

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathbarry** Ref: **689**
County: **Cork (West)** Mark: **292**
Category: **A** Date(s): **20/06/2007**
11/08/2007

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	47
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27
Litter Control	50	40
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	20
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	37
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	292

Overall Development Approach:

Rathbarry Tidy Towns have submitted a comprehensive plan for 2007 with clear, concise information and indeed an excellent map. The inclusion of photographs is of great benefit to the adjudicator and in particular congratulations is extended to the junior wing of your committee – they certainly seem to mean business!! Your continued association and support from the County Council, Coillte and the generous donation from Clonakilty Credit Union will become increasingly important as you progress further in the Competition. It has also been noted that you put some plans on hold due to the opportunity posed by the NeighbourWood scheme – this shows that you are taking a strategic long term view for Rathbarry and this is commended.

The Built Environment:

The Sprigging School looked impeccable, as usual, ensconced within the woodlands. The Shop and Post Office were also well presented. The red trim on the stone church was most effective but on further investigation the brown structure to its rear displayed chipped paintwork and moss. Throughout the village stonewalls were well maintained and you are commended on the repair work carried out during the year. O'Donovans Pub looked well however there was some staining on the gable wall that detracted from its overall appearance.

Landscaping:

Hanging baskets and window boxes were admired at O'Donovans. Similarly the Post Office displayed a nice splash of colour in the form of window boxes and indeed the grounds too, were impressive. Public landscaped area was well maintained with well-trimmed grassy areas and the rose beds and colourfully restored farm machinery were admired. It is a pity that you had to put your plans for the Black Gates on hold but hopefully the project will be well under way by 2008.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The listing and illustration of wildlife in the picnic area to the rear of the church was beautiful with ferns and foxgloves in abundance. A number of brightly painted birdhouses were also spotted. As mentioned previously you have a considerable large-scale plan for the woodland area that will on its completion be to the envy of all other participants. Again you are commended on taking a timely approach and it will surely be a fantastic amenity for residents and visitors alike.

Litter Control:

There was a piece of litter on the Clonakilty approach road besides this, Rathbarry was litter-free on the day of adjudication.

Waste Minimisation:

The recycling facility at Clonakilty is obviously of great assistance for the residents of Rathbarry. Perhaps you could consider developing your own composting initiatives in the future.

Tidiness:

In general Rathbarry is neat and tidy in its overall presentation. The new building development mentioned in your application undoubtedly detracts from the village and its completion should ultimately improve the appearance of Rathbarry. In addition to this please pay close attention to boundary walls with regard to cleanliness and weed control, as at this level in the competition every point gained or lost could prove crucial.

Residential Areas:

Modern and period residences alike in Rathbarry are exceptionally well maintained and there is an obvious pride of place in the village – and rightly so! Whilst Ceol na Mara was generally well presented staining on the boundary was noted.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Ardfield approach road was immaculate on the day of adjudication – the signage was clean and crisp, furniture was well maintained and thousands of fuchsia blooms bobbed in the breeze. Similarly the Rosscarbery road is well maintained with good signage. The grass in the graveyard was a little overgrown but the steps at the rear of the church were clean and in good condition. Unfortunately the well-signed Water Wheel was not working despite the torrential rain!!

General Impression:

Rathbarry is a beautiful village in an enviable woodland location that provides many opportunities. There are still a few crucial problem areas in the village and its environs the will need to be addressed if Rathbarry is to continue to progress to the highest level of this competition. However, your committee seem to have a realistic grasp on where the village is going and have set a realistic time frame to achieve this. Therefore there is no reason why Rathbarry won't progress to Gold Medal status and maybe even a National Title in the years to come – keep up the good work!!

Second Round Adjudication:

The second round adjudicator had only been to Rathbarry twice before, but had felt familiar with the village centre from good publicity which the town has received in programmes such as Nationwide, because of its regular success in the National Tidy Towns competition. The reality does not disappoint. Moreover what is the familiar image is only part of the story, as the immediate vicinity of the centre of the village is equally noteworthy. Well done to the people of Rathbarry for presenting their village in all its accomplishments so well to the rest of us!

The first introduction to the village one receives when travelling from Clonakilty is the first sighting of the exciting local style stone walls some distance outside the village. These were much admired. (Incidentally a parking space in this area might be helpful, as the first sighting of the walls is not in the best place for stopping!) We agree that the best way to approach this work is outwards from the centre. However the tendency to stop the minute you see these walls (at a further remove from the village) might suggest that you consider the aforementioned parking space in that location. We are delighted to hear that a grant is to be made available from the Urban and Village Renewal funds. Good luck with your commitment to continue to access funding for this very worthwhile project. We assume that you will have the excellent advice of the local authority's Conservation Officer on this work. Don't forget to paint your farm gates to show up the walls as well! Will it be possible to underground the power lines also in the vicinity of the restored walls in due course?

In general Rathbarry is extremely lucky to be surrounded by Coillte lands, and we are delighted that you are working so well with that body. It is by nature a lovely landscaped setting for a rural village, and this in its own way has prevented unseemly development in a straggle from the edges of the village outward, which is the fate of so many less lucky Irish villages. You have also been spared the rash of suburban development so invasive of the village character in all cases. But you have taken an interest in making sure that the development which happens is sympathetic to the surrounds.

The Church, Post Office, the Castlefreke Gate Lodge, O'Donovan's pub, and the Sprigging School all are very well maintained as are the houses in, and in the vicinity of the village. This adjudicator would like to see a ridge roof to match the old adjoining roof put on the Post Office in due course, as the general effect, though well intentioned looks a little pastiche-like! Milltown Bridge is a lovely strong structure, and you have resisted garnishing it with unnecessary adornments such as hanging baskets or inappropriate lights! Well done! The simple stone sign indicating the name of the river in Irish and English is tasteful and informative for a passer-by. The signage at the Post Office is also tasteful and appropriate to the design of the original building. Your old style telephone box was admired.

Landscaping is exceptional in its natural state in the village, and you have augmented this well in appropriate fashion. Your floral displays were admired in their vibrancy at the centre, particularly surrounding the directional signs and fronting the Post Office. These are complemented by the good private garden planting opposite. Indeed all gardens are using natural trees and shrubs to best effect, together with stone wall and hedge boundary treatment. Especially admired was the rear entrance area to the church - complete with landscaped car park – a hidden gem, with its lovely stepped area and hedging so neatly trimmed. The River Walk from the Sprigging School is a valuable asset. Looking at the photograph the adjudicator took from the bridge, one is reminded of a Monet painting such is the subtlety of the colour and texture in the landscaped area along the river! Don't overdo decoration of the wheel area. The ducks were in a pen on adjudication date. Presumably there is a good reason for this.

You have not tried to interpret Rathbarry with obtrusive signage which could engulf your small village, but have created instead an excellent website full of local interest and information. It also includes sensible information for walkers, and its "flitting" in and out of Irish is good, and does not exclude non - Gaelgóirs! Well done on your website! The Lake Walk is also a wonderful amenity, and your proximity to the sea is in your favour in many ways. The area around the entrance to the Lake Walk could do with resurfacing.

Thank you for such an easily read plan and map. It is very useful to an adjudicator to have a proper map supplied based on the Ordnance Survey map , and in your case you have gone to the trouble of submitting an updated version!

Your signage at the village centre has become synonymous with Rathbarry! There was no litter in evidence on adjudication day! Perhaps in the future you will be able to have your own "Bring Banks". And your potential for expansion in the Wildlife area is huge given your surrounds. One small note: It may be difficult for the stranger to find you as the name "Rathbarry" only appears in Irish on the O.S.Discovery map no. 89
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