

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Raphoe**

Ref: **255**

County: **Donegal**

Mark: **236**

Category: **C**

Date: **08/08/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	41	40
The Built Environment	40	30	30
Landscaping	40	31	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	26	25
Litter Control	40	32	32
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	21	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	31	31
General Impression	10	8	8
TOTAL MARK	300	236	232

Overall Developmental Approach:

Many thanks for the support documentation and beautifully drawn colour coded map which the adjudicator found most helpful. Your committee's enthusiasm and innovative approach to this competition is improving the environment not just for it's residents but for everyone who has cause to visit Raphoe. The community efforts harnessed through Raphoe Community in Action Ltd and supported by the Local Authority augurs well for the future of Raphoe. With much achieved it is now timely to reflect on the community's aspirations and with the continued co-operation of the local authority, Fás and other agencies decide on some key priorities going forward.

The Built Environment:

Raphoe has a wealth of architecturally rich buildings, some in a state of neglect, which should be maintained, preserved and given a priority by the community, local authority and potential developers for the future. Deele College is looking well with mature gardens. However, some graffiti was visible on the adjacent wall. All banks have done a great job with hanging baskets, window boxes and a great show of colour. Street furniture is well presented throughout. It is important that plans for the development at Sheeplane and the former Raphoe Hardware and Grains premises on William Street are in keeping with the character of the area. A number of buildings, particularly in the Diamond would benefit from painting. Attention to detail is also required in the area of gutters, windows and roof presentation. Volt House is a good example of what can be achieved with a beautifully maintained and cared for appearance. There is enormous potential for improvements

under this heading.

Landscaping:

The central area of the Diamond is nicely landscaped with good use of colour, mature trees and shrub beds. Volt House as already mention has window boxes and hanging baskets which adds to the overall appeal of this building. Hanging baskets on street lighting, street furniture and a well presented car park were noted.

Raphoe Central National School's mural is lovely as is the garden with seating. Planters and seating at the Mart brighten up this area. The addition of planters in the car park opposite as requested in last years report is very welcomed. Some barriers at this car park are rusted and broken which make it look untidy. The landscaping at the Catholic Church is very impressive with railing, stone walls, shrub beds with gravel, trees and new light fittings. Areas outside the Diamond should now be identified for landscaping using indigenous trees, shrubs and low maintenance planting for good all year round colour.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your commitment and dedication to the whole area of wildlife and your appreciation of the environment is obvious. The Environmental and Wildlife Newsletter is an excellent idea not only for residents but also for visitors. Nature signs and wildlife signs are well positioned and presented. Raphoe Central School has retained it's Green Flag status, which judging by the information submitted was very well deserved. Well done. As part of your 3-5 year plan it is now important to identify what remains to be done in the whole area of conserving and enhancing the quality of wildlife locations as amenity areas for both locals and visitors alike.

Litter Control:

The area of the Diamond was free of litter on adjudication day with only incidental litter visible on some side streets and back areas. The new bins are well presented especially the heritage style bins in the centre. Posters and slogans are a very effective way to build litter awareness. Participation in the Spring Clean campaign and work through the schools is no doubt contributing to your progress under this heading. Well done to all concerned.

Tidiness:

The Diamond area has a generally tidy presentation. The side of Reynolds of Raphoe appears untidy and should be screened. The Shell Petrol Station has a cluttered appearance and some broken signs which need to be replaced or repaired. The recycling area had no litter but had an untidy feel due to the grass not being cut. The issue of produce on the pavements still remains. Old agricultural machinery outside Hendersons do not give a good impression. The physical condition of some buildings in the Diamond and untidy boundary areas adjacent detracts from the overall charm of the Diamond.

Residential Areas:

A number of individual residential premises looked well . A cottage with hanging baskets and window boxes opposite the Presbyterian Church is very welcoming. St. Eunan's Terrace has some lovely houses and well maintained gardens. The open green area was trimmed with some nice landscaping. Work is still ongoing at Cathedral Hill where some houses already have lawns, baskets and window boxes. It is very important the builders consider pedestrian access to these estates. Meadowhill Estate is in need of a focused effort by all residents to ensure the estate is presented to a high standard. As Raphoe now has quite a number of housing estates, a tidy estate competition should be considered, which would encourage individual residents to enhance their environment. A local business could be approached to sponsor a trophy and the whole event could be publicized

through your local newsletter "Raphoe People".

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The new bilingual street names, heritage and welcome signs are very attractive. Well done to all concerned. The road enroute to the Castle has a colourful mural. This road is nicely landscaped with trimmed verges and some mature trees. While most footpaths are in a good condition a number of areas including William Street and Meeting House Street need urgent resurfacing. Some back streets are in need of attention with weeds, potholes and untidy areas visible. The road surface in St. Eunan's Terrace needs to be upgraded also the screening of the oil tank at The Central School and painting the car park wall. Some footpath repairs are required close to the Church gate. Continue to work closely with the local authority to influence improvements under this heading.

General Impression:

You continue to make steady progress, however, issues such as derelict buildings/sites as well as the challenges of a growing number of housing estates at different levels of development need to be a priority for the future. Bring all stakeholders on board including owners, community groups, local authority, statutory agencies and residents groups to find a mutually agreeable way forward.

Second Round Adjudication:

The adjudicator for the second round of adjudication was impressed by the thumbnail history of Raphoe together with an account of its flora, fauna and walks presented at Volt House; so much information in such a simple format! how refreshing. The roadside boundary of the mart is an important focal point in the townscape of Raphoe due to its location on the junction of two roads; at the time of adjudication it was unsightly and in urgent need of visual upgrading; flower displays within the well surfaced curtilage area were beautiful. Landscaping within the Diamond and on approach roads is a successful mix of permanent planting and seasonal flower displays.

Weedy kerbs were a feature within the new Cathedral Hill estate and elsewhere in the town and litter control was less good than on the occasion of our first visit.

Footpaths and kerbs are in need of refurbishment at many locations, hopefully the planned redevelopment of sites within the town will provide such opportunities together with the possibility of the related ducting of service cables.

Congratulations on the retention of Green Flag status for the national school, the children deserve our appreciation.