

# Tidy Towns Competition 2008

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Urlingford** Ref: **406**  
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **234**  
Category: **C** Date(s): **20/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	34
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	34
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	21
Litter Control	50	25
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	6
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>234</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Thank you for the completed entry form with its unusually interesting remarks and for the first rate urban design map which one hopes will prove effective in the almost immediate future. (If you are enclosing the same map next year, please write on it the names of streets and estates, and also include the most recent building developments.) It is very encouraging indeed to read that you are planning for the time – which looks as if it will be soon – when the motorway will be open and you anticipate the possibility of making improvements to the town which would not have been possible during the traffic-choked era. Certainly the change in the general pace of life in Urlingford should be considerable. It would be of great interest if you would include in next year's submission a few brief sentences about the impact of the functioning motorway and what the perceptible changes have been for good or ill.

### **The Built Environment:**

Last year's adjudicator mentioned a loss of care in many of the town-centre buildings and this was seen to be still the case. It will be interesting to see if business people will grasp the opportunity of the reduced traffic to have improvements carried out on their frontages. If even a quarter were brought up to the standard of the smart Londis premises it would be a huge step forward. Among the best kept commercial buildings this year was Copymore: other off-street premises would do well to follow suit. (What is the large building on the left as you leave the town for Thurles? – it appears to be unfinished and has a forbidding look.) The buildings of architectural interest – the Church and the Court House – are very well maintained as usual.

### **Landscaping:**

It was always a wonder to this adjudicator that the bedding plants by the roadside managed to survive at all with the swish of vehicles every few seconds, but yet again they do survive and the plants themselves and the people who laid them out are to be commended for persistence. The Riverside Park looked extremely well,

and the planting around the major junction at the north end of the town always gives a good impression on arrival from Port Laoise. Shrubs on the Cork road were doing reasonably well. Mature hedging at the GAA Emerald Park was admired and a cue could be taken from this and taken up along other roadsides to tremendous effect.

#### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

Trees come under this heading. Your tree-planting programme in the town and in new estates was favourably noted. Friendly ducks were seen on the Goul River and it is good to read that you have introduced geese as well. The Mill Cemetery and its leafy neighbourhood are a haven of peace and clearly the proximity of the river will play a part in developing this whole area as a nature reserve.

#### **Litter Control:**

Litter control was reasonably good, and good considering the difficulties. It is hoped that when the traffic abates that this will become less of a task for the dedicated voluntary helpers. Considerable disposable litter was seen on the date of the visit – and of course it is a thing that varies from day to day - alongside the old wall opposite the national school, in St Mary's avenue and on the road leading to the Mill Cemetery.

#### **Waste Minimisation:**

You did not fill in the section under this heading so it is assumed that there has been no progress since last year. This topic will become increasingly important in the coming years. For a start, you should read the booklet, which is obtainable free from the Tidy Towns Unit, and in it you will find many suggestions which will be appropriate to your situation. It will be good to act upon them. Heartiest congratulations to pupils and staff of the school for their green flag status.

#### **Tidiness:**

Some dereliction was seen – such as a little Gothic building near the Fire Station, and there were rusty corrugated iron structures beside Emerald Gardens and on the road to the Mill Cemetery – considerable painting is needed because the deterioration has obviously been going on for some time. In the main street there is still over-enthusiastic mass-produced signage, and the overhead wires do not help to give a tidy effect – the latter is something which should be seriously addressed once it becomes possible to lay underground cables in a less busy street. Unfortunately the road leading to the Mill Cemetery is coming in for a lot of stick here, but the fact is that it is quite untidy with unsightly fences and boundary walls, some nasty entrances, and the open yard of the ruined castle (or tower house) looks as if it has been used for motor-related dumping. This is in contrast to the excellent surroundings of the cemetery itself: the road leading to it should be improved to match.

#### **Residential Areas:**

This is a heading under which very appreciable progress has been made. Congratulations especially to the residents of estates on the edges of the town. St Mary's Avenue is a very interesting example of unusually imaginative mid-20th century residential planning and it was encouraging to see that a good effort appears to be under way to restore the circular garden; most of the houses are presented with real pride though some boundary walls were in need of attention at the date of the visit. This is the kind of estate that is becoming increasingly fashionable with young people. The two-storied estate across the main road was also well looked after. Interestingly positioned houses at Togher Crescent were admired; this estate is notable for the variety of trees planted. An amazing thatched mansion was noted on one of the side roads.

#### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Consider traffic-calming measures that could be introduced for local traffic once the main highway is open. Road surfaces and paving are reasonably good throughout the town. Street lamps such as those seen in Abbeyleix would make an enormous difference to the appearance of the entire town if introduced. This should be pursued with the local authorities in conjunction with the undergrounding of cables and removal of unsightly poles when the motorway is operating.

#### **General Impression:**

This adjudicator was impressed by the optimistic tone of this year's entry and hopes that some of the comments above will be helpful when important changes are being considered. It is hoped that these changes will not now be long delayed. Every good wish to the committee and to the residents of Urlingford when entering on a new era in the town's life.

