather rough and overgrown. The New Community Playgroup building was admired. Graffiti was apparent on road signage on the Castlefinn approach. A rusty roof to a cottage in the village centre created a bad impression. Generally, the town of Raphoe looked well on the day.