

# Tidy Towns Competition 2006

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Ferbane** Ref: **621**  
County: **Offaly** Mark: **227**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **07/07/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	33
The Built Environment	50	32
Landscaping	50	31
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20
Litter Control	50	28
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	13
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	8
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>227</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Thank you for submitting a very comprehensive entry form, supplemented by an excellent review and future plan document, which details the progress and suggested actions.

The addition of a map was a great help to the adjudicator to identify areas that may be only known to locals. Your achievements for 2005 have been noted during the course of the adjudicating process so well done to all concerned.

It is very encouraging to see such commitment and unity of purpose on the part of the wider community in Ferbane.

The level of interaction between the committee, local authority, internal residents associations and other relevant agencies is very good and the involvement in the local CE scheme has delivered the practical benefits.

The involvement of local businesses in the sponsoring of different initiatives is laudable, ie hanging baskets, and proves that your efforts are being recognised.

### **The Built Environment:**

The core area of the town has improved since this adjudicator last visited some years back, quite a number of premises had been refurbished and a few derelict places were transformed.

Hennessey's Pub is now a candidate for consideration for shop front of the year, what a transformation in a few years

The problem with through traffic and street car parking has been somewhat alleviated with the addition of the pedestrian lights directly across from the Super Valu Carpark. The new link road to Belmont incorporating the one-way system into the centre from that direction is a big plus.

There are a number of new parking areas noted as well.

The town premises have been transformed by the colour scheme applied from late 2001. The RC Church and surrounding area was in very good condition as were the national schools Scoil Mhuire and Boys National. St Mary's Hall, which seems if it has been further refurbished, is a top class community amenity. The Gallen Community School was very presentable and a credit to those who are responsible for its upkeep. The new amenity area at the bridge is a worthwhile addition as it serves as a relaxing point for the visitor and local alike. The GAA Club Ground on the Aughnaboy Road, impressive in size, it is also kept very well. There were many examples of well-presented business premises and indeed private dwellings but it would be unfair to single out individuals as most owners have made good improvements as outlined in your submission. One or two additional shop fronts have been submitted as entries for shop front awards. There are still problems with dereliction and it is hoped that your involvement with Offaly County Council will see some movement on some of these sites as they are very much out of step with the progress that has been made in the town.

### **Landscaping:**

The content and variety of planting arrangements were excellent, and as can be seen from the plan a great deal of thought has gone into the planning in this category. A good example was the shrub bed at the main car park near fire station where there was a mix of well-tended shrubs and roses. The main street has been revitalised with a colourful display of attractive hanging baskets. The entrances have been enhanced by prudent planting arrangements. The identification of new sites for tree planting will be a welcome addition as trees are the most important plants in any urban setting. There were many fine examples of individual gardens that caught the eye and it is noted that Aughaboy Cottage is still providing colour on the Ballycumber Road.

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

The Committee has set an example that other centres might follow in actually organising a wildlife audit that will lead to a separate strategic plan under this category alone. The fact that you have such natural habitats as the banks of the Brosna and a long and traditional association with the peat lands, gives the town that slight advantage over many other centres. The creations of walkways would be an excellent way to explore areas of both historical and folk interest. One looks forward to some leisure walking in Ferbane in years ahead DV.

### **Litter Control:**

Litter control was quite good but it is still very important to spread the gospel to young and old of the importance of being responsible for one's litter and to dispose of it in a proper manner. Note that there was a little litter seen at the green area of, the otherwise very well-maintained, Devlin Park.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

The Ferbane Business Litter Code 2001 is a worthwhile initiative in this new category and is in keeping with the objectives of the Race Against Waste Management programme that promotes good waste management. The participation of both primary and secondary schools in projects that relate to better awareness of good waste management practice is a progressive step. This will get the message across to pupils at an impressionable age in their lives.

### **Tidiness:**

Ferbane is similar to many other villages and towns in Ireland at the moment, as it is seeing the effects of "progress" in the form of a multitude of housing developments and individual house building. This activity leads to messy site areas, slowness in completion of additional work such as landscaping and boundary fencing, when the actual developments are complete. There is very little that any committee can do in these circumstances except encourage full completion. Your proposal to re-locate recycling containers from such a focal location is welcomed, as they do not associate with such a fine building at all. Overall the standard was quite good, with the few usual exceptions that one finds everywhere. As stated earlier all one can do is encourage owners to come into line with everybody else. Shops and other commercial premises should be encouraged to minimise the amount of fly posting which is

becoming a national past time.

### **Residential Areas:**

The standard in this category was very good, and the fact that the committee has developed strong links with residents has helped in this regard.

It is hard to imagine that Ferbane has now 8 recognised residents associations.

St Cynocs, Gallen View and Devlin Park were in very good condition, and it was noticeable that boundary walls and surrounding areas were all maintained to a very acceptable standard.

The involvement of residents associations has been critical to the improvement of such boundary walls and communal areas

This adjudicator had not visited Moyclare or Knockaulin Drive previously and was pleasantly surprised at the general appearance. The name stone for Knockaulin Drive on the main street needs to be re sandblasted, as it is slightly illegible as it stands.

In actual fact there are number other stone name stones that could benefit from the same treatment.

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

The volume of traffic that flows through the town has increased dramatically in the last few years, hasn't it everywhere.

The road surfaces have been improved to cater for this and traffic calming has been put in place where required.

The big improvement that this adjudicator observed is the provision of a new circular road that leads out to Belmont and alleviates congestion in the center of the town.

This road is enhanced by excellent stonewalls but the siting of caravans should be stopped before it becomes an issue.

The signs were clear and visible and these were complemented by planting arrangements at appropriate sections.

The base of the boundary wall on the right going out the Athlone Road needs to be cleaned of unsightly decayed weed growth.

### **General Impression:**

It was good to come back to Ferbane after a number of years absence and see the improvements.

Last years adjudicator mentioned that that further improvements should occur in 2005 and these certainly did happen and were taken into account.

Keep up the good work and good luck with the further implementation of your plan.