

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Knockbridge** Ref: **497**
County: **Louth** Mark: **286**
Category: **B** Date(s): **06/06/2006**
09/08/2006

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	46
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	31
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	286

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations on your Three Year Plan. It shows much painstaking research and more than adequately covers any possible developments and improvements that can be envisaged. (What is missing from it is that specific years are not targeted for the completion of this or that project – for example “2006 plant bulbs at Stephenstown” - “2007 enhance area at community centre” such annual targeting can be very helpful in creating a specific timescale and create an urgency to get work done! But more importantly it can mean that all projects do not go full steam at the same time, something that has caused exhaustion in some other centres.) However from your record in the past, what ever way it is done it is certain that Knockbridge will come up with the right answers in the end. Thank you for filling in the questionnaire so adequately – not all committees do – and it helps to guide the judges fully and fairly.

The Built Environment:

As last year, the principal buildings were very well presented – among them the handsome church with its superb stained glass, Wolfe Tone Hall with its swathes of Virginia creeper and disabled access, Brodigan's with its unusually attractive green paint, the tidy school.

Landscaping:

Landscaping at Ballinlough Cottages always comes as a pleasant surprise at this distance from the village. Elsewhere, the lawn and imaginative arrangement of raised flowerbeds at Lisheen – with catmint and roses flourishing side by side at the time of the visit – impressed; at Lisroland the excellently maintained public spaces with clusters of evergreens that will create interest during the winter months was evidence of an immense amount of work; the Tourist Information sign was outstandingly well presented with the floral display surrounding it; and there were colourful window boxes, hanging baskets and tubs at a number of salient points. It is very useful to know that you propagate your own flowers: congratulations on this initiative.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Under the former marking system you had reached the top mark attainable under this heading – probably the only centre in the country to do so. Under the new system you are already making an inroad. Stephenstown Pond is of course the chief reason for this. It is interesting to note from your entry form that the Gun Club is responsible for hatching and rearing the ducks – and perhaps other aquatic birds? – another impressive initiative. Your bird-box provision has also been favourably noted.

Litter Control:

This seemed to be even better than last year. The co-ordination of the various groups who help is a key to this achievement and it is very encouraging to learn that transition year students are very active. There was very little disposable litter in the village at the time of judging, and also at Stephenstown.

Waste Minimisation:

It is interesting to read that you participated in the Stem management systems, receiving certification for community-led village development in particular. The adjudicator apologises for failing to note if he saw a bring bank facility in the village, and assumes that he did, so credit has been given.

Tidiness:

Allowance was made for extensive roadworks outside a new estate. The wall at the cross-roads on the Stephenstown side was in need of freshening up with whitewash this year. The massive walls of the Grain Store badly needed something similar. The eight large notices of instructions at the beautiful entrance to the Burns Cottage and Stephenstown Pond give a somewhat unwelcoming effect because there are so many of them – the visitor feels guilty of infringing several rules! – could not all the instructions and warnings be included in bold lettering on one, or at most two, boards? The entrance to the GAA was unusually weedy, though the boundary hedges were well kept. Apart from the above, fairly minor, points, Knockbridge gives a good impression as a tidy village.

Residential Areas:

Older houses in the village are well maintained and create the essential residential core. Ballinlough cottages were looking very well on the date of adjudication. Lisroland estate is superbly maintained; this suburban-type development is far enough removed from the village not to accord ill with the existing traditional buildings; this was the best kept estate seen this year in three counties.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Surfaces of the main roads were excellent, and road-markings clear. This adjudicator had not been in Knockbridge since the Carrickmacross road was improved, and it is now splendid! New paving was favourable noted. It is essential that traffic calming measures be provided for the Dundalk road: you should not let up on your approaches to the local authority.

General Impression:

Nine is a very high mark for this small but important section. If you successfully follow the proposals in your Development Plan you will without doubt add to your marking in all the above categories. Best wishes in your fine endeavours.

Second Round Adjudication:

The second round adjudicator like the first round adjudicator commends you highly for your approach to the planning of your various Tidy Towns tasks and projects. The 3 Year Plan is a model of how such plans should be prepared – simply presented with clear realistic objectives - and the very high score awarded here is well deserved. However please note the comments of the first round adjudicator re annual targeting. The Lisroland estate was looking quite stunning on the day of the 2nd round adjudication. This large estate has achieved quite a uniform level of presentation throughout in landscaping and individual property presentation terms. Grass areas here are superbly presented and carefully thought out tree planting in the past is now providing an excellent backdrop to this attractive estate. It is noteworthy that on the approach roads you have taken the area for Tidy Towns purposes out some distance from the village centre. The well presented lush grass verges on the Blackrock approach were admired but some weed growth was noted where the pavement surface meets the roadside kerbing and also between kerbing and the road surface before the Stephenson Pond area. On the approach from Louth village worn verge areas needed attention. Throughout the village the raised flower beds and the stone flower holders bring much colour just where it is needed for example at the entrance steps to the church. The Stephenson Pond area is a model of how such areas can be developed for the benefit of both wildlife and visitors to the area. The adjudicator visited this area some time ago and the

excellent standard of presentation has been maintained. On the day of this visit just a little litter was noted in the church car park in the area of the information signage and on the Blackrock road. Congratulations on your achievements to date and we look forward to seeing your 2007 projects next year.