

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Collon** Ref: **490**
County: **Louth** Mark: **242**
Category: **A** Date(s): **25/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	39
The Built Environment	50	32
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	32
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	11
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	27
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	242

Overall Development Approach:

Collon continues to significantly improve from year to year. The level of participation in the tidy towns competition appears to be good with 9 members on the committee and this would seem to be a reasonable number given the size of the village. Full use also appears to be made of Louth County Council and the elected Council members in getting projects done. Perhaps some contact should also be made with Louth LEADER and Fas to draw some additional support? The communication with the wider communication may require some further consideration – according to your entry form as there are no meetings or newsletters provided, although it is noted that a website is planned. It is recommended that this area receives some attention in your action plan as communicating information to the wider community on issues such as litter prevention, appreciation of wildlife and the natural environment, waste minimisation, etc are all key parts of the tidy towns competition. It is heartening to see that communication has now been made with the school and it is hoped that this will lead to additional involvement from schoolchildren who can be a valuable resource in this competition. In relation to new members, it is quite clear that Collon is growing at a rapid pace and it is hoped that as the village expands (as illustrated by the current level of housing construction) and new residents move into these new housing developments, new members can be attracted to the Committee. Trying to involve local sports clubs like Mattock Rangers is also likely to pay dividends. The adjudicator would like to thank the Committee for submitting the detailed plan and documentation with their entry form – this was very helpful during the site visit. However, a couple of small improvements are suggested. The handwritten letter submitted was useful, but it would be preferable to have all of the proposals and the works undertaken included in the plan – otherwise, the impression could be given that the plan is not being adhered to and this could result in a loss of marks. Secondly, the map in the plan is very useful, but a small number of items were missing from it such as Nuns Lane, the wildlife garden, the graveyard, Kells Road and bring bank etc. This oversight could lead to some of the Committees good work being overlooked on the day of adjudication.

The Built Environment:

Collon has a wealth of lovely historical properties, some of which require a little refurbishment, but they make a fabulous contribution to the streetscape. The number and quality of these buildings is remarkable in this small village and it would be wonderful to see viable and appropriate uses in each one of them. There are a number of lovely buildings on Ardee Street / Lower Street such as the Church of Ireland Church and cemetery. The stone houses close to the entrance of Mellifont Abbey are also particularly nice. The market square provides a lovely focus to the town and it appears to be completely intact and sympathetically treated. The market house is a particularly fine building and this is complemented by the old Parochial Hall and the building opposite, while the Catholic Church provides a nice focus to Drogheda Street. It was noted during the adjudication that the old Church of Ireland School and teachers residence were undergoing refurbishment and we look forward to seeing them completed in 2008. Dereliction was not a particularly problem, but one vacant / derelict site was noted opposite the Forge. It is recommended that a strategy for dealing with derelict sites is included in your action plan. Also, be sure to fill in this section of the entry form and state what actions you have undertaken in this category.

Landscaping:

The Committee have clearly been busy with landscaping projects. A number of planted beds were observed during the adjudication at the Market Square around the seat which complemented the grass area. Shrubs and other planting was observed on the Ardee Road. Planting was also observed at Brides Place, but this was spoilt slightly by the presence of weeds. The flower bed close to the cemetery on the junction of Tenure Road and Drogheda Road was also attractive. There are some opportunities for planting on Ardee Street which would benefit from some additional landscaping and colour – this could possibly be explored in your action plan. The beds at Papal Drive have a lot of potential but were poorly maintained and overgrown at the time of adjudication. Overall, the planting and landscaping is good, but some improvement could be made.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Collon has numerous opportunities for the provision of wildlife and natural amenities and it is heartening to see that a wildlife park has been provided to the rear of the Community Hall. It is important to indicate the access to this area from the main thoroughfares so some signage would be particularly helpful. It is noted that local schoolchildren will be involved and it is suggested that they should be encouraged to undertake surveys and wildlife projects that could be used to make information boards for users. The work to the cemetery is also noted and this should also enhance wildlife in this important habitat. Remember that as the town expands, the need for these facilities will grow so this category should be receiving additional attention in future years. In this regard, the proposal for a riverwalk was noted with interest.

Litter Control:

During the adjudication, it was clear that a high standard of litter control has been achieved in Collon. There seems to be no doubt that this excellent performance reflects the work of the Committee in organising twice weekly litter patrols, identifying and focussing on litter hot spots and liaising with the school. Have you considered becoming involved in the National Spring Clean? This hard work is also reflected in the mark achieved in this category.

Waste Minimisation:

This area is becoming increasingly important in the tidy towns competition. It is noted that a bottle bank is now located in front of the community hall and this is a key component in reducing waste generation. The additional actions of providing compost heaps in the 3 locations where compost is required for landscaping projects is also noted and the Committee is to be commended. However, the additional actions mentioned in the action plan such as segregating the litter collected and running seminars on community composting should be prioritised. Other actions such as obtaining mulching mowers should be considered. Actions like these will help the Committee to significantly improve your performance in this category in future years.

Tidiness:

In general, it is considered that a reasonably high standard of tidiness has been achieved in Collon, with considerable effort going into areas such as weeding, cleaning of road sides and maintenance of green areas. It is evident that action has also been taken on signage on Ardee Street and the area beside the Garda Station has been cleared. Some areas continue to detract from the village somewhat, such as the area adjacent to No. 1 -6 Ardee Street which requires weeding, the area behind the Catholic Church which is in deplorable condition while the car park of the bring centre is in poor condition. It is suggested that some of these actions could be included in the action plan.

Residential Areas:

There are some particularly attractive and well maintained residential areas in Collon. Bridewell Place is a credit to its residents as a high standard of landscaping and maintenance has been achieved. The residential area on the way in from Monasterboice (adjacent to Papal Place) is lovely, with high quality planting and

maintenance of the green areas evident – the grass was being cut on the day of adjudication! Keep up the good work. Papal Drive is also nice, but it is let down somewhat by overgrown and weedy planting beds.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads to Collon are generally of high quality with good surfacing, clear markings and well maintained signage. Drogheda Street and Ardee Street are generally well particularly well maintained streets. Drogheda street has also got very attractive and well maintained street furniture. However, the road down to Mattock Rangers has not improved noticeably, while the road leading down to the pitch and putt course is also quite poor. The surfacing and verges of Nuns Lane are also poor while the boundary treatment opposite Oriel Heights is poor.

General Impression:

The mark achieved by Collon in this years competition shows a significant improvement on last year. This is down to the hard work of the Committee who focussed on key areas and got a number of projects underway. The adjudicator is confident that Collon will continue to make progress in 2008.