

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Owning** Ref: **402**
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **228**
Category: **B** Date(s): **16/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	26
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	16
Litter Control	50	32
Waste Minimisation	20	4
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	228

Overall Development Approach:

This adjudicator had never visited Owning before and was much impressed with what he found. The countryside is particularly beautiful, speckled with fine farms. The village has considerable charm, mainly, it would seem, enhanced by the participation of the entire community. It is good to read that you are supported by the Credit Union. As mentioned by last year's adjudicator, you could be due additional marks were you to give more information on the entry form about your activities – there may be activities (in the school, for instance; or in connection with wild life) that are invisible to us and we should be informed about. Also, as you do not enclose a map it is possible that we have missed some essential features for which you would be due marks. Next year please be sure to enclose a map with all locations, sites, names of places to which the roads lead, etc, named on it.

The Built Environment:

The school was neat and well presented. So was the Marian Hall. The fine church with its unusual sculptural urns, handsome limestone gate pillars and wrought iron gates in its attractive graveyard will need a coat of paint by next year; the excellent painting of the nearby public house shows how important this can be in visual terms. Anthony's pub is very well presented indeed.

Landscaping:

The crescent-shaped garden on the approach to the village from Piltown is most eye-catching, with its well-spaced shrubs, trim lawn and splendid rose-bed; this is a credit to those who designed and maintain it. Other examples of planting naturally are less conspicuous but help the general show of colour nonetheless. Although private property, the garden of a house on the road to Aheny is absolutely splendid. The tree with the stone surround is an attractive feature. Perhaps something more could be made of the interesting ecclesiastical remains close to the church. Other remains – the megalithic tomb and the holy well marked on

the Ordnance Survey - might be investigated to see if they are worth incorporating as special projects and included as a part of the village heritage.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Trees come under this section. There is a wonderful stock of ancient trees in the village and neighbourhood, and the yews in the church grounds and graveyard are superb. You mention on the entry form that you have planted young trees in the past year but do not say how many; congratulations on this initiative. You say that you do not 'interfere with all the natural amenities that concern wild life', but this is surely a negation of our duty to preserve and encourage the natural world, and as well as this it is removing yourselves from the possibility of additional marks. In almost all villages throughout the country the school children take part in wild life projects; perhaps a rethink on this is indicated.

Litter Control:

There was very little disposable litter in Owning on the date of the visit, Congratulations to your voluntary helpers and especially school children who pick up litter. One looks forward to the day when people will learn not to drop litter and litter-picking will become unnecessary.

Waste Minimisation:

A very well-kept bring bank was seen at the Marian Hall, including a bin for clothing. You do not say if you are actively involved in recycling. This topic will become more and more important as time goes on. You might study the 'Race against Waste' booklet and find in it helpful advice to meet your own situation.

Tidiness:

It was not clear what derelict site you painted – had you supplied a map this could have been shown on it. Perhaps it is the blue house near the church? The majority of verges were seen to be trim, but some were surprisingly unkempt, such as opposite the entrance to the Sue Ryder home. Technically, verges outside the village name sign are not expected to be trimmed, but where these signs are very close to a village most villagers take the initiative of trimming verges for quite a distance into the rural areas, and this gives a very good and welcoming impression. As in other villages, householders here might take responsibility for verges and roadsides immediately opposite or outside their own properties.

Residential Areas:

The older houses in the village are most attractive and maintained with a real sense of pride. A lovely old house covered in Virginia creeper was partially seen behind a high wall. A number of well-kept bungalows line the road to the east of the village. Though these are technically outside the 80kph limit they are essentially part of Owning and their neatness has contributed to an increase in marks. Many bungalows on all the approach roads are in fact maintained extremely well; one with a remarkable front garden has already been alluded to. The Sue Ryder village is a model of what a small residential estate, whether private or public, should be. Beautifully kept, and a real haven of tranquility, it was inspirational to observe that it is situated so close to the school so there is a sense of the continuity of life.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The car park at the church was spic and span. Surfaces, even of the side roads, were very good. A new post and wire fence with a trench was seen alongside the cornfield: a bit of a conundrum as to the purpose of the trench – next year's visit will no doubt explain! - but it looked very businesslike.

General Impression:

It was a real pleasure to visit Owning for the first time. It is a very well kept village but there is still a considerable amount to be done. Some of the suggestions made above may prove useful. Best wishes to the Development Association and the residents of the neighbourhood in their worthy initiatives.