

# Tidy Towns Competition 2006

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Rathdowney** Ref: **789**  
County: **Laois** Mark: **218**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **28/07/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	30
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	28
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25
Litter Control	50	18
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27
General Impression	10	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>218</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

The adjudicator would like to welcome Rathdowney to the 2006 Tidy Towns Competition. The back-up documentation that you supplied was comprehensive and the photographs, press cuttings and other papers were most interesting and helpful on adjudication day. Your committee of five is quite small for a busy town. The press cuttings were very interesting and it is great that you get such good coverage for your Tidy Towns work. Hopefully Rathdowney will do well in the Pride of Place Competition in August. You are a most welcome re-entrant to the Tidy Towns Competition.

### **The Built Environment:**

Rathdowney has a very interesting collection of buildings representing different architectural periods. The colour of the Garda Barracks is a very brave one that works excellently in this location. The Ryan Solicitors building has interesting ground floor door and window detailing. The Teagasc building caught the eye as being very well presented. Rathdowney also has some interesting shop-fronts and those include the O'Flynn's Medical Store and Richard Williams & Son. The iron work on the latter premises is interesting as is the shopfront built out onto the pavement area. The Granite of the Catholic Church has a lovely warm texture and the boundary wall and freshly painted railings here set off the building effectively. At Landscape Products Ltd the long grass at the roadside fencing needed some attention. On the approach from Ballycolla the side walls of the St. Fergal's College property are in need of repainting as is the small gate at the roadside and the barriers here. The Church of Ireland church is wonderfully located and the landscaping here together with the building was beautifully presented. The Square is of course the focus of the built environment in Rathdowney and it is an effective area that did not appear to be too overpowered by parked cars.

### **Landscaping:**

The many window boxes and hanging baskets add colour to the built environment and approach roads. At the

Square the landscaping here has matured well and the many window boxes and flower tubs along the residential side of the square were very much admired. On the way into the SuperValu car park the landscaping on the left has matured well and softens the retaining wall here. The planting of Whitethorn and Sycamore trees on the Ballycolla approach is an excellent investment in the future presentation of this road.

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

The river cleaning at Meadow Meats has been noted and also your work on the Pond. On adjudication day the presentation of the Pond was extremely poor with stagnant water and much litter in many locations in the Pond. What a poor impression for visitors to Rathdowney despite your good work on the clearing of some areas of the Pond to facilitate wildlife. The small stream that feeds the Pond along Mill Street was also badly littered and quite unattractive. Have you considered having a survey carried out of the wildlife of the Rathdowney area?

#### **Litter Control:**

On adjudication day litter control in Rathdowney was extremely poor and this represents a major challenge for the Tidy Towns Committee. Litter was noted at the entrance to the Dunnes / Rathdowney Designer Outlet complex, on the Johnstown approach and outside the Catholic Church. Other problem areas included the Boys National School, and the Borris-In-Ossory approach road. The condition of the Pond and the feeding stream has been mentioned above. Much casual litter was also noted along the main street.

#### **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 Rathdowney 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. Your comprehensive survey work on waste generation in Rathdowney is commended and the initial results of the survey are very interesting. Congratulations to the two schools that have achieved Green School status.

#### **Tidiness:**

An untidy area was noted across the road from the Catholic Church a little way along towards the town centre. This area had very long grass, weeds and litter. At the sports field on the Ballycolla road the long grass was coming over the top of the stone wall and needs attention. Bad weed growth was noted at Condon's Bridge. On this approach dead weeds were noted at the base of the attractive limestone walls before Condon's Bridge. On the right hand side on the approach to the SuperValu car park an untidy area was noted partially enclosed with timber fencing. On the pathway down to the SuperValu car park the hedging needs to be trimmed back from the pathway that it partially blocks. Some weed growth was noted in the cobble loc\k paving in the Square. The old petrol pumps at the bottom of the Square might be removed by the owner as they are now quite untidy. Watch out for some untidy narrow openings off the main street. The adjudicator is not in favour of the display of retail goods on the pavement as was noted here. Apart from looking rather untidy such displays can cause major difficulties for people in wheelchairs or the visually disabled.

#### **Residential Areas:**

Residential areas both housing estates and individual properties were quite well presented in Rathdowney. In many cases good landscaping added the finishing touch to a well painted property. Excellent private house presentations were noted in the Square. Good colour choice complimented by very colourful plants and shrubs created a very attractive presentation. Well done to all the residents involved in Rathdowney.

#### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The Errill approach road looked quite well and the residents here have done good work on the verges and roadside banks. The Verges in contrast on the Borris-In-Ossory road were very poorly presented and did not appear to have been worked on recently. The Johnstown approach road was quite well presented and tidy. On the Ballycolla the long grass inside the timber posts had not been cut; perhaps this was not cut deliberately to facilitate wildlife?

#### **General Impression:**

Rathdowney is an interesting town with attractive buildings and the adjudicator wishes you well with your 2006 plans.

