

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathanna** Ref: **44**
County: **Carlow** Mark: **246**
Category: **A** Date(s): **23/06/2007**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2007 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 33 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 32 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 34 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 25 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 38 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 7 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 15 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 27 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 27 |
| General Impression | 10 | 8 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 246 |

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for entering Tidy Towns Competition 2007. Rathanna is indeed a beautiful village in a lovely corner of Carlow, attractive for its peacefulness and its traditional rural nature. We welcome and acknowledge the hard work of a small committee as you appear to be a very active small community. We note and are encouraged by your organising a theatre group, and several walking events in the lovely Blackstairs Mountains which form a backdrop to the village itself. We also support your endeavours for young people with the help of ADM supported CANDO. We are impressed with the suitability of the 3 year plan submitted. We also note that you are aided by Carlow County Council and the Heritage Council and LEADER.

Perhaps you should engage with the schools which serve the children from your catchment area, whether primary or secondary. These after all, are the volunteers of the future, and coming from such an environmentally good place as Rathanna, they would influence other students also.

Finally it would be a great help if you could mark all the places you refer to e.g. specific peoples' houses on your sketch plan. This also refers to references from your 3 year plan. The adjudicator was left to try to decipher where certain peoples' houses were that were referred to in both the report and your own submission! It would also be a good thing if you would submit an Ordnance Survey map for the village.

The Built Environment:

You have good vernacular buildings – houses and public houses in the village which you are obviously caring for. The stone walls of Carlow are famous, and you have these in abundance in this upland area. We would suggest that you continue to restore the stone walls as you are doing and respectfully suggest that you might consider rebuilding in dry stonewalling, which is traditional to this area, keeping alive a traditional and valuable

skill.. Another notable feature of the village and its immediate surrounds are field/garden gates. You are lucky to have such interesting features of the Built Environment. It would be important that future design, materials and finishes respected those already in the village. The other significant features are your bridges. Conserve them as part of your Built Environment. They do not need any extra embellishments, so we would respectfully suggest that you remove all hanging baskets and brackets from them. The adjudicator is pleased to see the retention of the old pub/shop front that is Osborne's, with its interesting old Irish signage. Encourage the owner to retain this, and not to insert PVC windows.

The new granite seating in the car park is very appropriate.

Landscaping:

You are to be greatly complimented on engaging the services of a knowledgeable botanist/landscaper to advise your group. You have obviously been listening to the advice, which will lead to landscaping which is appropriate for the area, and which will enhance your existing upland natural vegetation, but which will also be maintenance-friendly and attractive to wildlife. Your cutting back of the grass margins only to the narrow strip as recommended has been carefully followed.

The issue of attaching or not attaching hanging baskets to the bridges appears to be undecided by the group, as the baskets are still attached to the Kiltlealy bridge approach, although your expert recommended removal here. But perhaps you are intending doing this in the final year of your plan. Again in removing them be careful not to damage the fabric of the bridge, and obtain conservation advice before so doing.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your wildlife board is excellent. Would you consider moving your Wildlife Board to the car park opposite, where it could be read in more safety?

Perhaps walks could be established in the long term along the river bank, if rights of way and safety issues could be addressed. This would be a long term project, but would open up a private quiet space, and introduce the bridge which is only accessible from a ROW at the Kiltlealy approach (bend on the village side of the Kiltlealy Road)

Your commitment to Biodiversity is evident throughout your 3 year plan.

Litter Control:

Rathanna was extremely tidy on adjudication day. The Bring Bank area was spotless, and well maintained. It is easily accessible. The Bring Bank/car park area has, as a backdrop two farm building walls in private ownership. These are a credit to the owner, as both the stone walled single storey wall to the rear and the newer rendered wall forming the actual boundary of the car park are very well maintained indeed.

Waste Minimisation:

To perform to a high standard under this heading it is necessary too encourage all sectors of the community to survey the amount of waste generated by themselves and to formulate strategies to minimise the amount produced, as opposed to simply collecting waste for recycling. We anticipate a performance of excellence under this heading in the years to come given your track record to date in every other respect. The race against waste booklet included in this year's Tidy Towns pack contains a number of good ideas on this.

Tidiness:

Overall tidiness is very good. However there are one or two areas that might benefit from some attention. Firstly in the area near the Kiltlealy bridge approach the brackets for the redundant hanging baskets are crooked and half filled.

The incomplete house at this bridge here needs screening in the interim. You might encourage the owners to plant in advance of occupation, which will be of benefit to them as well as to you.

There is a single storey house as one approaches the village beyond the bridge at a bend with a very pleasant front curtilage. However its rear curtilage needs screening as it abuts the road. It is impossible to keep a rear curtilage completely pristine as we all have to dry clothes, store fuel etc, and this even more so in an agricultural area. Planting of suitable species would improve the view travelling in both directions.

Lastly but by no means least the wall facing the approach from the Borris side at Coady's pub could still do with repainting /touching up as it is a focal point of entry from the Borris approach road

Residential Areas:

Unlike so many towns and villages throughout the length and breadth of Ireland, Rathanna has been lucky to avoid the arrival of the suburban new housing estate development, which usually imparts an urban feel and little local awareness. It is obvious that there is a tradition of pride in one's land and property inherent in the local community, both within and adjacent to the village. This is passed on from generation to generation by good example and hard work. All properties almost without exception are well maintained, and it is a credit to you as a community that you can rely on such support.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The street is cared for, as are the approach roads.

Your signage is excellent, both Sli na Slainte, and your Wildlife Board.

See last paragraph in Tidiness above also. Eventually you will get around to under grounding your wirescape it is hoped when funds permit.

General Impression:

Rathanna is a beautiful village with tumbling streams throughout its length

The church porch is testimony to your endeavours...certificates for Litter League, Endeavour Award, Volunteer Award, Carlow Floral award etc. Well done!