

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Horseleap** Ref: **295**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **206**
Category: **A** Date(s): **26/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	26
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15
Litter Control	50	33
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	13
Residential Areas	40	19
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	24
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	206

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your application and welcome to Tidy Towns 2007. It was disappointing there was no map included with the application as it made it difficult for this adjudicator to be sure of the location of key sites. The committee is to be commended on bringing together the two relevant county councils - Offaly and Westmeath - and for engaging with them on proposals for improving the infrastructure in the village. Progress may be slow in this area but keep up the momentum and good luck with on-going efforts working with joint body of councillors. Once the main works have been agreed, hopefully, the committee can put more effort into other aspects on village community development. It is important to draw up a 3-5 year plan with goals and priorities for the area. It was a pity no such plan was included in this years application as was recommended in previous years. This adjudicator has seen towns have their points increase remarkably with an invigorated developmental approach.

The Built Environment:

The school in particular looks very well, after the recent work on it. The couple of houses across from the school are also noteworthy, especially the little cottage with the red door and some of the bigger houses alongside. The houses on frebane road out are very well kept and pleasant to look at.

Most buildings are satisfactory, however, there are a number which have been let run down and are quite shabby.

The barn on right hand side as you are coming from galway has some attractive stone work and an entrance to a really well kept house and garden but contrasting to that, next door old building is shabby and lets down the appearance of town on this particular approach. Some tidying up of the overgrown path would improve things here.

The shopfront of the old post office is quite interesting, and maybe more could be made of the Irish sign writing as it's hardly noticeable. There is an empty window where perhaps a heritage information notice could be put inside, depending on what the building is actually being used for.

Paddy Ryans premises and the Garden Centre and Midlands Motors looking well, as is the quirky house with the old signs and cluttered bits and bobs in front.

Landscaping:

The numerous trees planted at entrances to village were noted. The planted areas at the school are great. There could be more plantings in containers in particular at the church yard which is spacious and bare of any colour

Horseleap has put themselves forward for the riverside award and the river this adjudicator sees is the Gagesborough river which has not had any landscaping or amenity work done to it that could be seen. It cannot be accessed easily. Without the map, can't be sure it's the right place

The sculpture of a horse and surrounding landscaping is distinctive at the Clara approach road which gives lovely entrance to town.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

School is very well presented with lovely plantings – particularly like the honeysuckle and the butterfly bush and lavender which is all very good for insects and wildlife generally.

The river has a lovely old stone bridge and steps over it but completely full of weeds and nettles and thistles at the actual river side so potential to be developed, depending on landowner, but could be a nice feature in the town – could be quite an attractive lunchstop maybe for passers by or developed along with wildlife features, linking with school if possible. It would be good to develop walks and nature trails.

Litter Control:

In general, the village is litter free, which must be a challenge having the main Dublin - Galway road run through it. With this in mind it is an achievement to have it free of litter. Just to mention there is some cemetery litter at back of cemetery and would suggest a litter bin be placed here to better manage this

The river was free of litter which could have been a black spot

Would be good to involve the schools in litter projects - if not in actual clean-ups, in designing anti-litter signs for motorists passing through to see.

Waste Minimisation:

It is good that businesses have co-operated well in this area. It would be good to see more information on what this involves.

Is the school in the Green-Schools programme? Are there links with householders and the church on waste issues? There are many opportunities for school litter and waste and other environmental projects which would increase points in this category. Please consult the Race Against Waste guide for projects that could be undertaken.

Tidiness:

Along the wall of the property near the phone box is a corrugated iron gateway which is a bit shabby – if that could be improved would be good as it is in a prominent place. Really interesting building in centre of town with the old signs and red phone box and cartwheels and water pumps and all sorts, but unclear if that's actually a shop or a private dwelling – if it's actually someone's home it's very unusual. No doubt a key player in the TT committee. Across the road there some old tractors and carts and bits and bobs for sale so it's quite likely that is a shop but it's not clear. So if one wanted to purchase, where would they go?

Very neat and well painted and litter free with good traffic control measures and disabled parking there so well

done to the school and all involved there.

In field opposite statoil garage, there were property signs strewn about, very messy and unsightly

A bit messy also across where theres some rubble beside farmers field, brings down the look at this partiucular part of town as well. perhaps this could be stored out of view
Church acceptable and car park but church railing needs to be repainted and the church could do with being brightened up. Plenty space for plantings. Looks quite drab. Also outdated poster on pole about a Christmas event! Tidy overall

Residential Areas:

Horseleap is a village with few residential areas, in fact the main street is also the main residential area, but the private properties that are here are in the main part very well presented.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Approaches are all acceptable. The approach from mullingar is a little overgrown with the sign obscured by long grass.

Nice trees planted on the kilbeggan side. Those young trees when they mature will be very good. The back of the cemetary behind the church was the only back area as already mentioned to have any problems

General Impression:

Overall Horseleap is a pleasant, tranquil village. It is unique in that it is a border village but residents are taking great strides to overcome that difficulty.