

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Athy** Ref: **354**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **240**
Category: **F** Date(s): **23/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	23
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	240

Overall Development Approach:

Athy is welcome to the 2007 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your submission which included photographs as well as your plan all of which helped in adjudication. Athy enjoys heritage status and of course many fine heritage buildings of which it can rightly be proud. The town is also blessed with wonderful natural amenities such as the River Barrow and the canal. Athy truly has all the ingredients for success in the competition and we look forward to charting your progress over the coming years. It is good to note the large number of members on the committee and as well the number of meetings each year together with clean up groups. Your liaison with various agencies and of course with schools no doubt makes an important contribution to the overall appearance of Athy and will continue to help you move forward significantly in the competition.

The Built Environment:

A heritage town shouldn't suffer from oversized advertising hoardings and hopefully these will be eliminated from Athy. Indiscriminate signage is unattractive also and there were far too many signs at the last junction approaching the old industrial complex. Whilst your difficulties regarding the swimming pool building is appreciated its poor visual impact could be minimised if it was simply cleaned or painted or perhaps planted with a fast growing climbing plant. There are many attractive shop fronts in the town however there is still too much above fascia signage and a number of window displays were spoiled by indiscriminate posters in window and doors together with poor curtilage areas. Congratulations on the redevelopment of the old Convent of Mercy for hotel use, this is a fine achievement. All of your public buildings including your Heritage Centre are handsome features of Athy and looked wonderful on the day of adjudication. More could be achieved for the presentation of the Recreation and Community Hall premises.

Landscaping:

The People's Park is a fine amenity and was being enjoyed on the day of adjudication, some seats however are in need of painting. Two incidental amenity areas on the Stradbally Road are in need of more attention. Landscaping at Bothar Bui is beautiful and the public art feature is a nice touch. Container plants at Emily Square add a welcome touch of colour to the stonework within the square. Thank you for the photos showing your spring flowering, these were appreciated.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The river park at Emily Square looked splendid and has been considered for the Waterside Award. No doubt the canal harbour area which is currently underdeveloped and potholed will see visual and recreational amenity enhancement over the coming years. Well done on the wildlife park and bird tables initiative on the Monasterevin Road. Good luck with your plan for a second wildflower area.

Litter Control:

The overall standard of litter control was quite good. The most notable black spots were the verges of approach roads, however this appears to have been discarded from passing traffic, another weak spot was within the residential development beside the railway station. Your weekly litter patrols appear to be effective in maintaining litter control at a high standard and it is good to note that Athy has been declared litter free by I.B.A.L. Well done also on the involvement of the schools and on the acquisition of additional litter bins. Congratulations on your success on having the Tidy Towns logo appearing on parking discs, this is a creative initiative.

Waste Minimisation:

Your Green School initiative is important under this heading, admiration is due to the students involved. Thank you for the photographs of the recycling points at different venues in the town; the one beside SuperValu featured a number of boxes and bags which is unfortunate. Well done on the litter segregation during clean ups for recycling. No doubt your composting seminars will be effective in reducing the volume of waste produced by the community.

Tidiness:

Untidy yards and an undeveloped site at the railway station are problematic under this heading. Well done on the control of fly posting and graffiti together with weed control. No doubt you will be successful in time in having overhead service cables placed underground and to have CCTV installed at the recycling centre in the Edmund Rice car park.

Residential Areas:

Your Tidy Estates Competition is an excellent initiative and the many new estates visited in the course adjudication were beautifully landscaped with well maintained green areas. The advice and support given to resident groups appears to be useful. We note your liaison with estates that are involved in the Pride of Place Competition and it is good to see that all associations are invited to your AGM. Grassed roadside areas to boundary walls located opposite the Garden Centre are a most attractive feature and were beautifully maintained at the time of adjudication.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Reference has already been made above to your future plans to have the overhead service cables ducted and service poles removed, these look very poor in the town centre along the main street; Emily Square however looks well in this regard. A number of items of street furniture need to be refurbished; this includes litter bins and some street name plates. Well done on the refurbishment of the canal bridge on the Stradbally Road and the removal of some signage on approach roads however your work has not been completed in this respect. We wish you well in your plans to upgrade the area at St. John's Lane and at the doctor's surgery beside the Dominican Church.

General Impression:

Athy is an attractive town with many handsome features and wonderful natural amenities. Your focus of attention for the immediate future should be to improve shop window presentations and the removal of excessive signage as well as the ducting of overhead service cables.

