

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ennis** Ref: **68**
County: **Clare** Mark: **300**
Category: **G** Date(s): **07/07/2008**
23/07/2008

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	47
The Built Environment	50	40
Landscaping	50	44
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	31
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	21
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	300

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you Ennis TidyTowns Committee for your entry on behalf of Ennis to the 2008 TidyTowns Competition. Welcome to the 2008 TidyTowns competition and congratulations on the quality of your submission.

Thanks to your Committee of nineteen people who take the time and effort to attend your regular meetings, in addition to other TidyTowns events. Your Committee and partnership organisations are doing very worthwhile work for Ennis, a town with a population of less than 25,000 people. As stated by you, this spirit of co-operation and partnership has contributed to recent successes for Ennis. Your Committee plays an active role in the long-term development of Ennis as a centre of excellence and as a green and healthy environment in which to live. Well done to all concerned.

Thanks also for the detailed submission on TidyTowns activities and for the town walking trail map. These were very useful documents.

Your ongoing partnership work with many organisations including, Town Council, Fás, County Council, Chamber of Commerce, and the local businesses, and all those that have supported your activities is of obvious benefit to all. This is a vital ingredient in the success of TidyTowns activities. Your use of a Fas Community Employment Scheme to assist in your communications strategy is of benefit for Ennis TidyTowns activities. I would recommend that TidyTowns activities play a more a more prominent role in the website www.ennischamber.ie. I failed to see any references to TidyTowns activities on this website.

The work of local people, residents, business people, schoolchildren and others is to be praised and it's easy to see that the TidyTowns Competition over the years has generated involvement and given the community a sense of 'Pride of Place'.

I wish you all the best with your planned activities into the future. Keep up the great work.

The Built Environment:

Ennis, to this adjudicator, has changed for the better over the past number of years and the economic success of the town is reflected in many of its exceptional public and private buildings. In addition the development of such projects as the Ennis Sculpture Initiative has resulted in some wonderful pieces of public art throughout the town. Further progress is reflected in the ongoing infrastructure road works and roundabouts all about Ennis. These improved access routes will only lead to further economic and other quality of life successes.

The quality and excellence of the various buildings that are so much a part of Ennis impressed this adjudicator. Public buildings that impressed included: The Cathedral of Sts. Peter & Paul; The Franciscan Friary; the Courthouse; the Grotto at the Courthouse; County Council Buildings; Fire Station; Garda Station ; DeValera Library; Chamber of Commerce; Glor; Cois na Habhna; Shannon Development Information Age Park; . Private sector buildings that left a positive image included: Queen's Hotel; the Old Ground; Temple Gate Hotel; Carrig Donn; Brogans; Seoidin; Collins Jewellers; Concepts; The Copper Jug; Clare People; Chez Marie; Tom Steel Bar/Next Door; Nozomi. There are of course other commercial buildings not listed in this short report that also deserve mention and have all contributed to the success that is Ennis.

Many of the commercial premises in the narrow streets have wonderful colourful shopfronts, which add so much to the positive impact of Ennis.

The impact of more recent and new public art and sculptures also were positive on this adjudicator. These included; the DeValera statue; The Celtic Rest at Temple Gate; the Franciscan's Figure; 1916-1966 Memorial; and the wonderful Hands creation by Shane Gilmore.

Some negatives included; derelict buildings and the inappropriate use of commercial billboards advertising in particular one that was adjacent to the historic O'Connell Monument.

The challenge now is to maintain the healthy balance between the "old and the new". This is not easy and demands a watchful eye by all concerned.

Landscaping:

The beauty of Ennis is reflected in the many mature trees that add so much to the landscape. Those trees at the Courthouse are quite magnificent. The well maintained lawns and grassed areas and flowerbeds also impressed.

The use of planted hanging baskets throughout the town is wonderful and adds a dramatic show of colour to the town centre and to the periphery areas also. The Fergus Bridge is a super feature. Well done to all involved in the various locations for exceptional landscaping in the individual elements that gel to make Ennis look so well. The residential areas of the town also put so much effort into their own gardens and the result is mainly impressive and of benefit. The Green Area winners are proud of their successes.

Overall, the work on this area over recent years has paid rich dividends.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Ballyalla Lake and walk areas are a peaceful haven so close to town. In general the recreational areas of Ballyalla were nicely landscaped on the day of my visit. The grass was cut, nicely landscaped and the ducks and swans seemed quite at home there. It seems a perfect location for wildlife.

The Sli na Slainte walks add to the tranquillity of the place.

The use of Interpretative Boards on birdlife and fish species located near the River Fergus is worthwhile.

The setting up of Biodiversity and Exercise walks, as reported will add to the amenities for locals and visitors alike. The River Fergus has a huge wildlife impact as the habitat for fish, ducks, geese and swans. A potential project might centre on the role of the River Fergus as a natural amenities area; this study could be undertaken in conjunction with the infrastructure works to be completed in 2009.

