

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Stepaside** Ref: **1013**
County: **Dublin (Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown)** Mark: **206**
Category: **C** Date(s): **17/07/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	25
The Built Environment	50	27
Landscaping	50	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15
Litter Control	50	23
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	13
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	206

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Stepside back to the Tidy Towns Competition as your last entry was in 2001. We are delighted to have you back as your participation is important to the competition. Major development was under way at the time of adjudication and this will mark great progress for the village. 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 that may have an interest in the Competition.

The Built Environment:

The new development in the village centre appeared to be making good progress at the time of adjudication and hopefully the external elevations and finishes will be appropriate to a village environment. The Post Office and Spar premises were well presented as was the Pharmacy next door. Good simple yet effective signage is a feature of The Step Inn and the window boxes here added some colour. The smaller side areas to the Garda Barracks would benefit from painting as would the road boundary wall to Kilgobbin Road. Consideration might be given to the provision of some landscaping for this building as it looked rather bare.

Landscaping:

As in 2001 your last year of entry landscaping continues to be an extremely strong aspect of Stepside and the landscaping in both public and private areas was highly impressive. In the village window boxes and some hanging baskets provided a splash of colour where required. The central green area in the middle of the village looked well but the two seats needed to be revarnished or painted. Some damaged grass verges areas were noted here. Weed growth at the Rose bed at the cross-roads needed to be removed and the long grass

area extending from here in the Leopardstown direction looked rather untidy. The grass had been very closely cut and the cut grass was not removed. This grass strip has excellent potential.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The wildlife panel at the cross roads was examined and this offers interesting information. It is recommended that your Tidy Towns Committee would examine the wildlife potential, and see what you can achieve in terms of making the Stepside area even more wildlife friendly. The new Biodiversity Award that is now part of the Tidy Towns Competition should be considered by your Committee for 2008. If you have not already done so, the starting point is to have a habitat survey carried out of the wildlife in the Stepside 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 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, birds, fish 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 your area, and investigate the possibility of new ones. 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.

Litter Control:

Bad littering featured in Stepside Lane, around the front of the construction site and some litter was noted in St. Patrick's Park. Isolated litter was seen along Kilgobbin Lane. It is very important that your Tidy Towns Committee develops a litter control plan for your area as part of your overall Tidy Towns Plan. The issue of litter control is not an issue just for the Local Authority. All citizens and especially your Tidy Towns Committee have a key role to play. Your plan should include such issues as surveying the litter bins that you have in your community and their adequacy, clean up days and the role of your local schools. Has your Tidy Towns Committee considered organising a litter survey to establish the generators of litter in your area? It is most important that litter bins are placed in close proximity to the largest generators of litter. The regular emptying of a litter bins if of course essential.

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 your 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. You could also consider a partnership with local firms and businesses to encourage them to reduce unnecessary waste. In regard to waste minimisation it is important to remember that quite small actions can sometimes have a significant waste reduction impact.

Tidiness:

Allowing for the construction work underway in the village the standard of tidiness was reasonably good. The display of retail goods on pavements is something that can cause problems for the disabled and might be considered by your committee. The damaged bollard at St. Patrick's Park needs attention as does the graffiti noted on the Telephone Box. Weeds and litter in the small enclosed area on the uphill side of The Step Inn looked untidy and this could become an attractive small landscaped area. The Car Park area to the rear of the Post office was poorly presented with a lot of litter and weed growth and untidy areas just inside the entrance off the road. At the Public Golf Centre litter in the car park needed to be controlled.

Residential Areas:

Residential areas were generally very well presented especially on the Leopardstown and Kilgobbin Lane approaches to Stepside. The standard of private and public landscaping on these roads was really

exceptionally high. Weed growth at Kerbing at St. Patrick's Park needed attention. The landscaped area at the entrance to Kilgobbin Lawns was outstanding and it is being so well maintained – a credit to everyone involved.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Leopardstown and Kilgobbin Lane approaches were very well presented but the approach down Stepside Lane needed a lot of work in terms of roadside bank maintenance. The pedestrian entrance to St. Patrick's Park off Kilgobbin Lane was a little overgrown as was the small landscaped areas on each side. On the road in from the Football Club and Golf Courses work on verges and roadside banks needed to be done.

General Impression:

It is great to have Stepside back in the Tidy Towns Competition and the adjudicator would like to wish you well with your Tidy Towns plans for 2008.