

Tidy Towns Competition 2006

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Strokestown** Ref: **715**
County: **Roscommon** Mark: **169**
Category: **B** Date(s): **30/06/2006**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2006
Overall Development Approach	50	30
The Built Environment	50	22
Landscaping	50	22
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15
Litter Control	50	16
Waste Minimisation	20	0
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	16
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	169

Overall Development Approach:

The committee of six members is a small group for such a big town and it would be worthwhile having a recruitment campaign at this stage to get new members. From the large amount of new housing in the town it would be very encouraging to get members representing this group. There is much work to be done in and around the town to take it to the standards that are fitting a town of this nature. The backbone of the town appears to be the Main Street with the intersection at the roundabout of Bridge Street and Elphin Street. Much work has been done on the Main Street in terms of resurfacing, elimination of overhead cables and the provision of the attractive lamp standards. A plan of action is needed setting out the priorities for development from here on. This should involve input from all sectors of the community including public bodies and a comprehensive step by step, year by year plan drawn up. This could then be used as a yardstick to measure achievement each year.

The Built Environment:

There are a number of fine buildings in the town such as the Library, Bank of Ireland buildings and the pink building beside this. The Heritage Centre and the Catholic Church look well. The schools are in good condition. There are a very large number of premises that need attention to paint and décor and it is a pity to see such when the framework of the streets are well formed with the improvements over the years. A listing street by street of all buildings that need attention could be made – these could be placed in categories and a programme of encouragement and persuasion adopted to try and make progress. Simple improvements like the removal of grass weeds from the gutters of the premises on Bridge Street close to the roundabout or the cleaning and painting of so many sites would be helpful. The area at Walshes Mushrooms deserves attention. The entrance and boundary to the truck depot below the Maxol station on Bridges street is unsightly and the wire fence is covered with bindweed. There are some very well tended premises it goes without saying and great credit is due to those who keep their premises in tiptop condition. The stone fronted buildings of the

Percy French premises and the stone building on the opposite side of the street are attractive as are the well painted premises. The entrance to Strokestown house is impressive at the end of the town. The gates of this need attention to painting

Landscaping:

The trees through the Main Street are very impressive and are progressing very well. The surrounds give a good definition. Some of the circles are planted and most are not. There is a proposal in the entry form that these would be planted up. One has unsightly white plastic fence surrounding it. The width of the street is so broad that even a second line of trees could be accommodated – on the other hand when these trees reach their full maturity they will occupy a considerable amount of space. The roundabout could have more impressive planting as it occupies such a central spot. The grass at the Heritage Centre has been recently cut and all the dead grass remains in position. The tree stump is not really serving any purpose there nor is the similar stump on the other side of the road. Individual gardens along the approach roads contribute well to the overall landscape of the town by their efforts with their road frontage gardens. The many containerised plantings also add well to the summer colour of the town.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Heritage trail through the town is a good idea as is the idea of providing seats at the various locations of the trail. The Sli na Slainte is also welcome and a plaque about this was noted near the Heritage Centre. Ways of providing wildlife and natural environment appreciation would be very welcome. The Strokestown house grounds and garden is a marvelous asset to have in the town. The small river at the Bridge street area could be cleaned and made into an interesting feature. It would be wise to consult the tidy towns handbook in this regard

Litter Control:

The litter control system seems to be working reasonably well although as mentioned in the entry form a litter collection every Saturday morning may not be adequate – perhaps this in addition to normal cleaning of the streets. The area by the entrance gates of Strokestown House was badly littered on the visit. It would be wise to have vigorous campaigns aimed at all strands of the community to get a good attitude towards litter removal

Waste Minimisation:

There is no evidence of activity in this section in your entry form. This aspect of the competition is about concentrating both on the need to choose materials and methods that avoid producing waste and to consider environmentally friendly ways of dealing with the waste that is generated. A campaign of awareness with both homeowners and business people needs to be started to give an understanding of the importance of waste management and recycling. Compost heaps can be made for green materials, avoidance of using materials that do not degrade easily and separation of the various materials so that they can be recycled.

Tidiness:

The Main Street looks particularly tidy with the well defined lines of trees, their circles beneath and the well surfaced road surface. There are many protruding plastic signs at shops especially on the Bridge Street area, mostly these are not necessary and it would be an improvement if most of them were removed. The weeds growing around the entrance to the Strokestown House take a little from this grand entrance. The broken footpaths and difficulties with signage are well known to the committee and hopefully your efforts with the council will result in a positive action.

Residential Areas:

The amazing building boom has hit many towns as it has Strokestown leaving much disruption in its wake. Hopefully when the dust settles a comprehensive approach can be made to amalgamate the new building developments into the town and surrounds. Many of the estates need proper finishing off with appropriate landscaping and roadways completed. The Forge Hill development for instance on Elphin Street is very unfinished at the entrance and yet some of the houses seem to be occupied. The development at the Maples has good entry and grass laid at the entrance and the estate on the opposite side of the road appears raw. The tidy towns committee should keep a watchful eye on all planning applications to be in a position to object or request modifications if the plan would do damage to the fabric of the town. When buildings are complete they should be watched to see if all the finishing work is completed before the developers vacate the site. Many of the older estates look well. Single houses on the approach roads also look well.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Elphin Street area has very severely damaged road surfaces with holes and broken footpaths, The Main

Street has a beautiful surface. The approach roads are well tended with good grass verges and hedgerows consistent with the natural countryside.

General Impression:

Strokestown is going through a major transition with all the new building developments. While this is so, it is not a reason to abandon efforts to improve the many older premises within the town to bring them to a high standard that befits the town. The circular road development will give a further impetus to stimulate interest in the town centre.