

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castlecomer**

Ref: **177**

County: **Kilkenny**

Mark: **211**

Category: **C**

Date: **12/01/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	35
The Built Environment	40	27	26
Landscaping	40	32	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	22
Litter Control	40	18	20
Tidiness	20	14	14
Residential Areas	30	24	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	31
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	211	209

Overall Developmental Approach:

Castlecomer Tidy Towns Committee obviously receives a great level of support from local businesses, the Trade Council, local schools and Kilkenny County Council. The traffic management plan should make a great difference to the town from the point of view of quality of life, car parking etc. The litter problem is a continuing one, as witnessed by your own notes, and the reports from the previous two years. This is something that will have to be tackled in a serious way before next year's competition. The restoration of the stables at the demesne in order to create craft units will be a marvelous initiative when in place. This appeared to be a building site, currently. The playground at the Riverside Park area had not taken place yet either. Do ensure that in terms of presentation you maintain the current high quality and simplicity of appearance. It is not necessary to gild the lily by over-ornate presentation! Castlecomer has a proud mining heritage, which is reflected in the various features evident in the town.

The Built Environment:

The schools and their grounds looked extremely well. Scoil Mhuire National School in bright yellow was proudly sporting its green flag! The Church of Ireland School and Community School both looked extremely well and had well maintained grounds. Both churches looked well. The Catholic Church is under renovation at the moment and the adjudicator was pleased to hear that you have been treated in a fashion suitable to its protected structure status. The Church of Ireland looked magnificent, set as it is on the hillside to the far side of town. Indeed there are quite a number of

protected structures within the town and the adjudicator was pleased to hear that you are hoping to expand this list. Be sure that the fine Georgian building terminating the main street / high street / square uses traditional timber sash windows when it is restored to its former glory - it is in a very prominent location at the top of the street. This is most important, as this greatly effects the appearance and proportions of buildings, as witnessed when windows have been replaced using PVC. There are many fine traditional shop fronts i.e. Comerford's and Murphy's both of which would benefit from being restored to their former glory - the latter should ensure that it retains its timber sash windows in any such renovation. There is a good use of the Irish language in evidence in the town, such as Siopa Una and O'Braonain. Do discourage the practice of projecting plastic signs and encourage their replacement with ones of a more traditional timber variety. Hennessy's Giftware looked very fresh as did Bollard's. The two creeper - clad buildings on the main street, the solicitor's office and the Avalon Inn were both admired. Two modern additions Castlecomer Credit Union, in stone and the Garda Station, in modern vernacular style with a stone wall to the front were both admired. The Court House should be painted up before next year's competition and the Fire Station and boundary wall were also in need of a fresh coat of paint.

Landscaping:

The nicely maintained grassy banks and statue of the Virgin Mary at the junction of the Ballyraggett Road and that to the hospital were greatly admired. The magnificent lime trees marching down High Street or the Square are quite magnificent. It is a good initiative to encourage permanent planting as it is practical both from an economical point of view and also ensures that the town looks well year round and not just in Summer time! The flower tunnel is also a very good initiative. The 1798 monument was simply presented and well maintained. Rose beds either side of the main street also looked well. The Shankyard Memorial was well maintained, as was the graveyard beyond the Catholic Church.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The adjudicator was pleased to hear that you have a bat colony in the vicinity of the bridge! Castlecomer is indeed fortunate in regard to this category of the competition, with its magnificent demesne and riverside area and indeed the mature lime trees marching up the square. Do try to get local school children involved and encourage their awareness of the wildlife habitats within their locality. You should get in touch with ENFO and read your Tidy Towns Handbook for means of increasing your input in this aspect of the competition.

Litter Control:

This has been a severe problem in the town for three years running now! Quite a lot of litter was evident to the main streets of the town, at the entrance to the woods and riverside park and at the other entrance further along the Dublin Road beyond the Ormond Brick Factory. The roadside itself also sported litter, particularly at the bridge. More litter was evidenced on the Kilkenny Road and a lot was visible on the laneway to Castlecomer Pottery. You have mentioned that you will be getting new bins, which is to be actively encouraged. Bottles and litter were also evident to the riverside park area. You should try to foster an interest by the children in keeping their town litter - free. You should also endeavour to empty litter bins more frequently and thereby encourage people to use the less full bins.

Tidiness:

The entrance to the woods area beyond Ormonde Bricks has been mentioned before - it appeared quite overgrown. Do ensure that rear areas and alleyways are also considered when presenting the town, and not just the main streets.

Residential Areas:

The standard in this category of the competition was very good, generally. However, the terrace of houses on the Ballyraggett Road looked quite neglected in comparison to the corner house opposite which was brightly painted with magnificent yellow trims and colourful hanging baskets. The charming gate lodge by the bridge on the Dublin Road, with its curved window was greatly admired. A grubby gable on the Kilkenny Road looked unfortunate - do ensure that it is not just the façades of buildings that are painted up, as gables can be all the more prominent as one travels along the roadside. The magnificent gardens of the well - maintained houses on the corner of Maryville were greatly admired. The charming dormer cottages in brick, with their magnificent cottage gardens looked extremely well as did the mock Tudor style houses opposite. The grassy banks with trees to the terrace of houses on the Kilkenny Road also looked extremely well.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Ballyraggett Road was generally quite good. Signage was a problem in some areas - at the bottom of the square heading out the Dublin Road, the warning sign appeared quite grubby and the warning stripes on the bridge would need repainting. Indeed, the Dublin Road appeared quite overgrown, although the stone wall opposite was admired. The Kilkenny Road was fine. The town nameplate sign on the road to the Community School also appeared quite grubby.

General Impression:

Castlecomer is a very busy centre which has the potential to do extremely well in the competition - it has all the ingredients to be a very successful Tidy Towns entrant. The enthusiasm of the committee is to be greatly admired. However, litter is a severe problem and continues to be so. You will have to endeavour to resolve this problem before next year's competition.