

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathangan** Ref: **383**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **279**
Category: **C** Date(s): **09/07/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	34
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	19
Residential Areas	40	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	279

Overall Development Approach:

Rathangan is welcomed to the 2008 competition. Thank you for the completed entry form, comprehensive schedule, pictures, the cd, tape, copies of your Core News together with extensive accompanying and supporting documentation. As background the Rathangan integrated social and economic community action plan 2008-2013 was also supplied.

The work on the ground is ample evidence of your ability to attract up to 40 volunteers which of its self is a fine achievement in a town of the size and scale of Rathangan. The red brick road surface in the centre of the village is very distinctive as is your use of the River Slate as a significant attribute and asset. Rathangan has a number of very fine dignified 18th and 19th century structures. We liked particularly the dignified terrace houses with the green and red door in Glebe Lands towards the top of Leinster Street. The Old School, now the Garda Station and the Old School House have a very agreeable air. The 1830 Parochial school now the Community Hall has likewise and all are an interesting link with your past. While the yard to the foreground of the latter is sparse it was neat and clean. However the fine iron gates would benefit from attention and repainting. The presentation of the entrance to Lodge Interiors leaves much room for improvement. All approaches to the village are well presented and orderly but Blackrath Road, newly resurfaced with its wide, well cut verge is outstanding. The raised flowerbeds and seats on the road from the Curragh are attractive and inviting.

The Built Environment:

Buildings in general are well presented throughout the village. Additional hanging baskets and window boxes would be welcomed. The Credit Union office was neat and orderly, while the imposing Catholic Church and School beside it are very well presented. The difficulties at Drumands old plant with planning permission delays now being encountered will clearly take some time to move from its present aspect to become a

positive additional element within the town. In the interim perhaps some attempt could be made to present the forecourt in a better manner.

Very fine new premises of Conlon's Motor Company caught the eye as did the small scale Cross Bridle Design shop. Ryan's pharmacy and Forget Me Not are two pleasantly presented structures while the post-primary school was neat and orderly in general, the iron work at the entrance area would benefit from repainting. The former school and now accommodating FAS Headquarters and other facilities was well presented as was McConnell's Meats and Corry's Auctioneers. The fine new buildings on the North side of Bridge Street and the Bridge Bar itself are strong, positive statements as is Merrimack Meat factory in the Industrial Park. Doyle's Equipment leaves room for improvement.

We admired the stone flower beds around the new Tidy Towns signs on all approach roads while Dawson's Court has been improved greatly by the new stone walls.

Landscaping:

The canal and area were very well presented and the north canal path particularly, leading to the interesting and unusual well was very inviting. At the top of Leinster Street the triangle and within it the circular flowerbed at the junction with Blackrath Road was particularly impressive and complements to all involved in this fine presentation.

The small pump on Blackrath Road would benefit from repainting as has already been done in Ard Mhuire. The trees opposite the church beside the river in New Street are very fine as are the very good stand of trees opposite the Garda station. The Tannery Field with its famous display of wild flowers is a delight to visit and savour. We welcome your plans to develop the Slate River Walk utilising this as a focal point. The Graveyard on the Edenderry Road was very well presented while the small scale Maura Laverty (1907 -1966) Memorial Garden is an ideal introduction to the River Park above the bridge. The fitting memorial there to local poet, William A Byrne is also well maintained. The GAA Sports Ground was very well presented with the grass well cut outside the walls and once again, splendid maturing trees.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Although it could be equally discussed under landscape the truly magnificent Killinthomas Wood is more appropriate as the centrepiece of your fine wildlife presentation. The wood itself has some fine information boards on the flora and fauna of the area together with the very helpful indications of the lengths of the various walks through the woods and the walking surface to be expected underfoot. To walk deep into the wood, to stand perfectly still and simply experience the moment as nature embraces one, with the birds and occasional animal calls mingling with the visual joy of the sun shimmering through the trees is to truly experience peace. From the nesting boxes which have produced baby wrens, to dragonfly's, to hedgehog's, to goldfinches all underscore the deep seated appreciation of wildlife and birds each being respected and promoted in a very practical and successful manner. The viewing opportunities associated with the river path, its flowers, the flora and fauna of the area are all high-lighted and illuminated in detail in the fine display sign near the bridge.

