

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Straffan** Ref: **385**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **290**
Category: **B** Date(s): **07/07/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	40
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	35
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	35
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	22
Residential Areas	40	36
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	37
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	290

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the completed Entry Form together with the helpful Map providing details of your objectives during 2008. Straffan is now firmly established in the upper echelons of the competition. Your village is growing substantially in size and you have been able to draw successfully on the increased resources available to you, 10 active adult members and 14 junior committee members. These numbers can swell to 30 during individual work nights. This is a splendid level of commitment from the general community.

You have successfully tapped into the significant resource represented by Kildare County Council. We readily appreciate your plea that you would rather spend your time working as opposed to negotiating or talking. Sadly, in the present day world these latter activities inevitably are an integral part of progress.

You have developed the core of the village to very great effect and compliments on the installation of the table top ramp, pedestrian crossings and the superb finish of the amenity area at this junction. The overall effect is greatly enhanced by the splendid garden adjoining.

The Built Environment:

The Barbarstown Road new retail units beside the delightful Straffan Cottage are a useful addition to the commercial activity of the area. The Straffan Inn was well presented. It may be difficult to keep the area in its front free of weeds and litter as it is not tarmaced. The grey fronted house is most attractive while the 1786 Catholic Church was very well presented as were its grounds. The National School had very pleasant planting at its doorway and we note, with approval that it has secured its Green Flag Status. The grounds of the Church of Ireland itself were delightfully presented.

Landscaping:

The range variety and sheer extent of gardens and planting that has taken place is commendable. The well established trees on the Clane road are beautiful as is the mature tree outside the school gates. The ground planting opposite the national school is maturing attractively. The small grotto in the Catholic Church grounds caught the eye. The large stone signs at the K Club and the flowers behind them make a most attractive entry to Straffan. While in general, grassed areas were well presented, some of the approach roads did leave room for improvement.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The nearby butterfly farm and the grounds of the K Club are established as an important attribute in this regard. The Church of Ireland graveyard also offers opportunities for the development of small scale birdlife and small animal habitats and this aspect might be explored with the Church Authorities.

Equally the School may be willing to incorporate a nature habitat within its grounds to the benefit of the all round education and development of the pupils and the community in general.

Litter Control:

The standard of litter management on the day of adjudication was very high indeed. A few minor amounts had been discarded on the road opposite the School. Litter bins were noted located close to the Straffan Inn.

Waste Minimisation:

Your Entry Form referred to the hope of the School that the work they were doing would lead to them securing Green Flag status. It was a real pleasure to note their success and the Green flag flying proudly on the day of adjudication. The household survey carried out by Scoil Bhríde would have garnered worthwhile information. In addition it would have served to concentrate the minds of many for the need to recycle. This category is as much about getting the question of waste and the issues surrounding recycling discussed and considered as it is about the actual implementation of a recycling programme. Your project is precisely what is intended.

Tidiness:

A number of elements must be considered within this category. The road signs at the centre were somewhat askew. This, because of the long grass at this point made this vista somewhat untidy. The perennial difficulty of weeds between the road and pavement and at the base of walls was almost totally absent in Straffan on the day of adjudication and we applaud this level of presentation.

Residential Areas:

The housing stock of Straffan has increased substantially in the last short number of years. Barton Grange is still in course of construction while The Beeches development, with the stone wall topped by good iron work to the front is maturing pleasantly. There are some excellent individual gardens on the Clane Road with hedges and floral displays outside their front facing walls. Straffan Gate is a work in progress yet to be occupied. The costly dwellings in the Bawnogues are individually very well presented but the central grassed area is not well developed as yet. Surprisingly the dressed stone cladding has already fallen away from the supporting block wall of the otherwise imposing frontage.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

On the Celbridge Road there is a delightful sense of enclosure occasioned by the trees' branches practically joining overhead. The Failte sign is tending to be obscured by encroaching vegetation. The speed limit signs are clean but are obscured by a branch of an overhead tree. The verges and hedges are not cut back appropriately. The installation of strong markers to prevent parking on the grass verge is prudent and worthwhile. The speed limit signs opposite the K Club are damaged. Their directional sign in the town centre is very traffic soiled. On the Clane Road the village nameplate is looking somewhat tired. The traffic calming signs have been vandalised. On the Maynooth road the new pavement is a splendid new addition to the area.

General Impression:

Straffan is a delightfully presented village which, despite the enormous extent of new dwellings has retained the same feel as a small, rural village. The integrity of its presentation is a wonderful tribute to the hard unselfish work of those involved with the Tidy Towns Programme. All involved with this year's entry are applauded for their efforts and wished well in 2009

