

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Geashill** Ref: **754**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **271**
Category: **B** Date(s): **19/06/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	271

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your completed application form, 5 year plan, indexed sketch map and other supplementary material in support of this year's application.

Your 5 year plan alludes to the fact that you are "fortunate to live in a distinctive village with a unique heritage" and I very much empathise with that sentiment and indeed I would go further and say that any us that come from small rural villages are indeed fortunate full stop as each has its own distinctiveness. My wish is that they stay unique and that any developments that take place are in harmony with what already exists. Unfortunatley this term progress at time tends not to be respectful of heritage.

It is good to note that that your objectives are measurable, achievable and not just aspirational and you are wished well for the future.

I have to admit that it was my first visit to Geashill and it certainly will not be my last.

It has taken a lot of drive and effort to achieve the level in the competition that you are at.

This effort will need to sustained to bring you to your ultimate goal.

Your are very fortunate also that the vast majority of local residents are very supportive of your work programme.

The interaction between the County Council and your committee must be paying dividends in that the Village is being considered for a village renewal scheme.

On a much more practical level the Mountmellick Road was being resurfaced on the day

The Built Environment:

The restored Old School and its excellent grounds are complemented by the modern as the existing School is so well maintained.

The Commercial properties in the village have made the effort to encompass both the modern and traditional

in an inobtrusive way – the half door in Carruthers Bar is not seen too often these days.
The road surfaces, already alluded to, add to look of the village and the traffic calming on the Tullamore Road has not unduly impinged on the general appeal of Geashill.
The standard of presentation of the private residences, surrounding back areas and front gardens was near excellent. It is unfair to single out any premises but the Thatch Cottage on the Mountmellick Road with its wondrous garden and most unique copper beech hedging has to be commented upon.
Notice was taken of planning permission, on what would be considered as prime agricultural land, for 15 houses. One hopes that the planning authorities have made it clear to the developer that any thing built is in keeping with what is already in place.

Landscaping:

The planting schemes all around the village have been carefully planned. Examples abound but the arrangement at the picnic area (Edenderry Mountmellick Road signs) is particularly appealing.
The hanging basket and planters contain very lush petunias, begonias offset by cineraria.
The public landscaping and planting schemes are equally matched by the beautiful individual gardens that were observed.
The trees planted on the Portarlinton Road are well protected which is conducive to healthy and accelerated growth.
The trees at St Oliver's Terrace will mature over time and it is important to indicate to the children that they need to respect the trees.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your initiatives in this category are very forward thinking and elements such as wheel chair access to the Glebe show commitment to inclusivity.
The idea of tree identification labels in 3 languages is very worthwhile but it all goes back to support from the community as it takes various forms of resources to provide these type of facilities. If that support were not there these things would not be able to be put in place.
Count your selves lucky that you have such a giving community.
Continuation of the progress being undertaken in this category, as well as possible increase in marks, will see a legacy for future generations in Geashill.

Litter Control:

There was very little litter evident on the day except for a few stray wrappers and this was a Monday morning after the weekend.
The bins were well appointed at appropriate points in the village.
The ongoing work by the Committee in promoting the message of good litter control is paying off. It is good to see individuals take it upon themselves to pick up litter as was witnessed on the day. Maybe they suspected what my mission was, and in a small village very little is missed.
Keep up the ongoing excellent work.

Waste Minimisation:

Four excellent initiatives noted in this category especially the agreement with Glanbia to purchase Village Composting Equipment.
That coupled with the Green Schools will foster the Race Against Waste reduce re use culture amongst the younger generation.

Tidiness:

Surprising a number of signs were dirty and need to be cleaned particularly the Mountmellick N80 and the Edenderry R402 at picnic area. Another wee chore for Offaly County Council.
Some of the bins need to be up dated in keeping with the tidy image of the village.
One or two seats at the focal picnic area also need to be painted or treated with wood treatment.
The Traffic Calming area will slow traffic down and make it safer for villagers and visitors who are not aware coming from other directions.
Finally the Memorial to Rev Thomas Burbage needs to be sand blasted to improve its appearance – after all it commemorates a man synonymous with the history of Geashill.

Residential Areas:

The St Oliver's Terrace residents deserve special commendation for the way that they have presented the estate.

The traditional street houses are a joy to behold and the newer individual ones especially on the Daingean Road will in time become "settled" and integrate well with the rest of the village.

Just to reiterate on what was stated in a previous section that the proposed development on the Mountmellick Road be in keeping with the rest of the village.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

While the main entrances were good surface wise some of the link roads were a little rough.

In actual fact the area around the Green could be re surfaced and as there was road surfacing taking place on adjudication day this area should have been included in the schedule.

The Traffic calming and additional infrastructure that goes with it will make a huge difference to Tullamore entrance.

General Impression:

It has been a pleasure to visit Geashill for the first time and I have some pleasant photographs to remind me to re visit sooner rather than later.

The amount of local cooperation that has gone into making the Village such an attractive place to live in and visit has been immense.

It proves that hidden Ireland often offers more to the visitor in terms of tranquility and history than mainstream destinations.

Good wishes to all for the future