

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Knockbridge** Ref: **497**
County: **Louth** Mark: **294**
Category: **B** Date(s): **01/07/2007**
04/08/2007

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	45
Landscaping	50	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	38
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	294

Overall Development Approach:

Knockbridge is to be congratulated on another excellent performance in the tidy towns competition. Once again, the Committee has managed to improve on a particularly strong performance in 2006. It is very encouraging to see such a high level of participation in the tidy towns and with 20 members on the Committee, this is clear reflection of the level of enthusiasm and commitment in Knockbridge. The contacts that you have established is very impressive, it is noted in your application that you have not confined yourselves to the traditional local authorities and agencies to obtain support and funding for your projects, but you have forged ahead and made contact directly with a wide range of groups and interests in order to further the objectives of the Committee. The links with the Local Green School are also noted and there is no doubt that this is helping to improve the performance every year. The preparation of a high quality action plan has also been a factor and it is noted that you have adhered closely to it. The entry form submitted with supporting documentation is also up to the usual high standard.

The Built Environment:

There are some lovely buildings in Knockbridge and in many ways, it reflects the settlement pattern and layout of a traditional Irish village. The buildings accommodating McConnide's Pub is very attractive and forms a central point in the village. Immediately opposite is a lovely period dwelling that adds great character and interest. Bodigans Daybreak shop nearby also makes a positive contribution to the streetscape. The village green also deserves a special mention as do the lampstands around it. The Church is a particularly impressive building that dominates the streetscape and forms a visible landmark from the surrounding area. Both the Church and the car park are exceptionally well maintained and they are a credit to everyone who is involved. Wolfe Tone Hall is a lovely old building and it is a shame that it is in poor condition. It is hoped that it can be refurbished and that a beneficial use can be found for it soon. The first class work undertaken to the Marion Shrine was also noted and full credit is due to all concerned.

Landscaping:

The exceptionally hard work of the Committee is clearly evident in the landscaping projects that were seen on the day of adjudication. Very impressive planting was noted at the Church and the car park which greatly improved the appearance of this approach into the town. In the opinion of the adjudicator, the most impressive planting was observed at the village green where the mature trees, planting and lovely beds and street furniture all combined to produce a first class central open space that is a credit to everyone on the Committee. The planting noticeable on both sides of the Ardee Road was also very impressive. The landscaping work on Stephenstown Pond is first class.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

As always, Stephenstown Pond is an exceptionally good facility that provides an excellent amenity for residents and school children alike. The Committee are to be congratulated on their hard work for maintaining and continually improving this amenity. It is encouraging to note that the schoolchildren appear to have a central role in the different projects carried out here such as the bulb planting. It is interesting to note that you are anxious to innovate by providing a touch screen kiosk for viewing. The proposal to strengthen the links with Stephenstown pond and the village are particularly important to ensure a good access to this facility. The wildflower area on the Blackrock approach road was also noted.

Litter Control:

A very high standard of litter control is being achieved in Knockbridge. On the day of adjudication, little or no litter was evident and this reflects the work of the Committee in organising and undertaking regular litter patrols. This strong performance is reflected in the high mark achieved. Well done!

Waste Minimisation:

This area is becoming increasingly important in the tidy towns competition. The efforts of the Committee to date are to be commended as it is clear that a number of important initiatives and actions have been undertaken. The provision of the bottle bank is particularly important as are the composting and other workshops, segregating waste and the actions of the local green schools. Other additional actions should be prioritised such as providing composting areas for making compost for landscaping projects and obtaining mulching mowers. Actions like these will help the Committee to improve your performance in this category in future years.

Tidiness:

In general, it is considered that a high standard of tidiness has been achieved in Knockbridge. On the day of adjudication, the village was very tidy and the Committee deserve credit for their hard work in achieving this. However, one or two areas were disappointing. It was observed that area in front of Wolfe Tone Hall was very untidy and overgrown with weeds. The approach from the west was also a little untidy due to a poorly maintained flower bed outside Loughantarve and a poorly maintained area with no gate or fencing at the entrance (opposite the housing estate). A pole with no sign was also visible. Given the high standards evident in the rest of the village, this was disappointing.

Residential Areas:

The residential areas in Knockbridge achieve an exceptionally high standard. Lisroland must surely be among the best maintained and landscaped estates in the County, while others like Cloonanna achieves a similarly high standard. The new development at Loughantarve achieves a reasonably good standard and has the potential to improve.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

In general, the approach roads to Knockbridge are exceptionally good, as all have high quality surfacing and clear road markings. Welcome signs can be found on all approaches and this gives a good impression to visitors. In general, all roadside verges are very well maintained and in good condition.

General Impression:

Congratulations to the Committee of Knockbridge for another excellent performance in the tidy towns competition. The adjudicator

Second Round Adjudication:

Knockbridge was presented to the high standard that this adjudicator has expected from the community over the last decade, well done to all concerned. The village looked beautiful on the day of second adjudication and the presentation of Brodigans to both its front and rear façade is a credit to the proprietors here. Whilst the nicely landscaped walls of the Grain Depot were admired the building itself is not good and its roof which is a very predominant feature of this part of the village looked really poor.

The neatly trimmed hedgerow and mature trees lining the road in from Stevenstown Pond make a wonderful entrance into Knockbridge and prepares one nicely for the flower displays on the crossroads. It was good to see that the landscaped banks on the entrance from the Louth Road continue to enjoy good ground cover. The stands of silver birch in Cloonanna were admired also and of courses the mature trees interspersed with geranium beds between are a visual treat. Container plants throughout the village were admired for their colour and profuseness. The Stevenstown Pond Complex is a wonderful experience for visitors and one can only imagine what it feels like to have this on your doorstep on a daily basis. A new stone wall entrance to Naomh Bhríde is noted.

Litter control was excellent throughout Knockbridge and this is no surprise given your track record in the competition. The second adjudicator did not notice a bottle bank, perhaps this was simply missed.

The curtilage area of commercial premises on one of your approach roads continues to present a problem. A new commercial premises further out sets the standard here.

Residential properties continue to enjoy great everyday maintenance as well as creativity in landscaping both to public areas and private gardens. A few boundary walls are in need of attention but not so many as to present a problem for the village in the competition.

Some beautifully grassed roadside areas to boundary walls were noted. Perhaps a namestone can be provided for the new Loughan Tarve residential development on the Louth Road. Road and footpath surfaces are quite good and the verges of all approach roads are presented to the highest standard including hedgerow shrubs and trees.

A few boundary walls near Halla Wolf Tone need to be touched up with whitewash. Your village continues to impress in all respects and has achieved a lot for such a tiny community. The committee is aware of problem areas which are not extensive and the adjudicators are aware that everything is being done that can be done to resolve these.