Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Athy** Ref: **457**

County: **Kildare** Mark: **213**

Category: **E** Date: **05/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	36	35
The Built Environment	40	32	32
Landscaping	40	31	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	22	22
Litter Control	40	25	26
Tidiness	20	15	15
Residential Areas	30	22	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	23	23
General Impression	10	7	7
TOTAL MARK	**300**	**213**	**212**

Overall Developmental Approach:

The marked map, photographs and five-year plan were very helpful at adjudication time. The plan offers great potential. A more detailed plan outlining each item that needs to be done to achieve the overall aims would serve the committee really well. This would focus on the items i.e. what exactly needs to be done, by whom, when and with what resources. Each year an assessment could be made and the plan adjusted accordingly. The very heavy traffic passing through the town is distressing as also is the parking arrangements at Emily square.

The Built Environment:

There are many fine landmark buildings in the town. The Emily Square area is attractive with the Heritage Centre and Town Hall looking well. The derelict building by the riverside hopefully will be resolved soon and this would make the complete area most attractive. The canal bridge and the river bridge are also landmarks. The canal bridge could be improved somewhat by the removal of the weeds and exposure of the entire bridge. The Churches look well particularly St. Dominic's with its wonderful setting. The Church of Ireland at Janeville also forms an important landmark building. Whites Castle is very prominent. The condition of the shops through the town is very varied. There are some well-maintained and well-decorated shops; there are also a large number of shops that are in need of attention to paint and general décor. A number of premises appear to be derelict. A serious campaign to upgrade the shops in the streets is called for here. Some derelict buildings – for example the building in view from the canal bridge do not help. The swimming pool hopefully will be

rebuilt soon.

Landscaping:

The Peoples Park is a lovely facility in the town. The mature evergreen Oaks look very impressive and give a very restful atmosphere in the park. The bank to the side of the entrance to the railway station is in poor condition and offers good possibilities. The tree planting at Emily Square has a tremendous effect – bringing green right into the centre of the town. The riverside area around Emily Square is attractive but needs greater attention to detail. The area to the riverfront of the Dominican Church looks well. Numerous colourful planting displays around the town add good summer colour including the many hanging baskets and street containers. The baskets at the Edmund Rice carpark and on the Stradbally road are very colourful and look well on the raised poles. The spring bulb-planting scheme is a very good idea and the photographs look spectacular. Entrances to housing estates can contribute very much to the landscape of a town – The Marina Court development is a good example. Mature trees in the small estate opposite the Marina Court shows the benefits of street or road tree planting as it matures. The commercial sector can play an important part in the landscape too – the Vet hospital looks particularly well and the newly planted surrounds of the Clanard Court hotel and Lidl are good examples.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

With the river and the canal on the doorstep – there is great opportunity for wildlife observation and appreciation in Athy. The riverside walks make lovely strolling ground. Projects should be developed to avail of these great resources and bring more awareness to the people of the town.

Litter Control:

There appears to be a difficulty with litter in the town. There are a number of incidences of poor litter control and hopefully a greater concentration on this aspect will prove successful. Litter by Emily Square and on the Main Street was noted. Serious litter was noted at The Lords Island area – a lovely place destroyed by litter. There also was litter in the Peoples Park and at the waterside area on Monasterevin road.

Tidiness:

The number of buildings needing attention to décor and the number of derelict buildings are causing a difficulty. People leaving materials alongside are abusing the recycle bins at the Edmund Rice carpark. Overhead cables hopefully will be removed in due course.

Residential Areas:

Work with local communities and residents associations is the key to achieving good progress in housing estates. With new housing estates it is important to keep a watchful eye to see that the developers complete the landscaping before leaving the site. Maintenance programmes are important too for newly landscaped sites – for example the Coneyboro site has been planted but the maintenance is unsatisfactory at the moment. It is great to see so many of the old residences within the town- hopefully when Athy is bypassed in the future, living accommodation within the town will not be strangled by traffic. The development opposite the Garda station is interesting, bringing life into the town centre. Such developments open up back areas – which are often not the most attractive areas and offer a challenge to developers – it is good to be able to walk through this development back to the streets.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The town centre streets are grossly over run with very heavy traffic passing through. Extra parking restrictions and more carparking away from the town centre would be helpful. There are numbers of

back lanes and back streets which need attention. The new paving in places is attractive. The areas by Emily Square look very well and offer a lovely town centre environment. The approach roads are in good condition. Developments along the roads cause disruption and blending the old with the new offers great challenge. The Kilkenny approach road appears very cluttered with commercial signs. The community centre building appears very drab. There is a very attractive roadside shrubbery by the shrine. On the Stradbally approach there is a vast amount of residential roadside housing. The Monasterevin road has some very well landscaped new housing estates – such as Cois Bhera. The approach along by the riverside is very attractive.

General Impression:

Athy has progressed well through the years. Emily Square has become a good focal point in the town and with the riverside aspect makes a very attractive venue. The shops along the streets need considerable upgrading. There are many protruding plastic signs from shops, which could be reduced. There is great potential along the watersides. The huge amount of residential areas also brings a new challenge to the town.