

# Tidy Towns Competition 2007

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Geashill** Ref: **754**  
County: **Offaly** Mark: **279**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **26/06/2007**

|                                | Maximum<br>Mark | Mark<br>Awarded 2007 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach   | 50              | 45                   |
| The Built Environment          | 50              | 37                   |
| Landscaping                    | 50              | 38                   |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50              | 24                   |
| Litter Control                 | 50              | 36                   |
| Waste Minimisation             | 20              | 12                   |
| Tidiness                       | 30              | 17                   |
| Residential Areas              | 40              | 26                   |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas  | 50              | 35                   |
| General Impression             | 10              | 9                    |
| <b>TOTAL MARK</b>              | <b>400</b>      | <b>279</b>           |

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Thank you for the comprehensive entry form, additional information with support letters, upgrade plan and other supplementary material. There are strong links between all partners in the community. Wishing you success in reaching the aims of the plan, which 'can only occur with the involvement and support of the entire community and voluntary organisations in the village, and the assistance of the local authority and other relevant bodies'. There must have been a lot of work and effort gone in over the years so far to reach the stage you are at in the competition. It does seem that you have the required drive from within the community to continue to do well in the competition. Geashill is an exquisite village, which will no doubt provide the extra visitors this year, through the National Ploughing Championships and the nearby National Fleagh, with a pleasantly memorable experience.

### **The Built Environment:**

The new stone wall at the picnic area and footpath resurfacing on both sides are excellent. This gives a good safe passage into town. The built environment in Geashill is of high standard, with key heritage buildings conserved through restoration. It is great to see people using the Old schoolhouse which is very impressive. Nice well kept lawn in front with low stone wall and little iron railings, football pitch as well, all had activity at time of visit. The Irish language is visibly used throughout the village. Rectors residence looks very smart and I like the two styles in front being used to hold planters. Buildings in general are well maintained in traditional style. The Cruthers bar looks smart, not overstated. Hamiltons has a more decorative style. Both are lovely establishments. The filling station might consider replacing its faded sign. The old cottage with ivy covering dormer window is beautiful, as are many private residences.

### **Landscaping:**

On the portarlington road, the picnic area and layby is immaculate. Trees and picnic tables and new litter bins

with ciggly stubber parts on top all very good. The benches are old style, good quality with iron arm rests so a decent investment, which was provided as part of a village renewal scheme. Good heritage information provided here. It is indeed a place for both residents and visitors to enjoy. No doubt the big barrels at the entrance are waiting to be planted. Lovely white entrance and stone wall at house opposite is very attractive.

Newly planted trees on approach road will look better as they mature. There are many new trees planted on approaches and native hedgrows in place

Village green marvellously well maintained and impressive with mature trees

The village green is pleasant with its lime trees, mature plantings and beddings and info sign, everywhere here is just lovely

Native trees planted on daingean and mount mellick roads

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The glebe walk is a marvellous experience! It is referred to by the committee as their natural wildflower area, and they have done a great job of it. What could be a litter black spot as it is hidden away down a back street, is very clean, no dumping, with many wildflowers. A very interesting natural area. It is perfect to highlight as a wildlife area. It can be followed all the way back on to the Tullamore road but while on the walk, feel secluded and away from it all. It is a pleasure to wander beneath the big mature trees of beech, oaks, sycamore. It would be useful to have a panel with tree and wildflower identification, to make it an environmental education walk, perhaps located down at the benches in the clearing. Alternatively, located at entrance to walk. (I see Nature panels for Glebe walk in the upgrade plan!)

It states in the application that they are gradually replacing dead trees in the glebe walk – will they still keep the tree stumps? They are wonderful habitats where microorganisms aid the natural decay process – get advice before removing.

Choosing native hedgerows for planting, such as whitethorn opposite the filling station, and beech from GAA pitch towards the village will further support native wildlife

There is much information in the application about flora and fauna, so the committee is well informed in this area, and the innovative planned projects will gain further marks in this category

### **Litter Control:**

Innovative approach to ban election posters from being put up in the village. No surprise that it was received positively by local residents. I'm sure they were happy of the reprieve from the visual bombardment that accompanies election time.

