

Tidy Towns Competition 2005

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Straffan**

Ref: **512**

County: **Kildare**

Mark: **213**

Category: **B**

Date: **01/07/2005**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2005	Mark Awarded 2004
Overall Developmental Approach	50	35	31
The Built Environment	40	30	30
Landscaping	40	28	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	17	18
Litter Control	40	32	34
Tidiness	20	16	16
Residential Areas	30	25	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	23	25
General Impression	10	7	8
TOTAL MARK	300	213	215

Overall Developmental Approach:

The plan submitted with the entry form this year is very welcome and shows great commitment to ongoing work in the village. The " Enhancement and traffic Calming Plan" is very much needed and this will completely uplift the village. The village is deserving of such a plan and this is long overdue. The new building developments taking place, the pounding of the roads with extra traffic and the general aging and deterioration of roads and footpaths is very noticeable. When the planned work is completed Straffan will be brought back to its former fine state. The committee of 14 members is a sizable number and having a junior membership is an excellent idea.

The Built Environment:

There is an interesting mix of buildings within the village. The two fine churches are landmark buildings as well as the cut stone buildings just beyond the Catholic Church. Stonewalls are a great feature of the village and surrounds and these give great character to the village both on the approach roads and within the village. The Litch gate entrance to the cemetery is a lovely feature within the village. The Straffan Inn looks well presented. The petrol station has a cluttered appearance

Landscaping:

The absence of a Parks department in Kildare is a very relevant point. However the residents of Straffan have made some very good contributions to the landscape of the village. The predominating feature of the landscape is the huge number of large trees in the area – this gives a lovely green foil. These trees were planted by previous generations who could never have hoped to see them in their full maturity. We also owe a similar legacy to future generations and this should be borne in mind to ensue we plant trees where possible. The chestnut trees along the roadside to Coarsemoor look well and there is great attention to the grass verges beneath these. The greens and associated stone and seating at the crossroads by the Straffan Inn look well and are well treated. The Catholic Church grounds in particular are tended well and the attractive combination of plants and hard surface is good. Individual gardens along the road and the entrances to the housing estates add greatly to the overall landscape of the village. The tubs and hanging baskets give a nice sparkle of summer colour to the village without being overbearing and the timber tubs are attractive.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The plans for the opening of Parsons Walk and Cow Lane walk will be a great asset and hopefully all the obstacles to their reopening will be resolved soon. The labeling of trees in the K club is a wonderful idea and provides a nice opportunity to become aware of these while walking. The Butterfly farm is an asset to the area. The work planned with the school is an excellent idea and by gathering local knowledge and passing this on in conjunction with school projects a positive contribution can be made towards wildlife observation and appreciation

Litter Control:

The litter picking plans are very good. On a walk through the village there was a disappointing level of litter observed. This could have been inconsistent with the norm. Litter was noted along footpaths and both on the path and in the cemetery.

Tidiness:

Because of the buildings development projects, the state of the footpaths and road surfaces – the village is suffering badly. The plans for the “Enhancement Scheme” are overdue and hopefully this will get underway as soon as possible. The parking situation by the petrol station and across the road at the church entrance is very disruptive and confusing for pedestrians.

Residential Areas:

The residential areas are well tended. The Coarsemoor looks very well as does the little estate across the road from this. The houses diagonally across the road at the Catholic Church are well cared for and give a fresh impression at the village centre. Stonewalls and greens set these off well. Individuals who look after their own properties and surrounds contribute well to the overall appearance of the village. The new estates – for example -the Beeches and the Mulberry properties are progressing. It is important that the committee keeps an eye on these developments and similar ones to ensure that when the work is completed that the site and road are reinstated properly.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The traffic through the village is very heavy. This does not seem acceptable for a residential village of this size. There is no safe place for a person to cross the road and this must be worrisome for children and the elderly. The road surfaces have deteriorated very badly with serious potholes and patches. Hopefully the “Enhancement plan “ will address all these issues. The work at Lodge Park back entrance is good.

General Impression:

Straffan has the core and fabric of a fine village. Much work has been done and is planned by the committee but all of this is very dependent on the "Enhancement Plan" getting started. Lobbying at the appropriate places to ensure this work gets started soon is an important job for the committee. Persistence and determination always wins through.