

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Athenry** Ref: **189**
County: **Galway** Mark: **241**
Category: **D** Date(s):

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	43
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	23
Litter Control	50	21
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	29
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	241

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for filling out the application form and giving details of work done and future work planned. We are pleased to see the new three year plan you have prepared for the protection and enhancement of Athenry and environs. We would be interested to learn about how you communicate with you community. Community cooperation and awareness are essential to achieving success in this competition. Other centres with high levels of community involvement communicate via a number of methods including: church notes, local radio, posters in local premises, email, and local newspapers. We would have welcomed a map with your application, for next year remember to include this as it enables the adjudicators to do justice to your work programme and gives them a helping hand!

The Built Environment:

Due to your medieval links you are lucky to have a wealth of historical buildings and ruins prominent throughout the town. Both the Athenry Castle and St Marys Collegiate Church are situated in prominent and visual locations in the town. We visited the St Marys Collegiate Church which now houses the Athenry Heritage Centre. We also visited the Athenry Shopping Centre and thought its modern design was very in-keeping with the area. A number of properties that we liked in the town include: Athenry Family Dental Practice, the Credit Union, Dowlings, Glynn's Pub, Glynn's Central Bar, O'Hara Solicitors and the VEC building. We visited the railway station and noted that it was clean and tidy and well presented. Derelict sites are a cause of concern and we noted a number of derelict buildings in the town. Sites that need urgent attention and are stopping you from achieving higher marks are located beside Kellys Pharmacy and beside the ruins of the Dominican Priory. The problem with dereliction is a challenging one to tackle but we urge you to present any neglected buildings as best you can. We await the conclusion of the substantial new development (Rivercourt) before commenting and we hope the final product will blend in well with surrounding environs.

Landscaping:

We noted that the traffic islands at Prospect beside the GAA Park and the Railway Embankment were well maintained. We commend a number of individual commercial and residential properties who displayed good effort, in particular we liked the colourful flower tubs and hanging baskets at the New Park Hotel.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Castle Park and the new childrens playground are in excellent condition. The playground is a wonderful amenity to the younger generations of Athenry. You have enormous potential to improve your marks in this area with the stone walls, greens and river offering opportunities to establish diverse habitats. Your submission states that amenity walks and nature trails are planned as a long term project. We welcome this idea and advise you to enlist experts to help you with this. Perhaps for next year you could liaise with the local school children and jointly prepare a local wildlife project that you could include with your application. This would also have the benefit of giving the children "hands-on" involvement with the Tidy Towns competition.

Litter Control:

Your problem with litter has improved a little but we noted a number of bins were full on adjudication day. These were located outside the Ulster Bank on Bridge Street and across the road from O'Hara Solicitors. We also noted rubbish in the river on the green beside the playground; these traffic cones, beer bottle and cans should be removed immediately.

Waste Minimisation:

You are working in tandem with local schools in promoting waste minimisation; we would like to know more about this for next year. It may be helpful for you to consult the guidance document produced by the Department entitled "How to win the Race against Waste in your Community" to allow you to gain more marks in this section next year. The Waste Awareness Officer of Galway County Council may also be a good starting point. Consider engaging with the local businesses, how about holding a waste awareness day or adopting the local Bring Bank? We visited the Bring Bank and it was encouraging to see them being used.

Tidiness:

We noted that the seat beside the welcome sign on the Galway approach could be cleaned/painted or replaced. We visited the new cemetery and unfortunately weeds were evident, this area could be improved for next year. Overhead cables are visible throughout the town and we urge you to lobby the Council to begin to get these under-grounded. We also thought that the Gaelic Pitch wall would benefit from painting. Boundary walls on the approach roads should also be maintained.

Residential Areas:

As mentioned in the report last year you have a great deal of residential properties and estates in and around the town. We visited a number of estates and generally all were well presented. The signage at Ballygarraun, Raheen, Cluain Lara and Ard Aoibhinn are appropriate. The terrace houses on Abbey Row and Barrack Street were also well presented.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The trees on the approach road from Monivea are appealing. The welcome sign on the approach road from Galway really is in need of cleaning. All signs should get an annual clean up. We would ask that you treat side and rear entrances with care as they now form an integral part of the adjudication process. We noted that car park at the Castle would benefit from surface upgrading. As detailed in the report last year you have a problem with traffic. A substantial number of cars were parked on double yellow lines in many streets around the town.

General Impression:

We acknowledge your efforts and steady progress to enhance Athenry and the surrounding area. For next year please bear in mind that the more information supplied with your application the easier it is for the adjudicators to award marks. It is possible that you might be doing yourselves out of additional marks in some sections because of the lack of information supplied. Overall you should be pleased with your efforts and we offer you best wishes for your future proposals.