

Tidy Towns Competition 2007

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Emly** Ref: **641**
County: **Tipperary (South)** Mark: **290**
Category: **B** Date(s): **12/07/2007**
08/08/2007

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2007
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	37
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	21
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	290

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the 2007 National Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your submission, which included a very detailed report covering all aspects of your work which assisted adjudication. The postcard initiative is well worthwhile and very attractively produced and will help to publicise the tidy town campaign and your initiatives. The Emly committee are to be congratulated in engaging the help of the broader community. It is noted that the net is widening in relation to applications for development assistance from many agencies and this approach is already paying impressive dividends, illustrated by your nomination by South Tipperary County Council for entry in the national "Pride of Place" competition 2007. Your continued liaison with the local schools is to be commended and the results are stunning. The projects on the Bird Surveys and the Butterfly Bush are truly impressive and have great educational value.

The Built Environment:

Emly, like many other Irish villages, gets its character from the pattern and shape of its own unique location. It was noted that within the village there were a number of both residential and commercial buildings ready for redevelopment. It would be a well worthwhile undertaking for the committee to have these buildings architecturally assessed with a view to their proper conservation and regeneration. In the past it was observed that many of the street buildings had lost their traditional sash windows and replacement of these would further restore the character of this charming village. Existing features such as doorways, sash windows, chimney stacks and railings should be particularly noted. Last year's report highlighted many individual buildings and all were again well presented. Callaghan's Shop was particularly admired. At the butcher shop the yard surface to the rear was being paved on the day of adjudication. A particularly attractive stone outbuilding was noted here. The public buildings including Halla Naoimh Ailbhe, the National School and the Church, with its magnificent grounds and attractive Grotto looked spectacular.

Landscaping:

The considerable number of landscaped areas around the village ensures that the population is well served with recreational amenity opportunities. The development of St Ailbhe's Drive Housing Scheme on the Fair Green was a unique undertaking and now creates an attractive and colourful centre-piece to the village. To the rear of St Ailbhe's Drive the passive park and wildlife area are a great addition. The deadwood sculptural pieces and the metal heron sculptures looked well. The central corner feature of the village pump fountain and the surrounding hard landscaping cobble-lock pavement is a magnificent addition to the area. This feature in the urban environment of the village is particularly complimentary to the sculptural centre piece in the Four Seasons Park. The ongoing tree and shrub planting is noted.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Emly has developed a nice network of wildlife areas and on the day of adjudication the bird life in the Four Seasons garden and the adjacent Wild Life Park was impressive. The Information Boards here were well presented, interesting and of great educational value. The wildlife area at the bridge with its interpretive panels for birds again looked attractive; perhaps there is a further opportunity for a similar interpretive board at the newly formed St Ailbhe's Park.

Litter Control:

Your initiative to recycle cigarette butts, which has now become a nationwide problem, is commendable. The Spring clean up and the monthly litter cleaning programme of the back areas and surrounding roads together with your talks in the school is having the desired effects.

Waste Minimisation:

The Bring Centre at the Knocklong entrance, set in an attractive hedged surround looked well and was neat and tidy on the day of adjudication. Your plan on waste management circulated to all houses in Emly was noted and the committee are to be commended for their fact finding visit to Limerick and the subsequent report to the school. The initiative of the school in collecting batteries and old phones and segregating litter is a positive development. We wish you well in your future plans to develop further initiatives.

Tidiness:

The overall appearance of the village is one of tidiness with a number of areas on the Knocklong road needing some attention and, in some cases, screening. The village green with its well manicured grass area and high quality street furniture looked particularly well.

Residential Areas:

The village environs contain a stock of well presented private houses with attractive individual gardens, while in the village proper there are many pleasantly painted properties adorned with colourful flower displays. Radharc Gailti looked well and many private gardens were admired. The housing estate behind Halla Naoimh Ailbhe has a nice sense of place and the lawns were nicely manicured and the area was neat and litter free. More tree planting here and perhaps the introduction of a hedge along the fence boundary would enhance this attractive space. Glen Court, still under construction, needs substantial tree planting to soften its impact on the landscape especially when viewed from Knocklong / Kilmallock junction.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

On the day of adjudication the laying of the surface to the Main St was nearing completion and this finish gave a fine visual facelift to the streetscape. Some resurfacing should also be considered in Radharc Gailti housing estate. The approach roads to Emly village from all sides are particularly attractive containing well maintained verges, lined with mature trees, strands of wild flowers and nicely kept houses and gardens. The Tipperary Road entrance has an exciting visual change from the rural to the urban environment at the nicely presented Uachtarlann Naoimh Ailbhe, a fine stone building with brightly painted window and door surrounds and white-washed stepped platform to the front. The linear strand of buttercups on the grass bank opposite and magnificent garden were admired here. Further along, at the Pallas Road junction, the Emly announcement sign with its bed of begonias and geraniums has a very welcoming appearance.

General Impression:

Emly is a village with an attractive built and natural environment that serves the needs of its population and visitors. The village looked magnificent at the time of adjudication and it is good to note that the hardworking committee have many future plans.

Second Round Adjudication:

Picture-postcards showing interesting details of towns and villages are hard to come by, except for bland shots of famous locations: it was a real pleasure to find the postcards published by your committee, and they should be an example to other centres to follow suit. Emly, it hardly needs to be added, was looking 'pretty as a picture' at the time of the second adjudication. Your newspaper cutting of 17 years ago was of great interest to this adjudicator because he has been coming to Emly every so often since then and is delighted with the progress made during that period, right to the top of the county! Congratulations to the committee, and to all the residents and business people of the town who have made this happen. Congratulations too to the County Council who have removed the ugly overhead wires and provided elegant lamp standards, and - within the last couple of weeks - completed the resurfacing of the streets. A good road surface and a clear skyline make a hugely positive impact, more, perhaps, than any other single elements. That is not to denigrate the wonderfully successful landscaping, and especially the subtle blending of, for example, hedges, stone walls and flowers. (Incidentally, tree experts advise that annuals should not be planted round the base of trees - it is worth noting this opinion.) The residential areas, whether traditional street houses or homes in new estates, were without exception very well kept. In Glen Court the traditional profiles and clean lines look promising - but one should beware of new estates arising any further out of town as there can be a loss of the sense of community, they encourage car-culture, and in the worst cases become a source of social disorder. New estates should ideally be built off side streets, as most of them are. The wildlife area in the church grounds was admired. The sculpture at the Emigrants' memorial is much superior, however. The view across the beautifully maintained graveyard towards the Galtees is something to be remembered always and it is this that the emigrants must surely have kept in their hearts; how lucky for the people of Emly today to have it ever beside them.