

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Virginia** Ref: **58**
County: **Cavan** Mark: **214**
Category: **D** Date(s): **28/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	34
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	19
Litter Control	50	26
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	214

Overall Development Approach:

Virginia Development Association is one which shows a high level of pride in and commitment to their town, and rightly so! There was mention in last year's report of a work programme and the possibility of elaborating on it. Did you succeed in doing this? It will be a useful document for you to clarify your ideas and aims and also in order that the judges can see your goals. It will also be useful as a guide to show you (and the judges) how you have progressed over the years. Both maps were very clear and very useful on the day. You would appear to have a large committee which is to your advantage.

The Built Environment:

Public and commercial premises throughout the town looked well on the day. The magnificent Church of Ireland with its marvellous grounds and magnificent avenue of trees terminates the vista of Main Street beautifully. The old Catholic Church that forms the Ramor Theatre, forming the "bookend" at the other end of the street, also looked well. The striking modern Catholic Church, National School and grounds on the Bailieborough Road looked well. The Courthouse was admired in pink. There are a number of striking modern buildings in the town environs which act as a foil to the existing stock of buildings, such as the Credit Union in render and stone, the Health Centre at the other end of town, Virginia College (the plinth of the railings here was a little tatty at the waterside) and the Shopping Centre, tucked in off the Main Street. The lovely displays at Pergola Nurseries make a cheerful impression. The Chestnut Tree was quite fresh, as was James Mathews and the Woodbine Inn. The Riverfront Hotel sported some magnificent floral displays. Pauline's Flowers and Gifts was admired. The Mill Bar looked well, as did the Fortune Palace with its original sash windows above. The Fire Station and Library were quite fresh on the Bailieborough Road. Talks with local businesses about signage are a good idea.

Landscaping:

The Square outside the Church of Ireland had colourful displays and a cheerfully painted village pump. The boat at the Dublin end of the town made a cheerful welcoming display, as did the associated floral displays on the bridge. There are a number of relatively new trees at the top of Main Street, which will be a great inheritance for future generations and we note your plans for additional tree planting on the road to Ramor Lake. Hedging at the Ramor United GFC Club was admired. The gravelled beds to the front of the National School looked very well. Attractive planting to the banks of single storey stone cottages on this road was also admired. We look forward to seeing your new lamp standards. Planting at the new shopping centre should look well when matured.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You are indeed fortunate in being in such close proximity to the marvellous asset of the lake and with the wealth of mature trees in the town and its environs. We note that you re-entered last year after an absence of a number of years so this is a category, which is quite new to you. Have you considered organising a wildlife survey? You can get local experts and schoolchildren involved in drawing one up. Other towns have found it useful to create wildlife areas, wildflower meadows or even erecting wildlife information boards – the lake area would be an ideal location. Work that you have achieved at the Deerpark Forest area is to your credit and this looked well. The allocation of Green Spaces to the schools is another excellent idea. The proposed Heritage and Nature Trail is looked forward to next year. The proposals to open lakes, boglands and woodlands as centres of learning is another lovely idea.

Litter Control:

The standard of litter control on the day was very good. A little was evident on the Ballyjamesduff Road and on the Main Street near the junction with Ramor Lake Road. The daily pick ups are obviously paying off! There is a problem area in the circular stone feature at the Square, where quite a lot of rubbish has accumulated. We note your comments regarding new and fewer bins as a solution to this problem in general and look forward to hearing your findings. The litter warden's visits to schools is a good initiative.

Waste Minimisation:

There was some evidence of dumping at the Bring Banks in the Shopping Centre, as there was last year. We note your comments regarding these becoming more varied in their range of materials accepted. This category also relates to how you handle the issues of waste management. Do you compost the green materials that you accumulate in your landscaping work – grass cuttings, clippings, etc? Do you segregate the litter you collect in your pick-ups? It also relates to how you make the community in general more aware of these issues - schools, households and businesses. Does the school participate in the Green Flag initiative? Plans for a segregated bin on Main Street are a good idea.

Tidiness:

The town was generally quite neat and tidy. There were a few problem areas in regards to weed control, such as on the road to Ramor Lake. There is a rusty pole on Main Street which may have supported a sign at sometime. It should be removed. Discourage fly posting as this can give approach roads a rather cluttered appearance. A few outbuildings behind the courthouse were in need of attention.

Residential Areas:

Houses along approach roads were generally well cared for with attractive gardens – those along the Cavan Road being particularly admired. New housing estates such as Yew Park and the Drumlins were noted. The latter sported a stone and brick wall at the entrance leading in which made a good impression. The charming stone cottages with rustic columned porches were, as ever, admired. It was interesting to note that the barge-boards to the dormers were different in each one! Bell's Grove B&B contributed well in this category on the competition, as did the other houses in this row on the Cavan Road.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The road leading to Ramor Lake was a little potholed, as mentioned last year. We look forward to proposed improvements in this location. The Cavan Road is an attractive approach to the town with well maintained grass verges (though there were a couple of them which appeared quite brown - had they been sprayed with weed-killer?) and mature overhanging trees. The Dublin Road was not as well maintained and some verges were quite overgrown. There are a number of empty and overgrown sites along this road. The bridge and its displays have been mentioned elsewhere in this report. Some signage needed washing down such as the nameplate on the Cavan Road. Grass verges on the Bailieborough Road were a little overgrown. The pole of the children crossing sign was quite rusty. New pedestrian crossings were noted on Main Street and must make a real difference.

General Impression:

Virginia is an elegant and dignified town which never fails to impress. It looked delightful on the day.