

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Abbeyleix** Ref: **302**
County: **Laois** Mark: **266**
Category: **C** Date(s): **05/08/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	44
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	32
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	37
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	266

Overall Development Approach:

The heritage town of Abbeyleix never fails to impress-even if the visitor is merely travelling through on the busy Dublin-Cork road. It exudes an elegant charm all of its own. The fact that you use the Tidy Towns reports as a working manual is commendable. You would appear to have a good working relationship with Laois County Council, Fas, the ESB and the Heritage Society, all of which is most beneficial. The new playground and the meditation garden are commendable projects.

The Built Environment:

Preston House looked very well with its cheerful red door, creeper clad walls and retention of original sash windows. Morrissey's is a fine traditional pub, which retains many of its original features including fabric awning, which gives it a quality of appearance that is enviable. Sadly many of the street buildings have lost their timber sash windows and should be encouraged to replace them. The two banks looked fresh and neat, although the canopy to the AIB should be replaced or removed as it is quite badly stained at the moment. The imposing stone church was admired. The Abbeyleix Manor Hotel sported a new extension and some attractive landscaping to the roadside. Hopefully this will extend to incorporate this new building. Commercial premises of note were: Quinn's Tea Rooms with its tables, chairs and floral displays below the trees; Ring and Allure in their traditional front; Mc Evoy's; Leinster House. The Post Office looked quite fresh. The Flower House looked quite charming but could be painted before next year's competition - as could the Market House on the Square. The Heritage House looked quite charming with its well maintained grounds. The Fire Station was quite fresh.

Landscaping:

The magnificent mature trees along the street give the main street an elegant air to it. Items of heritage such as the numerous fountains around the town are well maintained and attractive. Various tubs filled with

attractive floral displays were admired throughout. A small fountain with geranium surrounds was tinkling away on the Mountrath road.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You would appear to have a great interest in this aspect of the competition. The bat walk in order to see the habitats in the woodlands sounds like an interesting one. The provision of bird and bat boxes is commendable and the wildlife enhancement booklet is certainly a popular one to judge by your re-print! Wildlife regeneration areas are a wonderful idea. The wildlife enhancement plan made interesting reading.

Litter Control:

The standard in this category of the competition could have been better on the day. Although the main streets were free of litter, the odd paper was evident on the main road and quite a lot was evident on the approach roads. The employment of two street cleaners must be helpful in this regard.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done on already making progress under this new category in the competition. The participation of the school in the Green Schools programme is highly commendable and congratulations to them for receiving their Green Flag. The composting policy is a highly praiseworthy one. Continue to liaise with the local authority on this to ensure you comply with all the relevant regulations in this regard. Your Race Against Waste booklet contained with this year's Tidy Towns entry form contains many other good ideas that could be pursued over the coming years.

Tidiness:

The town generally looked quite neat and well attended on the day. The large yard area on the Cork Road should be more successfully screened from public view. A stone wall or indigenous hedging in this location would be helpful. A whitewashed wall on this side of the town would also benefit from a fresh coat of paint. The Abbey Gate could improve its hanging sign, which looked a little neglected. A rusty tin roof to a shed on the Mountrath road should be repainted before next year. The campaign to prevent dog fouling is a laudable one.

Residential Areas:

There are a number of new housing estates which are under construction on the day. It is to be hoped that these will be finished in a manner that will be in keeping with the town's character. The quality of finish in terms of both materials and landscaping is very important in this regard. De Vesci Hill was admired for its stone wall to the entrance, which looked attractive. The street houses of the town generally looked well cared for. Of note was one opposite Preston House with its colourful displays of hanging baskets and floral displays. The open space to Balladine Heights was quite overgrown and weeds were evident at the street kerbs. Knocknamoe Lane was admired.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Cork road was reasonably well maintained, although the odd item of litter was evident. The Dublin Road appeared rougher in appearance to one side of the road. The grassy banks had been cut back but the dead grass had not been removed and some litter was in evidence. The Mountrath road was to a higher standard with freshly cut verges and attractive landscaping.

General Impression:

Abbeyleix is a most attractive Irish estate town, which its residents are maintaining to a high standard of presentation. It has great elegance and charm. Congratulations on all the hard work achieved to date and good luck with your future work.