

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Athboy** Ref: **571**
County: **Meath** Mark: **263**
Category: **C** Date(s): **06/07/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	36
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	26
Litter Control	50	37
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	24
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	263

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the completed Entry Form, additional information, photographs and compliments on the Calendar which is a splendid innovation. Securing the energetic involvement of 14 volunteers, staging monthly meetings and sustaining two work-nights each week is a level of commitment to be applauded. Thankfully the results of all your efforts are very clear for all to see. You have established close links with Conradh na Gaeilge and their contribution of €1,000 towards your funds is indeed a substantial manifestation of their support also. The memorial garden on the former Darby National School site is a wonderful display. Absence of flags on the three flag poles might be questioned. The garden is very well maintained and most interesting to visit. The many dispirit elements which the memorial garden encompasses would benefit from an overarching panel drawing the various threads together. We noted and allowed for the major work in progress relating to drainage and pipe laying etc. The abandoned house on the Trim Road may be amenable to masking its present sorry state. It is a fine old traditional house and hopefully can be restored into occupation. Oakfield House is very impressive. We would recommend the planting of screening trees between the Ardan houses and the Industrial Plant adjoining them. Protruding signs are still perhaps too much of a feature. We noted 5 on Daly's pub – one of which was broken.

You have achieved great support from the community and display impressive fund-raising capacity as manifested by the benefit meeting at Mullingar Greyhound Races, coupled with the extraordinary amount of activities undertaken during the year as set out in the Chairperson's address to your AGM. The detailed and well worked out three year programme prepared for you by Ms. Corkell puts shape and substance on your ongoing plans. We liked particularly the inclusion of the all important maintenance guide lines.

We observed a TidyTowns volunteer in a TidyTowns vest on the day of adjudication, well done.

The Built Environment:

The Community School was well presented with a stone name plate in the foreground. It was freshly painted. Darnley Lodge Hotel was bright and inviting while Carty Properties Advisors caught the eye. St. Elizabeth's Nursing Home looked well. The Garda Station was below par, the windowsills especially required to be washed while the timberwork generally if not the entire building does require repainting. The Childcare Centre was very well presented both wood and building proper. The grounds, the tower and the Church of Ireland itself were interesting to visit and the original ordnance survey mark was appropriately highlighted. Work is in progress on the building adjoining it along Barrack Lane. The new library building incorporating the former gate lodge is an important use for the former building. The former old school on Main Street was also in appropriate, current use and well presented. The Ulster Bank and the Pharmacy are both outstanding buildings.

St James Catholic Church was imposing, well presented and historic. The National School (1945) in brilliant white, fresh paint with flower baskets on either side of entrance caught the eye. Window boxes, shrubs and the fine "monkey puzzle" tree in the foreground combined to make a most pleasant presentation

Landscaping:

The presentation standards of the historic Fairgreen, dating back to druidic times is a credit to all. Excellent planting was noted at Barrack Lane, while minor amounts of litter were observed at the start of the lane. The burial ground at the Church of Ireland was very well laid out and the grassed area suitably cut. We applauded the large and suitably full planters at the Library Road Junction. The small area in front of Dessie McCormack garage might usefully be the location for a small, raised flowerbed or rockery.

There were very fine displays at the entrance to the Castle Lawns with excellent trees on the roadway. The garden to those who died in 1798 is being maintained to a high order. However the seat does need to be repainted.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The views from the bridge embracing the river, a natural wildlife habitat and a profusion of bird life was delightfully complimented by the suitably sited and informative sign on the flora and fauna of the area. In recent years additional weight has been given to the promotion of interest in and the well being of wild life especially bird life. Perhaps a local enthusiast would participate with the schools in a survey to identify suitable wildlife habitats. A number of these might well be small locations but collectively they could have a sizeable impact on the range and variety of birdlife and wildlife attracted to the area.

Litter Control:

The cumulative effect of your many sign "Keep Athboy Neat", coupled with your frequent litter picking has made for a very litter free environment. Well done to all involved in this transformation. We noted litter bins which were suitably sited and of an appropriate design at the Community School and throughout the centre.

Waste Minimisation:

The recycling, Bring Centre on Old Castle Road was being well respected and much used. Nine units plus two for clothing positioned appropriately within a neat public car-park. Your Entry Form raised interesting issues concerning the use of these Bring Centres by older or disabled people or those without ready access to a car. Perhaps as an extension to the concept of neighbour watch assistance could be provided to them by neighbours in a sensitive manner.

Waste minimisation as a category is as much about getting the community to consider and implement methods for the reduction of waste in all it's forms as it is about materially lowering the extent of waste being carted to landfill sites. In this latter case the role of reusing where feasible and recycling wherever possible clearly has a major role to play. However, it is in effect a change in mindset both at Community at large and at individual household level that is required. It is suggested that in association with the environmental department of Meath County Council and An Taisce that a seminar or workshop dealing with these issues be staged in order to disseminate the message as widely as possible.

Tidiness:

We were impressed by the whitewashing taking place on the day of adjudication at St. Paul's Avenue. Quite a number of the informative and helpful Meath Heritage signs require to be washed. The McCann Auctioneers Property for Sale sign on the Trim Road had fallen over on the day of adjudication and looked quite untidy. Some spoil and weeds were noted outside the kerbs on the Navan Road. Sweeping outside the Community School is strongly recommended. Most grassed areas were well cut but one section here was left uncut for whatever reason. The magnificent wrought iron gates need attention. Six lance tops are missing and the entire needs to be wire brushed, sand papered and re-painted. This highly visual location also would benefit from the entrance walls being re-painted. Sadly some SIAC Construction site trucks have torn up and

disfigured the grass verges opposite their sites as they come and go. It is hoped that this will be restored fully when their work is completed.

The little goal post in Francville Court has been broken and requires to be replaced. We welcome the work in progress which appears to be beginning on the abandoned house on Connaght Street.

Residential Areas:

In common with many centres Athboy has experienced a dramatic increase in housing stock in the last number of years. Highfield housing features a very pleasant nameplate in stone with modest planting at the entrance. The communal grassed area is very neatly cut while individual houses contribute greatly with splendid private gardens. We enjoyed the shrubs planted against the warm redbrick background. Trees are maturing well in well cut grass. Infill housing is very suitable at Frankville Court on O'Growney Street and St. James's Terrace. The houses overlooking the Fairgreen were positive and well presented. In Clifton Court the weeds outside the pavement detracted somewhat from many splendid individual houses. For best effect cut the grass back from the top of the kerb. The trees are maturing very well but the empty site at the corner is unfortunate. Could this be temporarily at least made available as a communal grassed area. On the Ardan Estate, the old stationhouse development is excellent. Here the communal grassed area is not been maintained and is very much overgrown. It could be very much more enhanced if worked on. Remove the spoil and the few weeds. The sizeable Newmans Mill would benefit from just sweeping the streets and ensure arrangements are in position for the maintenance of the flowerbeds and shrubs.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

On the Navan Road the speed limit signs are obscured by vegetation as is the welcome to Athboy. No kerbs have been installed here between the road and the grass, so there is no clear definition between them. A welcome to Athboy sign on the opposite side looks well but the verge opposite has been damaged by truck and car wheel marks. The Trim Road and the Devlin Road were well presented.

General Impression:

Athboy is applauded for its many successes during last year and it is receiving, rightly, increasing recognition for its enhanced presentation. A suitable matrix has been prepared to structure your ongoing progress. We look forward to hearing of your increasing success in years to come.

All involved are applauded for their efforts and wished well in 2009.