

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Abbeylara**

Ref: **320**

County: **Longford**

Mark: **160**

Category: **B**

Date: **06/07/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	28	
The Built Environment	40	21	
Landscaping	40	20	
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	17	
Litter Control	40	20	
Tidiness	20	10	
Residential Areas	30	18	
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	20	
General Impression	10	6	
TOTAL MARK	300	160	

Overall Developmental Approach:

Abbeylara is welcome back into the National Tidy Towns Competition in this year of 2004. Your village originated as a crossroads village and has developed a rich cultural heritage being home to the Cistercian Abbey; indeed the view of the ruins of the abbey predominates on approaching the village from approach roads. A major problem facing the community in terms of success in the Tidy Towns Competition is the presentation of the crossroads itself which is the *raison d'etre* for Abbeylara. Underdeveloped, unsightly sites are prevalent in the heart of the village. Well done on your fund raising activities and your cooperation with statutory bodies. You have a large committee of fifteen, perhaps it should be broken into smaller groups with each group taking responsibility for different projects.

The Built Environment:

The church and its grounds are simply but tastefully presented whilst the school enjoys a magnificent presentation with its bountiful flower displays. The "M. Mc Cormack" premises is well painted but its adjoining gates and premises are in need of improvement. The ruins of the old Cistercian Abbey are an interesting feature of the townscape and should be floodlit at night. The plastic sign on the 'Food Store' should be replaced with a quality sign. Buildings which still retain their traditional architectural features such as the "P.P. Masterson" (which is for sale) will hopefully retain these features upon refurbishment. The site with planning permission located just at the crossroads will make a strong visual impact on the street scape upon redevelopment. Hopefully the

other site beside the handball alley will be appropriately redeveloped.

Landscaping:

Flower displays at the school have already been mentioned, these window boxes are amongst the best seen anywhere in the country. Landscaping to the roadside at the Abbey was attractive in terms of green verge, trees, shrubs and flower displays, however weed growth was noted here and will need to be kept in check. Grassed roadside areas out the Cloonaghmore road look well and the impact of colourful displays at the Garden Centre on the Edgeworthstown road is appropriate. It is suggested that trees be planted behind a wall on the Granard road to soften the harsh visual impact of farm outbuildings. Verges on this road were neatly presented.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The handball alley was very popular with children during our visit. Murals on the walls of the sports ground were admired however the gates here should now be refurbished. The committee should consider undertaking a wildlife survey of the village and its environs perhaps in conjunction with schoolchildren to increase awareness of the importance of wildlife. You are referred to your Tidy Towns Handbook for some good advice on how to proceed and compete under this heading.

Litter Control:

Litter control was very good. Well done to those committee members who empty litter bins on a regular basis and it is good to note the cooperation received from the County Council with the new litter bins.

Tidiness:

Well done on the hosting of a competition for schoolchildren regarding being a tidy village. Fill us in on the details for next year as this type of initiative can earn you additional marks. Don't forget to remove sprayed weeds as they can look unsightly and untidy when discoloured.

Residential Areas:

The terraced townhouses with brick detailing around window and door apertures were noted and admired. The majority of residential properties are nicely presented and some good roadside verges to boundary walls were noted out the Cloonaghmore road. Asking each household to participate in the Spring Clean Week for their own areas is a good idea.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Whilst green verges on approach roads were nicely grassed in some instances they could have been cut back a little more. Stands of mature trees were noted and appreciated. A nameplate on the Finea road was broken and ought to be removed or refurbished. The ditch on the Granard road was exceptionally well presented and the verge here was backed with neat hedgerow alternating with stone walls. The carpark to the sports grounds on the Edgeworthstown road is in need of resurfacing, lining and landscaping.

General Impression:

Abbeylara's best features in the competition are its approach roads and entrances. On arrival in the town centre there is an experience of disappointment due to undeveloped sites at the crossroads. Given the current economic climate this situation may not prevail for too much longer. Thank you for your re-entry and we look forward to charting your progress in the competition.

