

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Walsh Island** Ref: **292**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **240**
Category: **B** Date(s): **28/06/2007**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	33
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	39
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	240

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your entry into Tidy Towns 2007. Walsh Island is undergoing a lot of change and it is hoped that things progress positively. There appear to be good linkages with local associations and the council. Is the committee involved in a local area plan plan to input on shape of developments? Working in partnership with the council and developers to ensure development is sensitive to the area and fits in with a special plan that all have inputted into.

It would be good to get a 3-5 year plan with Tidy Towns objectives taking into account. The committee seems well organised and well supported so good luck with all endeavours.

The Built Environment:

There is a lot of construction work going on in Walsh Island which gives an untidy feel to the village. The key buildings of school, church, shops (one with post office) and pub are all well presented. The horseshoe fort is an attractive feature in the village and its upkeep is to a high standard. There are some marvellous private residences – it would seem there are buildings of mixed ages here

The old pump is hidden away – are there plans to make something of this feature?

Landscaping:

The approach roads to town are absolutely gorgeous – landscaping is stretching all the way out of village, tree lined road, through fields on both sides, little stream with bridge plain concrete block has been painted cream

and tyre painted with flowers in it – sign bilingual – shrubs around it and a little well. So pretty

The Ring fort relic is very impressive and enjoyable. It is well sign posted, has verges cut around it (presumably ok for parking) wonderful, even magical as it is so child friendly and inviting. Great to see wildlife features incorporated – birdboxes in there, as well as heritage features – stone circles – whether it was an actual ring fort or just to look like one I'm not sure – its got a made up hedge school, different trees – hazels in an arch – trails to wander – hideaways – picnic bench – kids toys push cars etc. left in for them to use – wildflowers, stone entry sign and a poem about a resting place for children. Well done to all involved.

There should be something at the junction of main Portarlington-Edenderry road where there is a pile of earth here so likely a project underway.

There are lovely elements of landscaping throughout the village but especially at approaches

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The relic encourages wildlife. Are there any trails that could be developed? Perhaps promoting the unique bog habitat in this area. Encourage inclusion of wildlife features in new housing developments – wild areas, planting with berries, seeds and nuts, year round food for wildlife. The school garden could be improved and wildlife features included.

Litter Control:

Really neat and tidy village despite all the works going on. There is no litter around despite all the activity so well done.

It is good that letters are sent to households.

In the cemetery there is no litter and no litter bins – a credit how thats managed. lovely bench for people to sit and relax.

Waste Minimisation:

In letters to households, is there info on waste management included? The bottle bank was in good shape, litter free outside school – recycling area totally clean and is being used as plenty of stuff in there. It is good that there are talks in the school to encourage responsible behaviour in young people and to spread the message back to the families of ways to reduce, reuse and recycle. The talk for householders on waste management will encourage waste reduction in the community. There are positive relationships with the County Environmental Awareness Officer in this regard.

Tidiness:

Surfacing and edges not well defined mostly where construction ongoing. Lovely fencing opposite the semi detached bungalows. What looks like a ball alley is outside village, in need of renovation, in an unusual spot.

Both cemeteries – in church grounds and across the road, are all very neat. The wooden surrounds on unmarked graves and the heritage project interesting

Long hedge past cemetery – is it used for parking when mass is on? Fill in gaps in hedge and tidy up base (rubble and uneven)

Lovely white and black brick planters are consistent and unusual

Path surface outside church to be improved and church railings will need a paint soon

Path not defined from road or car park – could be broken up

School could have more of a garden – could develop wildlife projects and composting area Gates needs to be painted – whole school could do with being freshened up. Lots of green space for garden

Attractive conifers in pots. Nice trees in school grounds

Residential Areas:

Parkers hill housing has a lovely sign, gorgeous benches and stones – nice landscaping. All neat and clean at time of visit. There is a lovely row of houses up by the forge, freshly painted and grass verges trimmed and road safety signs. There are many new houses being built. – the ones by coolagarry do look in keeping with traditional style.

It states there have been problems with developers not finishing off properly. Here at rockview, finished off

lovely with rock beds and those quality benches and rock name sign so however they managed it – actually maybe this is a more mature estate and new one is just tagged on to it, but it looks like matters with developers are improving
Island lodge – new place will look better when plantings mature

Some residences here and there such as opposite the school, are not looking the best, but could be improved with tidying up verges in front.

Some lovely old cottages well maintained. Like all ages here – really old cottages, newer houses say 20years old, then new housing estates going up both sides. Same consistent benches and rocks and trees.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

One of the most fun approaches to any place so far – an 's' bend with interesting landscaping at both bends – one has old train engine and a wheelbarrow full of peat, the other has bog oak sculpture. Before that the bog road with lovely houses to both sides, one had a rockery from below garden level up to road. All houses in this way very pretty – flowers all in bloom. No doubt as to where you are with welcome signs and lovely foliage and landscaping. Although, finding Walsh Island from the main roads was difficult and some wrong turns were taken. As suggested last year, perhaps the directional signage can be examined. Grass verges very tidy, before that tree lined entrance. When you arrive in proper, then footpath starts – all neat and tidy. New residences there all tidy, new surfaces, all clean and smart

Laneways all tidy

Road surfaces not in great condition but it seems resurfacing will follow housing development completion

General Impression:

Walsh Island is a charming place, undergoing much change, and hopefully will retain its village feel and sense of community. It is important to continue to work positively with local authority and developers. Hopefully the new residents will mean good business for local shops and pub, and more supporters for tidy towns.