

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Geashill**

Ref: **649**

County: **Offaly**

Mark: **246**

Category: **B**

Date: **27/07/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	43	42
The Built Environment	40	35	35
Landscaping	40	35	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	17	16
Litter Control	40	33	33
Tidiness	20	15	14
Residential Areas	30	26	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	34	33
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	246	241

Overall Developmental Approach:

Thank you for an excellent submission, outline of plans and ambitions for an improved Geeshill and illustrated map. We commend you for your vision and we acknowledge the challenge you have laid before you. You are endowed with many fine features, some very attractive buildings and a rich rural environment. You are also faced with busy traffic and pressure from speeding motorists. You have a good record in the competition and no doubt you have learned from your experience. Your challenge now is to adhere to your plan and bring the community with you.

The Built Environment:

Public buildings were well presented. The GAA entrance is poor and road surface here needs upgrading, especially between the chainlink fencing and the road. The Maxol fuel station is well presented but would benefit from some colour. An Post is well presented. Carruthers is poor in presentation on this strategic corner. Hamiltons is very well presented on a busy location. The sign at the SHOP is too blatant and should be toned down: it would have the same advertising effect. village pump surrounds need improvement. The Garda station is drab but the landscaping is acknowledged.

Landscaping:

The green is really attractive and provides a focal point for the village. It is good to witness mature and young trees on this important location. Continue your efforts of further tree planting here. The treatment of the village sign at the Portarlinton approach is attractive and should be matched with a similar standard at the Tullamore approach. The picnic area is in need of improved presentation and has fallen in standard. The picnic table should be replaced and the shrubbery needed cleaning. The entrance here opposite the village sign is poorly identified and now that the roadside hedge has grown it is not visible from the roadside. Fast traffic here is unfriendly also but well beyond the scope of tidy towns committees to solve it. We liked the treatment of the boundary wall at the school and this has been a successful project from public funding. The Glebe walk has some of the finest beech trees in the county: the private garden adjacent is playing host to a rich variety of attractive trees in its own right. We suggest you erect a symbol confirmatory sign on the wall to the walk to support the finger sign in the street.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You have great potential for promoting wildlife and we wish you well in your efforts to stimulate interest locally. Indeed the increased interest from Irish people in walking activity is now conducive to promoting a greater awareness of wildlife and tree species etc., so you should pursue this line.

Litter Control:

The issuing of a newsletter is commendable and should have a beneficial effect. The village was almost litter free on adjudication day, so you have scored well here. If you create favourable support for litter control it will not be an issue in future years and will maintain your marks. Public opinion is the most effective way to promote a litter free centre.

Tidiness:

Your problems in this respect relate to unfinished developments and untidy open spaces on the approach roads. Old stone walls are problematic in maintenance and need continuous attention when they begin to crumble. On the approach from Portarlinton you have a delightful combination of stone wall, tree planting and grassed area: the essence of a good combination and one that should be pursued to other places.

Residential Areas:

St. Oliver's Terrace has some well kept houses but many boundary walls need attention. You might consider a painting blitz of similar colour: it would make quite a statement but would need agreement from residents. You have some very good village infill with houses being built on sites within the village: this represents good policy and is preferable to the ribbon development witnessed in other areas. New houses seem good in design and presentation and we commend the planners for this. As a committee, you have an important part to play in assessing the character of buildings being built in the village and indeed planners should liaise closely with you: this calls for vigilance from you to alert yourselves in advance of developments: all too often observations are made after planning is decided.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The delightful thatched cottage on the Mountmellick approach is like a beacon shining in the dark. It is also richly embellished with attractive landscaping: well done to the owners. Approach roads are generally good but the Daingean approach is poor in places. We suggest you paint farm gates a bright colour. Also, consider two Fáilte signs on the two principal approaches; they would set the scene for an attractive village with much to offer.

General Impression:

It was a pleasant experience to make a first ever inspection in Geashill on a fine June day. Like many other centres in Offaly, the hand of the previous generation has been kind to you and left you endowed with many fine buildings, mature trees, traditional stone walls built by artisans with pride in their work and a generous extensive green. Your submission suggests you have a clear vision for improvement and we wish you well in your endeavours. Good luck for 2005.

Second Round Adjudication:

Litter commendably was not a problem during our second visit. The Portarlinton Road was again admired for its neat grass verges and stone walls. The Mountmelick Road was noted for the continued use of traditional stone walls; however, the drab walls referred to above reduce the impact. Neat hedging on the Tullamore Road created a good impression. You should concentrate on bringing the Edenderry Road up to a high standard for next year. Hopefully the excavated roads will be properly resurfaced before next year. In order to make significant progress in the competition greater level of consistency is required as a shabby building can seriously reduce the impact of a neighbouring well painted one. It is the beautiful green with fine stone walls and mature trees which is the lasting impressing of Geashill.