

# Tidy Towns Competition 2006

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Raheen** Ref: **165**  
County: **Laois** Mark: **193**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **28/07/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	27
The Built Environment	50	25
Landscaping	50	30
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	14
Litter Control	50	28
Waste Minimisation	20	0
Tidiness	30	12
Residential Areas	40	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>193</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

The adjudicator would like to welcome Raheen to the 2006 Tidy Towns Competition. Raheen is an attractive rural village with a Tidy Towns Committee of 15 people and this indicates good support for your work. The successful Tidy Towns Committees are those that succeed in harnessing the goodwill, skills and experience of a number of different groups and Agencies that have something to contribute to the implementation of the 3 Year Tidy Towns Plan. These groups and Agencies include the following –

- GAA
- Local Development Association
- FAS
- County Council
- LEADER Company
- The CLAR Programme (if you are in a CLAR designated area)
- Local school
- Urban & Village Renewal Grant Scheme

The adjudicator notes that a Tidy Towns Work Programme or Plan was not submitted for Raheen with the entry documentation. All towns and villages are required to have a simple straight forward 3 Year Tidy Towns Plan for their area. This Plan is prepared by your Committee in consultation with the appropriate local organisations. It should be no more than seven to ten pages long. The purpose of the Plan is to guide the work of your Tidy Towns Committee and others over the short to medium term. Your Plan should detail year by year the work that you intend to do each year. It is recommended that you do not have too many objectives each year – perhaps 4/5 key projects. The Entry Form did not provide a lot of detail on work that you have in hand, and the adjudicator had the feeling that much more work was taking place for Tidy Towns than appeared from the Entry Form.

### **The Built Environment:**

The future needs of the village were detailed in the Entry Form and these included speed limits, footpaths and new walls. The concrete wall between the old school wall and the stone wall would look better if plastered and painted. The old school was beautifully presented and the landscaping here blended well with the colour scheme used on this building. However the long partially painted building to the side of the old school needs to be fully painted. The Mass Rock is a central village feature and has been well designed and was well presented on adjudication day. The grey of the limestone here combined well with the colourful plants. Just the right level of planting had been provided here. The Eamon A Cnoic premises used a good choice of colours and again excellent landscaping was noted. The National School was a surprise for the adjudicator. How wonderful to see a modern design used in a rural area and the design does suit the site quite well. However the building and road boundary walls will need painting before the end of next year. The capping to the road boundary wall also needs to be painted. Excellent landscaping was a feature here. At the entrance to the GAA premises excellent colours were again noted and the nearby Dunnes premises that uses an earthy brown and white colour scheme caught the eye. Raheen is very good in terms of appropriate colour scheme use.

### **Landscaping:**

Good landscaping is a signature feature of Raheen and all the main public and many private buildings are excellently landscaped. The young trees at the village sign on the Abbeyleix approach road seemed to be developing well. Throughout Raheen the many flower tubs and window boxes add colour. At the Mass Rock the landscaping was especially effective. The planting at the cemetery entrance combined well with the freshly painted entrance walls to give a great impression overall. The landscaping at the school has matured well.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

It is important that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine further the wildlife potential of Raheen, and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly.

If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat survey carried out of the wildlife in the Raheen area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following –

- Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
- Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds, reed marsh, bogs
- Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
- Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to the Raheen area. This need not be an expensive survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable person locally who might undertake this task for you. Basically the survey would identify the animals, plants, birds, fish that inhabit your area and their associated habitats. It should be remembered that to carry out the survey properly that it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different time of the year.

Using the results of the wildlife survey your next step should be do draft a straight forward Plan for Raheen to preserve the identified habitats in your area, and investigate the possibility of new ones. For example perhaps there is an old Pond in your area that is disused, but with a little work could be an important area for wildfowl. It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many Schools there is probably a teacher who may have an interest in this area who would be willing to get involved. As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof display panels, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland.

### **Litter Control:**

Litter control was good on adjudication day in the main village area. However litter was noted on Church Lane and occasionally in the centre of the village. The twice weekly loiter pick-ups are obviously effective. The screening of the Recycling Centre mentioned in the 2005 Report appeared to be absent on the day of adjudication this year.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

This is a new category in the Tidy Towns Competition introduced in 2006. The purpose of this new category is to encourage Tidy Towns Committees and the community that they support to get involved in projects that

will reduce waste and encourage recycling. Marks can be gained by Raheen for the promotion of best practice. This can include community guidance on methods of reducing waste, segregating litter during clean up events. You could also consider a partnership with local firms and businesses to encourage them to reduce unnecessary waste.

**Tidiness:**

A black pole was noted near the Raheen sign on both sides of the village that did not appear to serve any real purpose. The old school gate needed to be repainted as did the gate of the old church. Occasional weed growth was noted.

**Residential Areas:**

Private houses were well presented and many properties appeared to have been freshly painted. In most cases landscaping complemented the house. Well done to all the residents who obviously take so much pride in their village.

**Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The attractive village name stone at both main village approaches looked really well and appeared to have been installed quite recently. Footpaths are urgently needed for the village and that would make a significant difference to the overall appearance of the village. On the Mountrath approach to the village the verge on the left hand side needed work. Church Lane was really quite untidy and a lot of work is needed here especially at the entrance area near the Bring Centre.

**General Impression:**

Excellent work has been done by the Raheen community in the presentation of their village. The adjudicator wishes you well in your various projects for 2007.