

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Charleville** Ref: **734**
County: **Cork(North)** Mark: **203**
Category: **D** Date(s): **27/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	28
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	26
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	24
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	12
Residential Areas	40	22
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	26
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	203

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to the Charleville TidyTowns Group for participating in the TidyTowns Competition 2008. Thank you for your submission and for your map which was quite helpful in guiding the adjudicator round the town once the adjudicator could find his bearings. It would be most helpful if the various roads out of town were named as Limerick, Cork etc. Thank you for the numbering of the various highlights of your recent work. This was most helpful. It is a pity that you did not include a 3-5 year plan. If you do not have one the exercise of compiling such a plan would enable you to set immediate and medium term targets for yourselves, would help you decide which local bodies and agencies would assist you with particular projects. As all projects need funding you would set down in your plan how you propose to fund these various projects. As well as that there are marks for the presentation of a 3-5 Year Plan. It appears that you intend to work on such a plan for the built environment. We would encourage the compiling of such a plan for all sections of the competition. A big ask! It appears that you are a busy committee. You do engage with local bodies and your submission suggests that have the support of businesses in your community. In what way do you liaise with Cork County Council? From which sources do you get your funding? Your entry on communicating with the community is somewhat vague. It would be good to hear how frequently you hold the public meetings, what kind of attendance you have and what stems from these meetings. It is important that you have some contact with the schools though one feels that the tone of a talk by the litter warden could be somewhat negative and a turn-off to kids. A more positive contact could be to encourage the school to try to achieve Green Flag Status. The pupils would learn much about recycling, reusing, reducing and composting. They would be involved in waste minimisation projects and would bring their new found skills, their new found knowledge and their new found enthusiasm home to the generations at home. Well done on the work you are engaged in. Charleville faces many challenges and great credit to you for involving yourselves in bettering the quality of life in your town.

The Built Environment:

Charleville is blessed with many period buildings, some of which are now in a poor state of repair, others of which are supplying services other than those for which the buildings were first designed. Many of these buildings are still well maintained and well presented and add to the heritage appearance of the town. There is no need to name them. They contribute to an eye catching colourful, streetscape that has the appearance of a heritage town. Many of the period buildings throughout the town need looking after as they now appear somewhat shabby. It is sad to see the fine building on the corner of Main Street and Broad Street unoccupied and deteriorating. Possibly the greatest regret one has in visiting Charleville is that the school attended by Devalera is so neglected. No matter what one's politics, this building should now be a shrine to one of our founding fathers. It is surprising that the fine Credit Union building does not have a sign 'as Gaeilge'. There has been much development at the back of mainstreet in recent years and the fine, modern buildings add to the interest of the built environment of Charleville. The Plaza on mainstreet is a wonderful amenity. You make great use of heritage signs, of hanging baskets and glorious street lighting. The relaxation of those sitting around in the Plaza is testimony to the success of this enterprise. The Catholic Church looks imperious and dominates the skyline. You are rightly proud of the Town Park and of the play amenity for the children.

Landscaping:

There are many examples of landscaping projects that the town has inherited from previous TidyTowns Committees. Many of these, sadly, are neglected now. The Garden of Remembrance is the coveted contribution of an earlier TidyTowns Committee and deserves greater attention than it now receives although your submission specifically mentions maintenance of this area. There are other places where this neglect is also evident. There is a need for greater support from the town traders in relation to hanging baskets. The floral displays along the street were sporadic and do not make a major impact. On the other hand there is most imaginative and colourful screening at the Charleville Refrigerator Services. The Kerry Gold landscaping is a standard to aspire to. Of course the 'piece de resistance' is your water feature and sculpture. Too often open spaces are not adequately maintained. An example is at the fine Council offices off the Cork Road.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

When visiting the Town Park the 1.5 acres was also visited. This is a wonderful idea, to incorporate your wildlife habitat into your major outdoor amenity. The next steps must now be taken. This wildlife area needs to be announced to the, at present, unsuspecting public. There will be display boards describing what is happening here etc. A similar exercise could be carried out at Glen Haven. You are on your way.

