

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Portlaoise** Ref: **313**
County: **Laois** Mark: **246**
Category: **G** Date(s): **03/08/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	23
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	246

Overall Development Approach:

Portlaoise Tidy Towns Committee does seem a little small given the size of this the county town of Laois. You would appear to have a good working relationship with the County Council, Leader, the Rotary Club and local businesses. Your work with the Portlaoise Against Litter Committee is commendable. There would appear to be a high level of commitment from the local community generally, which is always helpful to the cause! Your work to encourage the preservation of traditional shop fronts is laudable, as many have fallen by the wayside around the country over the years. The work on derelict sites is also good. The Heritage Trail was admired and gives the visitor a good inkling of the historical significance of the town; its extension is looked forward to.

The Built Environment:

The commercial premises along the main streets of the town looked well cared for on the day. Most of the shop fronts were to a high standard of appearance. There were one or two empty and abandoned premises, which were in contrast to the high standard generally, but these were the exception rather than the rule. Of note were: the Square Meal, Mc Carthy O'Hora's Architect's office in the old Church on Railway Street, a florist with no name above the shop front on the Market Square end of Main Street, the Medical Hall and O'Loughlin's in one front. All of these were well presented. The Courthouse is an imposing building but will need painting before next year. Its gateway was looking quite patchy on the day and should be freshly painted. Dunamais Arts theatre is an attractive and well-used premises beside the Courthouse, which sported some unusual and ornate stonework on the day. The Bank of Ireland will need to paint its upper level before next year's competition. The Heritage Hotel was smartly presented on the day. The modern church was well presented, as was the Fire Station. Grattan Business Centre is an interesting modern timber building. The Methodist Church and grounds looked well and the charming train station was well presented and smart.

Landscaping:

The planting of new trees in parks and roadsides will pay dividends in years to come. The planting of the roundabouts was greatly admired. Particularly the Abbeyleix roundabout with its petunias and marigolds. Attractive planting at the Market Square created a feeling of welcome. Main Street sported some attractive displays to either end. The ESB Training Centre appeared to be attractively landscaped. The fine War Memorial and associated green space looked well. Attractive planting to railings along the Dublin Road created a positive impression.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The amenity park at Green Mill Lane is a fine asset to have in the town. You should furnish further details of this project for next year's competition.

Litter Control:

The standard in this category of the competition was quite good on the day given the busy nature of the town. A very light scattering was evident in places along the streets and on both the main approach roads at green spaces. More was evident on the street leading down to the Train Station, both along the street itself and to front gardens of houses. More was evident on Green Road. Your work with Gardai, Litter Wardens and PAL are highly commendable.

Waste Minimisation:

This category of the competition is more to do with segregation of waste, recycling and composting. Do read your Tidy Towns Handbook and Race Against Waste brochure for ideas for furthering this aspect of the competition. They have suggestions on the organisation of seminars on recycling and the holding of composting workshops etc.

Tidiness:

The town centre generally had a neat and ordered appearance on the day. There are a number of empty properties, which look quite unfortunate, and in contrast to the generally high standard of shop fronts, generally. A concrete wall leading from Railway Street to the Church Street car park looks a little unfortunate and even some creeper grown up it would make a difference to its appearance. There were two very weedy yard areas-one a private car park on Railway Street.

Residential Areas:

Street houses were generally well cared for on the day. Those on Railway Street were admired. The local Tidy Estates competition sounds like an excellent idea. Have you considered extending it to incorporate a Best Garden Competition? Cherrygarth is an attractively maintained estate as is Beechfield. Ivyleigh House is an attractive B&B, which contributes well to this category of the competition. An attractive rose garden to a corner house near Scoil Naomh Pol created a positive impression.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach from the main Cork-Dublin road on the Abbeyleix side of the town appeared to have some roadworks taking place on the day. It is an attractive and well-maintained one for the most part, with well cut grass verges and mature trees. Litter was apparent on grass verges, however. New paving to streets created a good impression, particularly for the retention of some original limestone features such as kerbing. Rear areas are being developed slowly but surely and were generally of a high standard.

General Impression:

It was a pleasure to visit Portlaoise and spend some time exploring its various attractions. It has developed a great deal in recent years and continues to progress strongly in the competition.