

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Dunsany** Ref: **1359**
County: **Meath** Mark: **237**
Category: **A** Date(s): **02/07/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	30
The Built Environment	50	32
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	22
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	27
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	237

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to the Dunsany Pride of Place/ TidyTowns Committee for participating in the TidyTowns Competition 2008. Thank you for your submission, for your map and for the most helpful descriptions accompanying the map. It is a pity that you did not include a 3-5 year plan. If you do not have one the exercise of compiling such a plan would enable you to set immediate and medium term targets for yourselves. Such a plan would help you decide which local bodies and agencies would assist you with your various projects. As all projects need funding you would set down in your plan how you propose to fund these various projects. As well as that there are marks involved! Your committee meets regularly and on a particular night which helps bring continuity to your work. Do you engage with Meath County Council or with Fas? It is important that you would engage with the various bodies that can assist you. Discussions with the NRA could be beneficial to the village. How successful are you in getting sponsorship? What type of a budget would you have in a year? Good to see that a teacher in the school is on your committee. Have you suggested to the school authorities that they pursue Green Flag Status? This would bring added impetus to the Waste Minimisation plans for the village. Hopefully the community will continue to support your efforts.

The Built Environment:

This village on a busy road possesses some fine buildings. Many of the residences are older houses but still exude pride. Many of these older buildings have a stone finish, probably relics of a railway age, and these create interest and help create the Dunsany identity. The windows at Pianoforte were especially remarked upon. The entrance to the GAA pitch illustrated how important football is to Dunsany and the adjudicator felt inadequate at not knowing who the stars of Dunsany are. The village hall has had other uses in the past and, thankfully, the villagers have had the opportunity to save it from dereliction and put it to use. A pity that a similar fate did not befall that fabulous building beside the school. The Post Office looks very well. The school is the jewel of the street and any parent would wish their child to participate in an educational process

that would value their place of work to this extent, as teachers and pupils evidently do. The cemetery is maintained respectfully. The Church is the black spot. Take a look around and set goals and targets for next year for the Church.

Landscaping:

Your committee is doing its best to enhance the village through colourful landscaping which provides a splash of colour on the predominantly green canvas. The hedges throughout the village not only assist in screening but bring colour and definition to the appearance of the village. The trees are a natural resource and bring much to the character of Dunsany. Great work has been done at the pump in the past. Now the box hedge needs to be trimmed. The grounds of the Church have been beautifully adorned by the flower barrels and hanging baskets. But that good work is detracted from by the wispy grass verges. The screening of the derelict site is good and the planting of the dwarf busy lizzies adds a welcome splash of colour. Seeds have been sown at the seat at the cross roads. More colour would adorn that area.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Rather than totally sacrifice the appearance of the village by not trimming hedges and the grassy margin at the road sides for the sake of promoting wildlife, it is sometimes possible to strike a balance between the two. For instance cutting back the grassy margin sufficiently to allow pedestrian use while leaving the rest to grow wild meets aesthetic, safety and wildlife requirements. Hedges may also be trimmed provided it is done strictly in accordance with wildlife legislation and best practice. You should consult the TidyTowns handbook, your local heritage or conservation officer as well as relevant web-sites, such as Bird Watch Ireland's. Wildlife can also be promoted through planned wildlife friendly landscaping. One wonders if the disused road could be looked at for the purpose of creating wildlife habitats? The school might be willing to survey the area to get some projects started in this category.

Litter Control:

Well done on your management of litter. Your village could do with a few strategically placed bins. Your cleanups are certainly having the desired effect. Any piece of litter in Dunsany would be sinful.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done on segregating your waste when engaged with the cleanups. An advantage of living in a small community is that very little waste is generated. A disadvantage is that you will not be provided with a Bring Bank and that you must go to the nearest town to dispose of your bottles and cans. It could benefit your committee to study the booklet 'Race Against Waste' in the community available from the TidyTowns Unit. It would stimulate new waste elimination projects for you. The emphasis in this section of the competition is not on litter control but on minimising waste in your community. You could encourage the school to get involved in the Green Schools Programme which deals with lot of these topics.

Tidiness:

This is a category in which you could improve your marks dramatically. Already there are very few cables to be seen in the village skyline, a great start. Road surfaces are good. Use whatever means you can to improve the road verges and investigate the appropriate methods of keeping hedgerows controlled. As referred to above, well maintained grass verges would improve the appearance of the village no end. In places the footpath would benefit from sweeping. The lamp in the Church Yard needs a wash. This would give a more cared for appearance. There are some derelict buildings about. The owners of these buildings have a responsibility and could be requested to improve their appearance through a few simple steps covered in the TidyTowns handbook. While it is a last resort, don't forget the county council has extensive powers under the Derelict Sites Act to motivate owners.

Residential Areas:

The private houses are well maintained all along the village and in all cases bring colour and order to the village appearance. The housing estate at Knightfield is discreetly screened from the road and its landscaping also brings vibrancy to that area. The houses and their front gardens are ablaze with summer colour. Many of the houses are of exceptional standard. In a village that is changing it is inevitable that there will be people departing thus leaving the village with unoccupied buildings. In time these buildings can become a eyesore on your landscape. Dunsany suffers from this phenomenon also.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

As the road through the village is straight and does not have a junction, and also because the speed limit is at 60, there is a tendency for rushing motorist to speed through the village. Much of the traffic witnessed was of

the truck variety. Discussions with your local council could help bring some relief in traffic management. As this is such a small village you must try to make an immediate impression on the passer by. It would help the definition of your village boundaries if you were to take a more proactive approach to the road verges and hedges as referred to above. For instance, at present the Dunsany road signs are almost hidden due to the growth of vegetation over them. The sign at the side road 'Prepare to Stop' is almost completely concealed. So not only the appearance of Dunsany would be improved, but also road safety. Also, many of the signposts need to be painted and in some cases it would probably be better to have them replaced.

General Impression:

There is great credit due to the Dunsany Tidy Towns Committee for participating in this competition. The competition gives the village a national profile, it encourages your committee to continue with the work of improving the image of Dunsany to the passer-by and of improving the quality of life for the village dwellers. A little tweaking of your operation here and there would improve your mark also.