

# Tidy Towns Competition 2006

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Walsh Island** Ref: **292**  
County: **Offaly** Mark: **236**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **05/07/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	32
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	38
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>236</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Thank you for the completed application form and basic sketch map. It was good to return to Walsh Island after an absence of over 15 years and to see that it is in the process of what is major change for such a small rural village and the home of some of the greatest Gaelic footballers that the country ever produced. It was very noticeable that there is concern about the level of housing development that is taking place at the moment. Hopefully the proper balance will be achieved. The Committee has developed good links with the County Council and the Oak Partnership and these are obviously paying off as there are positive things that have happened in the Village as a result. Good to note also that support from the local community is forthcoming.

Keep up the positive approach and the improvements will be seen each year.

### **The Built Environment:**

The Church its grounds and the graveyard across the road are a credit to the parishioners of Walsh Island. The School, showing its support for Walsh Island, was in good condition and the boundary wall was painted on foot of comments made in last years report. The Forge has been retained and the immediate area in front nicely landscaped, it is good to see this association with past village life being recognised. The Shamrocks GAA ground was in very good condition. Both retail premises were acceptable but both might consider putting more traditional type name signs in place.

### **Landscaping:**

There were some excellent planting combinations to be viewed as one enters the village from all sides. The green areas adjoining these beds were being cut and cleaned on the day of adjudication. The landscaping at Church View had the ideal mix of low maintenance shrubs and perennials and was treated with respect. The Committee should consider getting advice from an independent source within Offaly County Council on how

best to supplement the existing schemes with appropriate additional ones that will complement new housing developments when they are fully complete. To do this the Committee will also have to engage with the developers and get their input as well.

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

The sites highlighted for wild life habitats were observed. It would be very worthwhile long term if the School became involved in generating some ideas that would encourage wildlife appreciation. Again it might be worth consulting with a local wildlife expert on how best to develop ideas and put them into practice. Something simple like design and location of notice board with fauna and flora of the area depicted.

#### **Litter Control:**

The litter control was very good considering all the disruption that has been taking place in the village. Keep up the awareness campaign via the local newsletter and through the school.

#### **Waste Minimisation:**

The Bottle and Can bring Centre at the school is well managed and good that it is located where children can become aware of the need to recycle waste material. There are other initiatives under the Race Against Waste programme that could be undertaken by communities such as yours. It is worth consulting the publication included as part of the original application package or maybe organising a talk to be given to interested parties by the County Environmental Officer.

#### **Tidiness:**

The village and its surrounds was basically quite tidy, very little weed growth or residue from farm related activities to be seen at roadsides. The Handball Alley looks as if it has been out of use for some time and wasn't in the best of condition. Most back areas observed were fine and owners are making genuine efforts to keep places tidy. The amount of building development taking place has left the core area of the village untidy and road surfaces have been affected as a result. In time, when all this building is complete, the road surfaces will be re done and the village will be back a "new" normality.

#### **Residential Areas:**

There is a nice new development on the road out to Clonbullogue? (directly perpendicular to the forge) which is well maintained. The well established Church View had properties presented to a high standard with one or two exceptions and the green area had been cut and the shrub and plant bed well tended to. The other newer developments are in various stages of work in progress and certainly will change the streetscape of Walsh Island when completed.

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

The entrances were acceptable but some road surfaces not in the best of condition. The Village is growing and new footpaths will make the peripheries more accessible. The verges and edges were well tended and the name signs visible and clear. For a total stranger there is a difficulty in finding the village off main roads, so maybe the Offaly County Council might examine the situation and come up with a solution.

#### **General Impression:**

The Village is developing fast but still it maintains its isolation even though it's only a few miles off a number of core roads. When new residents move into the village both the surfaces and the signposting will have to be improved. New residents also mean new potential recruits to associations such as Tidy Towns. Overall a good performance and the Committee of eight people is encouraged to keep up its good work.