

Tidy Towns Competition 2004

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathowen**

Ref: **37**

County: **Westmeath**

Mark: **201**

Category: **A**

Date: **07/07/2004**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2004	Mark Awarded 2003
Overall Developmental Approach	50	32	32
The Built Environment	40	31	31
Landscaping	40	33	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	11	11
Litter Control	40	30	30
Tidiness	20	11	11
Residential Areas	30	21	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	25	25
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	300	201	201

Overall Developmental Approach:

Rathowen has a particular difficulty in that it has the ongoing problem of high levels of through traffic which on the one hand supports the local economy but on the other puts pressure on village services. Essentially Rathowen must plan for its own future to develop all aspects of its own community and exploit its attractions. The committee needs a plan to map its aspirations and progress.

The Built Environment:

St. Marys Church looks very well. Lawns are nicely trimmed and a fine array of bedded shrubs. The school is painted a pink colour and at its side, an attractive lawn garden and trees. Garda station looks well with mature shrubs. On the opposite side, a terrace of two storey housing is cleanly presented but two houses are unoccupied and heading towards a dilapidated state with windows boarded up. Restoration work is being carried out on the house at the corner of Church Lane. Gaelic Chieftain pub looks well with its freshly presented frontage as does Feericks and the Post Office. The Community Centre looks well, but there was some stone facing materials stored untidily at its bottom right hand side. The verge opposite the entrance door could be attended to. The North Westmeath Information office was well presented with front lawn curtilage and stone walls. The building, also stone fronted, is well presented. The Church of Ireland looks a beautiful but somewhat dilapidated structure with entrance and surrounds overgrown.

Landscaping:

At the housing estate to the right of the school entrance road is an attractive amenity with grass generally well trimmed but with attention required to its edges. The lawns are generally well presented but the metal archway with its honeysuckle could be painted. There is a nice shrubbery at the town end of the green. There are a number of small green areas and houses with colourful plants which are quite pleasant. The blacksmiths stone could be a feature if it was more prominently displayed than at its current position in a verge in front of a broken wall and house remains and generally dishevelled back buildings. There is an attractive display of shrubs at the Garda Station, and grass margins and trees are maturing along the south side of the main street.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Russagh Grave yard is a small but attractive place with mature hedge rows and trees. It is ideal wildlife habitat. At the back of the grave yard is a mound which probably has historic significance. Apart from the installation of new fencing, no work has been done to the park area in front of the Community Centre which is growing wild. Unfortunately no signposting was available on the Corry Donlon Bog, River Inny to Lough Iron Walk. However there was a nice project on display at the post office windows of photos of St. Thomas's Church, St. Marys Church, Glebe House, also display of flora and fauna to be found on the Corry Donlon Bog walk. Consideration should also be given to the wild life habitat potential at St. Thomas' Church.

Litter Control:

There was little evidence of a litter problem apart from builder debris from the new housing development. Clearly the community's anti litter efforts are being rewarded.

Tidiness:

There is little wirescape. The verge on the left side opposite the school should be trimmed. The car park behind Feericks looks well. It has recycling bins and diesel services in its car park which are generally kept tidy. There are shrubberies along the walls of the car park.

Residential Areas:

The housing estate at the east end of the village is generally well kept with one or two exceptions. The small Rathowen Housing Scheme housing estate behind the Chieftain Pub looks well although the central green area could be better maintained as could the grass protruding from the kerbstones.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach from the Mullingar side has a footpath connection between church and village furnished with public lighting. From the traffic calming facility there is a variety of trees both left and right, and roughly trimmed verge to right. Footpaths are fine and the trees which have been planted in the verges have matured nicely and in time will certainly add significantly to the main street

General Impression:

The linear style and location on a busy national road route presents particular difficulties for Rathowen. Never the less the committee has worked well to bring improvements to village presentation. A three to five year plan would provide a more inclusive set of objectives and a time scale in which the work of the committee could take place.