Litter Control:

The litter is everywhere whether one is in town, in the Park or visiting some of the estates. What a pity to see your beautifully designed Plaza littered so frivolously despite the presence of the litter bins. Cigarette butts are an added curse. This carelessness is endemic and will take a major heave on your part to reinvent peoples' attitudes and behaviour. You are going to have to examine your strategies in this regard. Do ye participate in the anti litter leagues organised by Cork County Council? A small thing could bring about major change.

Waste Minimisation:

It is difficult to understand what is meant by the statement in your submission for the present year. The plans you have for the immediate future are more specific and clear. You could encourage the schools to try to achieve Green Flag Status. The pupils would learn much about recycling, reusing, reducing and composting. They would be involved in waste minimisation projects and would bring their new found skills, their new found knowledge and their new found enthusiasm home to the generations at home. It could benefit your committee to study the booklet 'Race Against Waste'. Such a study would stimulate new waste elimination projects for you. The emphasis in this section is not on litter control but on minimising waste in your community.

Tidiness:

The traffic calming measures on the Limerick/Cork entrances to town are well placed and give relief. And they are necessary. There are many factors that are militating against you in this section. All have been referred to in other sections. The assistance of Fás or Cork County Council is urgently required in improving in this area. Weeds, as at the Charleville Park Hotel, unkempt grass margins, dust and gravel create a neglected appearance. Pathways need the assistance of a sweeper as there is a lot of sand and dust. You will also need to tackle the phalanx of advertising on either side of town.

Residential Areas:

Charleville is fortunate in that there are many fine houses dotted all over town. These bring colour and maintenance to their surroundings. Some of these residences lead right into town beside the Church. There is another fine terrace of houses opposite the Kerry depot but the adjudicator did not get a name.

There are fine houses on a back road parallel to the Cork Road on the way to Fortlands Antiques which are proudly presented but the uncared for hedges and road margins detract from the fine appearance. The lack of signage makes commenting on many areas frustrating. On the other hand where signage does exist it is spectacular in font and style. The signage around Holy Cross Place is of the highest quality giving a personalised feel to Kennedy Place and De Valera Place.

The landscaping at the entrance to Lios na Rí is the standard that must be aspired to all over town. Glen Haven and Meadow Vale are estates of very high standards of appearance. There is great variety in house design, in landscaping in Glen Haven. No sign of litter. No weeds. The open spaces are mown. In the area of the stream the grass is allowed grow but does not have an untidy appearance. This is a natural wildlife area.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Arriving into Charleville on the Cork/Limerick road and one is struck by the increased volume in traffic immediately. Garages landscape both approach roads, busy filling stations also. The eye is dazzled by the activity. So there is a tension in the driver due to the activity. Some of the garages are cluttered with advertising, another distraction for the hard pressed driver. In order to counter this distraction the appearance of the grass margins is vitally important. Landscaping is vitally important. Colour is required. Screening is necessary to camouflage some of the dereliction. The approach road on the R515, by the Golf Club, is the most attractive into town. The fine stone walls leading down to the secondary school are very attractive. As a general comment there is a pressing need to maintain road margins more regularly. Apart from improving the appearance of the roads into Charleville these margins would help to define the town also. The goodwill and assistance of Cork County Council is urgently required.

Parking in the town seems to be very good. The laneways and streets from the parks to town seem to facilitate shoppers fluently and give adequate access to the main street.

The back of the yellow building is most likely Love Lane. The building here needs to be either painted or power washed. The weeds add to the neglected look. Baker Street has the potential to be a most impressive area of the town but at present is in need of a facelift. The finger signposting is most attractive.

General Impression:

The drop in marks from last year, one hopes, will not precipitate a drop in heads but a spur to 'show that adjudicator.' Many of the problems need the urgent engagement of other forces in your town, other than the TidyTowns Committee. Yours is a daunting challenge but one worthy of your enthusiasm. Charleville possesses many of the elements of a town that can reach the top in a TidyTowns Competition. To achieve that status your committee needs the backing of the local authority bodies, the backing of the business community in Charleville, the backing of the various housing estates and the imagination and organisation of your group in bringing these various interests together in a concerted movement. In order to perform this miracle you will need a vision of the town you aspire to in, lets say, five year's time. This vision must be attractive enough to mobilise the support of the above mentioned groups. The miracle has been performed in many other towns which faced similar challenges to Charleville. Go n-éirí an t-ádh libh.