

# Tidy Towns Competition 2008

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Kings Court** Ref: **1937**  
County: **Kildare** Mark: **260**  
Category: **A** Date(s): **07/07/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	30
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	10
Litter Control	50	40
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	18
Residential Areas	40	40
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>260</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Thank you to the residents of this lovely development for putting forward your area for assessment under the 2008 competition. As you may know, in TidyTowns a whole area needs to enter rather than parts of an area, such as cul de sacs, apartment complexes or housing estates. In order to determine whether an estate is large enough to compete as a stand-alone area in its own right (as can occur in some areas, particularly in cities) it is good to have an assessment done in the first instance. If it is determined that the estate is not eligible to participate, the report may still be used for general guidance, participating in other initiatives or as a basis or applying for grants.

Having visited Kings Court it was quickly evident that it currently exists as an estate within Naas and as such should be taken into account in judging the Naas area as a whole rather than as a stand-alone area. In time the estate may develop a composite identity with its neighbouring estate, the Gallops and other new developments that may spring up along the Dublin Road. It was noted that there was a cinema nearby called Storm and this may act as a catalyst for new shops and other such amenities either side of the road which in time could become a distinct 'suburb' of Naas in the coming years. Should that arise, the new area would be eligible to compete in TidyTowns. As things stand Kings Court would instead qualify to participate in any local authority initiatives or competitions run by the very active TidyTowns group in Naas (contact details can be supplied by the TidyTowns Unit at tidytowns@environ.ie, 1850 25 27 43 or 01 8882300).

Therefore in these circumstances, Kings Court is not eligible to compete for prizes under TidyTowns and marks awarded are for guidance only, but we are very happy to still supply a report which we hope will be of use as mentioned above and help the residents continue to contribute to the overall Naas TidyTowns effort.

Marks under this category are normally allocated for the extent of planning undertaken and the local community, business and agency involvement in the group's work. From the visit, it is clearly evident that the

Resident's Association has the full co-operation and support of everyone who lives in the estate, such was the high standard of presentation. It is fully deserving of a very high 30 out of 50 marks. To build on this support we always encourage the development of a detailed multi-annual strategic plan (normally 3 years) identifying specific objectives, responsibilities, resources and a time frame for delivery. This not only helps focus the group's activities but also provides a measure of progress for everybody involved thereby encouraging group solidarity and maintaining support. It would also be very useful if the association takes part in any other competitions or wishes to seek funding or grant aid.

### **The Built Environment:**

Kings Court is a fine new development of houses adjacent to the Gallops estate. The development has an agreeable sense of enclosure with just one vehicular entrance and exit point. It looks out onto the Naas Racecourse and its entrance is marked by a newly installed, fine name plate stone. To the front is a series of houses in a cul-de-sac while the Main Square is serviced by a continuous circular route. In this age of anti-social 'boy racers' you might wish to consider erecting a barrier or other device to prevent the possibility of circuit racing. This is suggested as a better solution than the installation of speed bumps should this all too prevalent practice visit your doors.

Parking of cars and especially heavy vehicles on the pavement is to be discouraged. Typically pavements are designed to have a lower wheel load bearing capacity than roads. As a consequence their ability to withstand the weight of parked cars without cracks and breaking is decidedly limited. Concrete pavements once broken, quickly disfigure and the cracks permits the growth of weeds and grass. An example of the unhappy results can be seen already on the approach pavement to your estate at the redbrick wall between you and The Gallops.

The boundary front facing wall is topped by iron railings. The longevity of railings of this type is directly related to the level of maintenance afforded them. The residence association should, having taken appropriate advice, agree on a repainting interval schedule policy. The base wall itself needs to be washed fairly frequently as it is already showing signs of traffic staining. Ideally, this area might be painted as well.

### **Landscaping:**

The Racecourse Security Fencing, while presumably necessary, isn't very picturesque. A more suitable solution would probably be a fast growing hedge either instead of the fence or to screen it. On the day of adjudication it was not possible to ascertain the soil type, so I demur from suggesting the most appropriate shrubs for this purpose although a local garden centre would most likely know the area and recommend suitable planting. It would be beneficial however to bear in mind that if this approach is taken, the association chooses a native species which, not only would provide seasonal colour and variety all year round but would support local wildlife as well.

The trees and the grass verge are maturing very well and were very well presented, as was the communal grassed area. In respect of trees, conventional wisdom would suggest that it is better to plant them in clusters rather than scatter them randomly around the available space. Monitor and as necessary replace the one tree which is not thriving. The planting against the end wall –between numbers 24 and 25 might benefit from stretched wire (non-rust) to aid support and accelerate growth. Weeds at the base of walls or between the red blocks do not appear to be a problem so far but this should be monitored on a continuous basis.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

In recent years additional weight has been given to the promotion of wildlife under TidyTowns. Undoubtedly the encouragement of birdlife does add considerably to the overall pleasure of any environment. A suggested location for any natural habitat is probably against the end wall referred to above. Seek advice from a wildlife or a bird enthusiast who can recommend the best method to create the essential food chain, arrange bird boxes and related matters.

### **Litter Control:**

There was practically no litter at all on the day of the visit. Well done to all concerned. TidyTowns encourages a strategic approach to picking litter, such a regular clean-ups involving children as well as adults. The National Spring Clean run by An Taisce is always a great start to the year, and indeed is used by many TidyTowns groups to launch their activities for the coming year. As the estate is relatively small, we would not recommend litterbins or any other infrastructure, which if anything could attract dumping and hinder rather than help your activities. You appear to have the whole situation under control in any event.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

This category is as much about getting the community to consider and implement methods of reducing waste

in all its forms including energy utilisation. In effect it seeks a change of mindset in both the community and at individual, household level. It invites each household to play their part in re-using where practical and recycling wherever possible. As a residential area, the options here are narrow, but many TidyTowns groups have introduced household composting schemes, and the compost is used for their planting activities. Providing access to local recycling facilities for people without suitable transport or elderly neighbours is also a service provided in many communities by their TidyTowns group or local authorities.

#### **Tidiness:**

The immediate impression was that the estate is very tidy indeed. On closer inspection, there was very small amounts of spoil outside the kerbs at the central grassed area. We were surprised to note an abandoned block on the side of the road which could be of course a source of danger to children and energetic cyclists. The ESB should be requested to repaint their junction box at the left near the estate entrance which is becoming unsightly.

#### **Residential Areas:**

The individual houses were well presented. To take things further the Residents Association might wish to explore the suitability for a co-ordinated colour scheme in sections or in all of the estate. Clearly this would have to be a voluntary decision.

#### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The estate name in stone is very fetching and while its current location is not questioned it might be more appropriate on the opposite side of the entrance thus facing oncoming traffic. Internally there is no indication of house numbers except of course on each house. Most of these cannot be seen at night. A low level stone on the left and especially on the right front indicating approximate location of the numbers might be beneficial to visitors.

#### **General Impression:**

These notes have been prepared at the request of the Kings Court Residents Association and are advanced as opinions for consideration and discussion by the Association. We were impressed by the overall presentation of the estate and applaud all for their efforts in achieving these standards. The estate certainly looks like a lovely place to live. While not eligible to compete in the national TidyTowns we would encourage you to enter any and all local initiatives being run in Naas and the county as we have no doubt the estate would do very well, and prize money is always useful for a committed Residents' Association. Whatever you decide, the very best of luck for the future.