

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Leixlip** Ref: **376**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **258**
Category: **G** Date(s): **07/07/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	28
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	30
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	258

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to this year's competition and thank you for the completed entry form, detailed plan review, revenue data, photographs and map which were very useful on the day of adjudication. Your remarks relating to the transparency of the marking system are considered else where in this report.

The substantial presentation at INTEL is both impressive both in its extent, skill and its finish. Some grass was noting growing in between the blocks at the triangle at the entrance gates. The Mill Lane pavement extension has enhanced this area greatly. It is necessary to finish the exercise by linking up to the existing wall with either a wall or alternatively a more secure permanent barrier if space constraints demand this course. Ideally, the removal of deleterious material from this stream would finish the job. The Rye River walkway is a delightful project and your work at the entrance is commendable and added greatly to its enticement capabilities. The difficulty of protruding, garish signs some of which are out of proportion coupled with the sheer number of them along the attractive Main Street continues as a difficulty. More rigorous enforcement of planning guidelines should assist your efforts here. The river forest square is an excellent development set off by well presented communal grassed areas. The large building, No 1 Main Street appears to have serious cracks in its front façade which is surprisingly disfigured by large sewerage pipes attached. It is clearly a building of considerable vintage so serious and far reaching decisions may need to be taken in the foreseeable future. The single storey houses in dressed stone opposite the fire station are a joy. One does need refurbishment.

The Built Environment:

The Credit Union is a delightful, well painted structure, similarly the Mall, consists of fine stone buildings which have a dignified, distinguished air about them and were very well presented. Leixlip House Hotel is an impressive premises while the Springfield Hotel with its many flags flying was colourful and the car park was

enlivened by suitable planting. St. Ralph's Church (Catholic) in its elevated position looked very well. While the Library, in redbrick was similarly pleasing. River Forest SuperValu Supermarket was smart and neat. The Fire Station had excellent detailing in its foreground. The Bridge and Salmon Leap Pub make a fine cameo however the corner and wall opposite the pub does need attention - quite how this could be achieved given the traffic volumes is not easy to suggest.

The enormous task of restoring St. Mary's Church is continuing. It is a bold and courageous move and certainly applauded. In the interim it is recommended that the fine, wrought iron gates be sandblasted and repainted with perhaps elements picked out in gilt/gold as is done to such good effect on the gates of the Liffey Valley House Hotel. The Plaza as a piece of hard landscaping is a success however some may consider it somewhat stark to be softened by the introduction of ground or low level planting. A panel outlining its representative role to reflect the meeting of the waters would be a welcome addition.

It is a tragedy that the splendid endeavours involved in the restoration of the Scout's Den and the plans to develop wildlife and environmental project within the grounds are on hold due to mindless vandalism. The inclusion of the wonderful Barn on the World's Monuments List of most endangered sites will surely accelerate its preservation and, overtime, restoration. We look forward indeed to developments.

Landscaping:

The Rye Valley Project and the roadside displays at INTEL, hugely significant developments have already been referred to. The substantial undertaking involved at the roundabouts is applauded and on the day of adjudication work was well advanced. There is excellent planting in front of Riverdale, trees, new pavement and grass. St. Catherine's Park was very well presented. We reviewed a number of the locations referred to in your comprehensive schedule notably Easton Road, close to the GAA pitch. Your selection of mountain ash at Confey GAA coupled with the variety of scrubs there are bedding in well.

We welcome your concept of the steel flower planters and look forward to seeing them remaining in situ along Main Street.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Biodiversity Project in Sileachán Valley is even by your own high standards an ambitious and spectacular project. We look forward indeed to its progress. The provision of information boards and sign posted access will enable this nature wonderland to be enjoyed by a wide audience. Have you looked into the feasibility of providing wheelchair access to some elements of it?

