

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathmichael** Ref: **1325**
County: **Dublin (Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown)** Mark: **191**
Category: **D** Date(s): **17/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	27
Landscaping	50	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15
Litter Control	50	23
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	24
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	191

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Rathmichael to the 2007 Tidy Towns Competition. Your participation is important to the competition. The adjudicator had never visited Rathmichael before and it is a most pleasant part of south County Dublin. It is suggested that at an early date that your Tidy Towns Committee considers the preparation of a simple 3 Year Tidy Towns Action Plan that would detail year by year the projects that you wish to undertake for Tidy Towns. When preparing the Plan it would be helpful to talk to any local organisations or agencies in the Rathmichael that may have an interest in the Competition.

The Built Environment:

The Church of Ireland church is a most beautiful building of interesting design in Wicklow Granite. It is recommended that weed growth and the kerbs in the church car park by the roadside receive early attention. The adjudicator is unaware whether Shankill Castle is in private or public ownership at this time. It would be interesting however if an information panel giving the history of the castle and the Rathmichael area could be provided perhaps at the Church of Ireland car park area.

Landscaping:

Little public landscaping was noted in the Rathmichael area though of course many private individuals have obviously made great efforts in this regard. Consideration might be given by the committee in consultation with the Local Authority in regard to the landscaping of the roundabouts in the area. Simple landscaping is usually the most effective and do remember that low maintenance landscaping is preferable.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

In many areas this is an aspect of the Tidy Towns Competition where there can be significant potential for development. All areas have the presence of wildlife to some degree. It is suggested that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine the wildlife potential of the Rathmichael area and see what you can achieve in terms of making your area even more wildlife friendly. The starting point is to have a habitat survey carried out of the wildlife in your area. Suggested habitats to be considered include the following –

Urban habitats – gardens, waste ground, walls, graveyards, hedges
Wetland habitats – rivers, ponds, lakes, canals, reed marsh, bogs
Woodland habitats – forests, hedgerows, plantations, parks
Grassland habitats – roadside verges, parks, wet meadows, dry grasslands

The survey should produce a species list for each of the habitats relevant to the Rathmichael area. This need not be an expensive survey. Perhaps there is a knowledgeable person locally who might undertake this task for you. Basically the survey would identify the animals plants and birds that inhabit your area and their associated habitats. It should be remembered that to carry out the survey properly that it will probably take a year so that all habitats can be assessed at different time of the year. Using the results of the wildlife survey your next step should be to draft a straight forward Plan to preserve the identified habitats in the Rathmichael area, and investigate the possibility of new ones. The grounds of the Church of Ireland church come to mind in this regard. Ultimately your objective is to encourage the existing wildlife to stay in your area and encourage new species to move in. This can only be done by creating an awareness of the feeding and shelter needs of the various species in the area. It is most important to try and involve your local school children in this project, and in many Schools there is probably a teacher who may have an interest in this area who would be willing to get involved. As part of the actions to be undertaken in your Wildlife Plan you might like to consider the provision of some weather proof display panels, illustrating and explaining the wildlife in your area. This has been done very successfully in many towns and villages in Ireland.

Litter Control:

Much litter was noted on Rathmichael Road, Ferndale Road and at Rathmichael Dale. Many Tidy Towns Committees find it most useful to organise a community litter clean up night a few times each summer and this is a great way of getting other members of your community involved in Tidy Towns.

Waste Minimisation:

This is a new category in the Tidy Towns Competition first introduced in 2006. The purpose of this new category is to encourage Tidy Towns Committees and the local community to get involved in projects that will reduce waste and encourage recycling. Marks can be gained for the promotion of best practice. This can include community guidance on methods of reducing waste such as segregating litter during clean up events. The organising of a Workshop on waste minimisation in the Rathmichael area is another initiative that you might consider. This could be held on a waste minimisation community awareness day as part of a series of local initiatives. Your local school or schools should also be involved with their own waste minimisation projects. In regard to waste minimisation it is important to remember that quite small actions can sometimes have a significant waste reduction impact. If you do not already have a Bring Bank Centre or if you have one that is not yet properly signposted from the town centre then such initiatives could gain additional marks for your centre in 2008.

Tidiness:

Rathmichael was generally found to be reasonably tidy on the day of the adjudication visit but there were problem areas. Many of the road name signs need to be cleaned such as those for Lordello Road. Graffiti was noted on the flyover in various locations. An untidy area on the left along Rathmichael Road just after the flyover needed attention.

Residential Areas:

Ferndale Glen was excellently presented with fine Granite walls and a great variety of trees and shrubs that combined well together. Castlegate was another excellent presentation though the sign at the entrance off Ferndale Road was partially obscured by growth. Other residential areas visited in the Rathmichael area were of a similar high standard in presentation terms.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

On the Brides Glen Road the attractive Ivy covered banks were much admired by the adjudicator and some good verges were noted here also and Rathmichael Road was also well presented in terms of roadside banks. The beautiful Granite walls by the roundabout at the beginning of Ballybride Road provides a great introduction to that road. There are some attractive banks and verges along this road by closer to the Lordello

Road junction the standard is not as high. Lordello Road has good potential for attractive presentation with some work on the banks and verges.

General Impression:

Rathmichael is an attractive area that can do well in the future in Tidy Towns and the adjudicator would like to wish you well with your plans for 2008.