Ennis is well served by the development of an excellent footpath/road structure that surrounds some of the town. This is great for the walker, jogger and those people that appreciate these facilities just five minutes away from the town centre. Has any research been carried out on the impact of these new roads on the indigenous wildlife?

The involvement of the schoolchildren in appropriate projects such as your Biodiversity project is so very

worthwhile.

Litter Control:

Ennis town centre was in general litter free on the day of my visit and obviously the work of TidyTowns Committee is paying dividends. The roads and the commercial premises areas were clean and litter free. The work of the litter patrols is successful in their monitoring of illegal dumping throughout the town. This work is to be applauded. There is an appreciation among the public of the benefits of a litter free town. It was my experience to witness a male passer-by pick up the remains of some litter close by to the Fergus Bridge and deposit it in the litter bin located closeby.

Congratulations to Scoil Christ Ri, Cloughleigh and Ennis National School on their success in obtaining Green Flag status. The Best Kept School Competition is to be applauded. Well done to all involved. The other 2008 projects listed in your submission are also wonderful initiatives; the relocation of bottle banks in Francis street, Information leaflet on Bring Banks, and Operation Kilrush Road, only work because of the dedication of individual members of TidyTowns Committee who volunteer for this activities. Congratulations to all.

Waste Minimisation:

The purpose of this category is to encourage TidyTowns Committees and the local community to get involved in projects that will reduce waste and encourage recycling. Projects could include community guidance on methods of reducing waste such as segregating litter during clean-up events,

The printing and promotion by TidyTowns and their partner organisations in the new Map of recycle locations in Ennis is an excellent initiative. Well done. The Ennis Recycling Centre on the Gort Road is a facility that will hugely benefit the town and its residents.

The involvement of the different Schools in the Green Flag Schools Programme is super, as is their involvement in the "Best Kept Schools" competition. The Spring Clean up of the Fergus river involving the schoolchildren of Scoil Christ Ri is a magnificent effort by these young citizens. The Civil Defence team is also to be congratulated.

Tidiness:

In recent years the infrastructure demands of a new road structure and motorway with many new roundabouts under construction just outside the town made life difficult for Ennis. This now seems to be completed and the results will only benefit the town and area. On the day of my visit the town, in general, was tidy and clean.

Residential Areas:

The older houses help retain the small town character and charm of Ennis and these are maintained to the best possible standards. St Michael's Terrace has nice gardens, a lovely grotto, and some lovely landscaping.

Other residential areas, both old and new, that impressed included; Westfields; Carrig an Oir; Toberteasca; Radharc an Locha; Ard Caoin; and Aughanterroe Estate

Congratulations to all concerned on the upkeep of their residential areas.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The access roads to Ennis are now a treat to drive on, as indeed are many new footpaths for walkers and pedestrian usage. I would hope that new cyclepaths are being constructed in appropriate and suitable roads for the encouragement of cycling as a leisure and safe activity. I failed to see any evidence of cyclepaths around and about Ennis. Am I correct?

The Car Park in the town centre was in general clean and tidy with some nice landscaping by planted hanging baskets.

General Impression:

There was a feelgood factor about walking around the town of Ennis on the day of my visit. The ongoing co-operation between the public, and others, and the TidyTowns Committee is evident in the progress made by Ennis in the competition.

Congratulations on your 2008 entry to TidyTowns Competition and good luck for the future. I look forward to

further visits to your town.

Second Round Adjudication:

Ennis is always a pleasure to visit and admire and there is so much to admire in this committed, colourful and vibrant Tidy Towns centre. Frequent signs underscore the town's commitment; Litter Free Zone; Take your Litter Home and especially Ennis Environment Challenge - Your Town, Your Environment, Your Responsibility. It's love affair with flowers continues unabated; there are quite literally hundreds of hanging baskets brimming with colourful flowers and adding a wonderful sense of movement and freshness to the streetscape and landscape. Wildlife and nature are very much projected as well. The Mill Bridge Amenity area is a joy, within sound of the almost therapeutic river weir's tumbling waters and in sight of the freshly painted standards and brackets in the park and the equally well presented flower baskets on the bridge. The range, extent and variety of street and public art on display are a special joy. What a farsighted practice to have implemented it, it's time and even more credit for maintaining that decision to this day.

In the general upbeat euphoria it is easy and almost tempting to overlook those aspects and defects which come into play, certainly at this level of the competition. The disappointing extent of discarded cigarette butts in so many places reaches annoying intrusiveness in the central Square, the extent of litter in the grounds of the large scale Mill Street Apartment complex, the lamp that has come away from the wall and is now hanging on its electric wires, distracting from the splendid frontage of Mr Q's, the number of street directional signs obscured by grass and vegetation and the handiwork of graffiti so called 'artists' in for example Halloran's Lane.