The Rye River Valley commencing from its location within the core of the town is of immediate significance in this regard. The interpretative signs at its entrance against an enhanced background will themselves need to be refurbished in the near future. The Celbridge Road Project has changed an easily overlooked corner into a potential wildlife habitat. Incidental opportunities like this, albeit individually small scale, can add considerably to the environment and its attractiveness to birds and smaller wildlife. The small river in Mill Lane because of its proximity to the Park should not be overlooked in terms of wildlife development. Is it possible to consider the installation of small waterfall effects along here which would add audible experience to the visual in the park?

Litter Control:

Litter bins were noted at the Rye Valley entrance and there are a number of other locations. Some bins are reaching the end of their useful life. Perhaps some of the 8 extra bins whose purchase has been approved might be used to replace one or two while you await a favourable decision from Kildare County Council in respect of servicing the additional locations.

Waste Minimisation:

The progress of the various schools towards securing green flag status is applauded and the ripple effect of these developments is likely to percolate through the community over time. The recycling facility at Lidl albeit the only one currently available is well maintained, suitably sited and appears to be respected.

This category is also about getting the community in general and individual householders to consider and implement methods of reducing their use of energy and the generation of waste in all its forms. In effect it is to seek a mindset change in us all in order to reduce, reuse where feasible and recycle where possible in order to diminish the extent of material being carted to landfill locations. Have you any plans to stage a seminar or workshop in association with the Chamber of Commerce, Residents Associations or the Schools to discuss these themes and examine options?

Tidiness:

We read with interest and understanding your remarks on page 28. Some graffiti was noted on the wall near the recycling centre in Lidl and on seats at the Rye Valley. The presentation of the REMAX offices in Main

Street is very much below par, the grey entrance between the two shops particularly calls for attention. The major visual impact of the ESB sub station on the Dublin Road would be improved by suitable painting of the front wall and, as you anticipate, the addition of vandal proof planters in the foreground. The field wall just above has been very well reinstated. The ongoing task to position more appropriate sized signage along the main street is noted and wished well

Residential Areas:

The staging of your Tidy Estates Competition is an excellent motivating strategy and the favourable results were very apparent on the day of adjudication. Duncarrick featured a very fine nameplate while Castle Park was very well developed with Marshfield very well presented having a number of individual very charming gardens. It is noted that there are many energetic Residents Associations who undertake responsibility for the presentation of these own estates, funded by subscription from the Residents themselves.

The Riverfront Estate is well established but the concrete tends to break up over time and is difficult to repair. There is a charming house opposite the Railway Station.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The redbrick divides on the Maynooth Road approach are a very pleasant feature but the overall impact was reduced somewhat by a modest amount of weeds and grass growing through them.

We commend your major undertaking in the upgrading of the roundabouts. It is important that the road be fully and appropriately reinstated beyond the Fire Station where pipes have recently been laid. In a similar manner press for the reinstatement of the road surface by the new pavement in Mill Lane to finish that splendid project correctly. The road surface does not currently join against the pavement leaving a rough patch which will inevitably become weed infested.

General Impression:

Leixlip Tidy Towns Committee is doing a superb job and is truly dedicated to the task. In common with many such organisations, especially volunteers they are expressing what they perceive as the non cooperative stance taken by official and civil bodies. You have presented a very well researched application form which raises a number of issues perhaps some arising from this very sense of frustration.

The adjudicator must of necessity access the situation as he or she sees it on the day of adjudication and do so in accordance with quite a finite matrix. In a situation where there is a degree of anti social activity, graffiti to be removed or other damage made good, the enormous effort, commitment and resilience called for can sometimes not be adequately recompensed but it is always recognised. Inevitably, in adjudication reports there is perhaps an overemphasis on the things to be put right leading to, if not ignoring, sometimes the inadequate acknowledgement of the great majority of things which are clearly beneficial and improved. Be assured that your efforts and your determination to enhance your Town are applauded and appreciated. All involved in this year's entry are sincerely thanked for their efforts and wished well in 2009.