Despite the erection of new dog litter signs, there was quite a bit of dog fouling unfortunately around the junction where the pubs are. Keep up a focus on this particular type of litter when sending out the annual litter letter to residents, reminding dog owners to clean up after their pets

Geashill was almost litter free, with just a few recent scraps here and there

It is good to see participation from businesses such as the pubs, in directing the smoking area and therefore smoking litter, to the back of the premises

It is fortunate to have the expertise and presence of a litter warden on the committee. It is noted that new litter bins are due and the street cleaning sweeps are to be increased in frequency.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

Well done to Geashill NS for getting the Green Flag. Their efforts have brought waste reduction message to the community and it is great there are strong links between the school and the Tidy Towns committee.

The area for recycling is great with large newly tarmaced turning area and bilingual signs. One sign down at the moment. It is good that there are partnerships with business such as oxygen providing the bins and glambia providing composting equipment.

## **Tidiness:**

Geashill is overall a very tidy village with great care and attention to detail given to maintaining it. The massive involvement and support from the community is evident in everyone doing their part – with a few exceptions where some housefronts could be improved - plain concrete pillars, some cracked and walls in need of cleaning or painting. Doesn't detract from overall look of the place but there are a few overgrown gardens, particularly on the mountmellick road.

Beautiful private gardens are in the vast majority, all well maintained. Even standard iron gate was painted red to make it attractive. All kerbs and verges are regularly tended to.

The development site with its temporary railings is unsightly, as the committee is aware, so will be much better when that's finished and taken away. In front is part of a very nice old stone wall which would take a creative approach to incorporate into a new border. With 3 house types for sale, and I think 15 houses to go up, lets hope its in keeping with village style and tradition.

The new spacious footpaths in various locations and cycling lanes coming from GAA are excellent – it must be wonderful to have made a safe way for people, especially children, to be encouraged to cycle.

Around the thatch cottage, the overhead wires in criss cross, spider web fashion take away from this part of the village as do the tatty old poles in a few places. It's a pity to have the untidy streetscape close to one of Geashills most outstanding private residences. Can the old poles be removed? Is this area to be considered for heritage lighting?

Traffic calming measures seem to be working.

Noted another large field is for sale near the filling station. Commend the owner as fence gate and pillars very neat. Although wild inside, looks fine. Damage to railings at pedestrian crossing hopefully will be fixed up so can take away blocks supporting it

## **Residential Areas:**

There are many outstanding private residences in Geashill. The cottages are delightful and charming with very well maintained gardens and interesting features such as rockeries or water features.

In St Olivers Terrace there are obviously some residents taking real pride in the area . The interesting planters, may be work of local craftsman, are delightful in wooden wheelbarrows and wells. The old fashioned roses looking good. Shared areas are well kept but some back areas in need of attention. Apart from some cracked pavement here and there – which is to be addressed in future resurfacing works – and some broken walls in need of repair, it is quite a pleasant estate. There is a bit of bunting on poles should be taken down at back. The wildlife area is a nice idea but needs to be kept up as all the feeders were empty.

The wooden fences along the front are lovely, and the trellising is noteworthy. The mature trees form a good border between it and road, with new ones planted here too. Great work being done all round.

The new housing development at Ard Riada is a great example of the success that follows having community input into developments. Its use of traditional materials is in keeping with the village style. The trees and shrubbery planted throughout help it feel more settled.

## **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

All approaches good, with picnic area on one side, and neat verges and consistently clear signs with red and white flowers at entrances. All approaches have welcoming colourful flower displays.

Road surfaces, footpaths and kerbing have been totally redone with road markings all newly finished with traffic calming measures in place.

Some back areas in the estate mentioned above need attention, and further resurfacing works planned will be improvement

In general all fine

## **General Impression:**

Geashill is an absolute delight. There is an outstanding strength, vibrancy and confidence to the community. A charming traditional village, combining old and new, with historical and natural attractions for both residents

and visitors to enjoy. I look forward to a return visit. Best wishes to all.