

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Johnstown** Ref: **396**
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **240**
Category: **B** Date(s): **20/06/2008**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2008 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 34 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 30 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 37 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 21 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 34 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 11 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 12 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 25 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 29 |
| General Impression | 10 | 7 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 240 |

Overall Development Approach:

It is very interesting and commendable that you should anticipate the opening of the M8 motorway by engaging in plans to restore the comparatively traffic-free village with appropriate improvements that can not be undertaken while there is a continuous flow of traffic. In spite of the traffic problems Johnstown has come on remarkably well over the years – this adjudicator remembers when the square in the centre of the village was an unkempt space and there was no way whatsoever of the passer-by remarking on what a pretty green: there has been a complete reversal thanks to the continuous hard work of this committee and the people of the village. It is good to read of your continued relationship with the County Council and FAS, and especially good to read that transition year students participate in environmental and community projects.

The Built Environment:

The tower of the Church of Ireland church forms a village landmark; the Gothic building is well maintained in its attractive grounds. Likewise, the Roman Catholic church is beautifully presented. The boundary wall of the school was in need of freshening up with paint on the date of the visit (as indeed did the walls of the small estate almost opposite). Colaiste Mhuire was well maintained. The unique plasterwork of the residence that is now the Husquvana premises is a credit to the firm. It is a pity that the prominent Ouncel building remains vacant.

Landscaping:

Plantings here and there, such as at housing estates and near the public toilets, are effective, but there is no major innovative landscaping project as such. The seating area at the Canal Road estate is a commendable innovation. The octagonal Green, of course, is what gives Johnstown its real charm, and this is maintained to an exceptionally high standard, as always in recent years. The hedge opposite the Church of Ireland caught the attention: more of this sophisticated kind of planting would enhance the approaches to the village no end.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is good to read that you are working with students of Colaiste Mhuire on local walks – an additional mark for this - though you do not state where, and the walks are not marked on your map. (Incidentally, we try not to miss anything, but a more informative map would be a help, with all the locations named; this might lead us to features that would result in increases in the marking.) We depend very much on information given on the entry form to evaluate activities of which we can not be aware, and this information is sparse under this heading.

Litter Control:

Litter control was reasonably effective, thanks to your evenings for litter collection by local residents. Let us look forward to the day when people stop dropping litter and such evenings will become unnecessary! It will be interesting to learn after the motorway is open – and you might include a sentence on this in the entry form – if litter decreases.

Waste Minimisation:

It is not known if the green flags were awarded in this year or in previous years, but whenever it was an extra mark is well deserved, and heartiest congratulations to the pupils and staff of both schools.

Tidiness:

You state that you are assessing dereliction with the County Council; you know of course that the Council has powers to take action against the owners of abandoned buildings but only rarely do so – it will be interesting to see what the result will be in this case. The most prominent derelict sites noted were near the village centre and down the Templemore road. There was considerable kerbside waste in the estate off the Templemore Road. An obtrusively rusty corrugated iron structure was seen on a corner of the Rathdowney road, and a smaller one near the Church of Ireland. Generally speaking, the tidiest section of the village is the approach from Freshford to the east, while the least tidy is in the neighbourhood to the west.

Residential Areas:

The individual houses on the Green, and the terrace houses in the main street, are what give Johnstown its particular flavour. The two Georgian country houses facing one another on the Urlingford road are real gems. Houses in the estates are more than adequately looked after.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Surfaces, especially of the main roads, are good. Try to have the wire-free lamp standards extended beyond the Green: those at the Green give a real touch of elegance. The car park at the Roman Catholic church was clean and tidy.

General Impression:

The people of Johnstown have really worked wonders over the years, as many a passing motorist will agree. Now that there will be fewer motorists, there will be opportunities to enhance the village further. It is confidently expected that the Spa Development Association will rise to this challenge.