

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Athenry** Ref: **189**
County: **Galway** Mark: **242**
Category: **D** Date(s): **27/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	41
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	24
Litter Control	50	21
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	29
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	242

Overall Development Approach:

Your adjudicator would like to welcome Athenry to the 2008 TidyTowns Competition. Athenry is an interesting town with a great sense of history. When work on the bye-pass is completed it should transform the town and allow the history of the area to shine through. On adjudication day the traffic situation was rather difficult and it will be great to see this resolved. Unfortunately the Entry Form submitted for this year's competition was greatly lacking in detail and in many cases was not specific in regard to work carried out for this year. No map of any sort was included and these factors made it very difficult for the adjudicator to assess the work for 2008. The 3 Year TidyTowns Action Plan was not included either so progress on that could not be examined. So for next year do include a detailed entry with relevant supporting documentation and a town map that clearly marks your new work for 2009. Do remember that the TidyTowns Handbook gives great information and suggestions. Both new Committees and those who have been involved in the competition for some time will find this booklet really useful. With a committee of 14 people you obviously enjoy strong support for your work for Athenry.

The Built Environment:

As a Heritage Town Athenry has many buildings of historical interest and the Architectural Walking Trail is a most interesting brochure. At the GAA property on the Croughwell road the sign needed to be painted and the road boundary wall also needed attention. The modern design of the Church of the Assumption was admired by the adjudicator and the roof in particular caught the eye. Good landscaping featured here also. The old town entrance archways give a great sense of 'arrival' in Athenry and are key features of the town. The area around the Heritage Centre and the Market Cross with the narrow radiating streets has a great sense of history. Has any consideration been given to moving car parking from this heritage area? The Town Walls are most interesting together with the surviving Watch Towers. However in terms of modern architecture Athenry has made good progress. The infill development on Cross Street with the new archway to give access to the

rear fits the streetscape here very well. Quite a number of properties seemed to be for sale and hopefully any new development will respect any architectural or heritage features of these buildings. Another older building that stands out is Brady's Butcher's Shop with the excellent graphics.

Landscaping:

The Entry Form referred to the Railway Embankment but did not give a location. The adjudicator examined the sloping embankment below the black railings near the Railway Station. The landscaping here was well maintained but much litter was noted here. At The Fields Bar the hanging baskets and window boxes added colour to this part of the street as did the other properties in Athenry who provided such landscaping. Near The Swan Gate roundabout a small area that was once landscaped was in need of serious renewal. Reference was made to the provision of summer bedding but no locations were indicated on the Entry Form.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

This river is an important amenity and it was good to read that you have been involved in a clean up here. Reference was also made to conserving natural amenities – what projects have you been working on for 2008? The Park was well presented again this year. For 2009 do consider a range of initiatives that will help to highlight further the great wildlife potential of Athenry.

Litter Control:

The weekly litter clean ups involving the Schools is a great way of getting the children more involved in TidyTowns and the environment. Much litter was noted at the railway embankment and on the Tuam road opposite the water tower. The same problem was noted on the Monivea road and along the road towards the Lady's Well right turn.

Waste Minimisation:

It was encouraging to note that waste segregation is being carried out involving the local Schools and that you are promoting waste segregation with local businesses. What is your approach to these businesses and how many are involved? Each year do try and introduce one or two initiatives and continue those from previous years as well.

Tidiness:

The replacement of the seat on the Galway road and work on weed growth was noted in your entry and indeed in any town or village weed growth can be a problem. You also mentioned the clean up of derelict sites but did not indicate which ones. However these clean ups are really important work and well done on taking the initiative. A vandalised Telephone Box was noted near Parklands estate. There is still some unfortunate signage in Athenry and this includes plastic or projecting signs. In some cases the font size of the graphics seemed to be too large for the space available or the scale of the building façade. As suggested last year do try and start discussions on the under grounding of cables in the town center.

Residential Areas:

A number of estates were visited and the adjudicator was quite impressed by the good presentation of large grass areas. Some of the estates visited included Gort na Ri, Ard Aoibhinn and Lambert Court. Grass areas here had been very well cut and good landscaping featured in these areas. Have you considered running an annual Tidy Estates Competition with the help of a local sponsor? It is also a good idea to try and encourage the setting up of Residents Associations.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Some of the approach roads were suffering very badly from the heavy trucks involved in the bye-pass development. Damaged stone walls were noted and many road boundary walls consequently needed to be repainted. The Monivea road impressed with the landscaping and attractive Limestone walls and the tall trees on the Croughwell road gives a marvelous first impression of Athenry.

General Impression:

It was a pleasure for your adjudicator to visit Athenry. For next year do try and provide some additional detailed information on your work for 2009. Good luck with your TidyTowns projects for next year when we look forward to visiting you again.