Litter Control:

Litter management was very good on the day of adjudication. We spotted ample litter bins beside the bridge, in Leinster Street, at the Schools and other locations. It is clear that your 14 volunteers with their litter collections have been doing a great job but your links to the Kildare Litter Warden and securing his practical advice and assistance as well is worthwhile. Involvement of the school pupils as well is an excellent investment in the future enhancement of the town.

Waste Minimisation:

The Recycling Centre behind the Community Hall was enhanced substantially by the two painted ends done by the children of Bunscoil Bhríde. There also appeared to be a recycling facility at the GAA Grounds. We welcomed the manner in which recycled railway sleeper have been used for garden edging in Ard Mhuire Estate. Congratulations are due to both the boys and girls national school who have retained their Green Flag Status and post-primary school currently seeking the same status is wished success. The recycling message is, clearly been accepted as critical and your efforts to promote Small Change in Business and the erection of suitable display boards at the Bring Centres address the second element of this category which is to encourage and promote a change in attitude in the generation of waste and the use of energy. The success of the boys' school garden utilising very largely recycled material was an excellent exercise in this regard.

Tidiness:

The sign on approach 'Please Keep Rathangan Tidy' is beautiful but do insure that the flowers in front of it do not themselves obscure its message. Low, ground covering plants are needed. There was a surprising amount of recent spoil on the Blackrath Road on the day of adjudication. Some minor amounts of spoil were

also spotted opposite the school in New Street. The black and white traffic barriers here are significant as they effectively close the view on that approach. Washing them would enhance that corner considerably. At the GAA Grounds re-tightening the support wires holding up the lattice wire would be visually very beneficial. The weeds outside the new curbing before the Mid-Kildare Tourism Route sign should be attended to. The location certainly and perhaps also the size of the large luminous and moving sign outside the bar in Leinster Street has to be questioned.

Residential Areas:

Rathangan has seen unprecedented increase in the availability of new homes over the last number of years. Doorley Park, Temple Mills and Ballyderrig have collectively added substantially to the number of houses and potential population of the centre. It is to be hoped that the TidyTowns will insure that as many as possible of these new residents will have an opportunity to participate in the committee's activities. The general presentation levels already attended by these developments all fares well for the future. Ard Mhuire had a very splendid stone name plate while the communal grassed areas were very well presented with a good range of tree planting. There are some excellent private houses along Blackrath Road and on New Street beyond the school. Yellow Lough Park is another new development which was very well presented on the day of adjudication.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The presentation of the approach roads is to a high order and clearly the attention given to verges and hedgerows is paying dividends. Signage in many locations would benefit from washing as there are too many examples of traffic stained signs and sign poles in need of repainting. Some signs have gone beyond the point where they can be simply refurbished and they need to be replaced. For example the 'Do Not Park' sign on the Curragh Road approach is among a few that were noted. We welcomed the 'Failte to Rathangan' signs in both Irish and English, also the good signage on the Edenderry Road. The 'Community Alert' sign here also needs to be washed.

We would recommend that the Killinthomas Wood sign be moved to the opposite side of the road where it would be more easily seen. There is also a need for a second sign at the roundabout where both routes are marked as Edenderry Roads. It is easy for the visitor to get confused. Blackrath Road has recently been resurfaced but the road surface on the Edenderry Road urgently needs similar upgrading.

General Impression:

Rathangan has improved greatly over the last number of years and its progress continues. The development of the Canal and the continuing linkage to it at various locations throughout the small centre make this delightful facility readily available to an ever wider audience. It is clear that the future of Rathangan is in safe hands because of the extent to which the upcoming generations have been involved and associated with the enhanced presentation. We applaud the manner in which significant figures in the past are being honoured and commemorated in tangible especially visual ways. We look forward indeed to the full implementation of the plans for the Slate River and the Grand Canal Walkways.

All associated with this fine entry are thanked for their efforts and applauded for the standards achieved.