

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Slane** Ref: **582**
County: **Meath** Mark: **260**
Category: **B** Date(s): **03/07/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	37
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	37
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15
Litter Control	50	32
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	20
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	36
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	260

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to the Slane for participating in the TidyTowns Competition 2008. One wishes your committee the very best in your endeavours to improve the appearance of Slane and to improve the living conditions of all who live in the area. Thank you for including your map which helped steer the adjudicator about town in a meaningful way. Thank you for including your TidyTowns 3-5 Year Plan. While you set out your projects in that plan, there are no strategies included and no deadlines included. In some cases you name the agency or public body you will engage with to achieve your aims. How are your various proposals to be funded? Vague aspirations will not channel your work in an effective way. Yet this plan illustrates your commitment to the work you have undertaken. One hopes that you gain the support of your community. Are the various agencies that have influence over decision making in Slane supportive of your ventures?

The Built Environment:

The immediate impression one forms of the town is of an old heritage town. The main street dominates the built environment of Slane. From the top of the street the eye notices the colour and the shapes of the shop fronts. From the bottom of the street upwards the eye picks out the grey of the stone. Either vista is attractive. There is no doubt but that many vestiges of former times have survived. Well done on your negotiations to restore the cottage on Cannon Row. Is that the cottage across from Slaney Heights? It is a delightful reminder of the cottage cum cottage garden of another time and well worth a battle to retain it. Pity you did not put it on your map. It seems strange that the library would not be housed in one of the period buildings but its simplicity is tasteful. It is a hopeful sign that the Church of Ireland building is being renovated. Some of the shop fronts and signage compliment the heritage atmosphere for example Breens, Solitaire and the Poet's Rest while others diminish the image. The opposite is true of the Georgian brightly painted doors

on the stone terrace, the doors bringing vibrancy to the traditional grey. Every now and again one sees railings which are immaculately painted as at the Catholic Church or at the Health Care Centre and at the delightful Francis Ledwidge museum. The village square is a treat. Mind you the traffic is an unwelcome alien in a village square designed for horses, carriages and ladies in flouncy dresses. The Credit Union building completes the heritage impression at the top of the street, its design combining modern design with the pervading stone effect. The block from there to the junction is a treat. Then from time to time one is annoyed that a greater effort is not made to enhance rather than detract. The boarding at Cill Ghrian detracts from the pillars. Slane is an enchanting experience but is a place that needs the watchful eye of the overseer.

Landscaping:

It appears that you grasp every opportunity to bring colour to Slane, to soften corners, to create space on roadsides, to embellish estate name stones, to plant. Slane is already blessed with an incomparable natural landscaping so your work is to adorn that landscape and brighten the effects that man has on the natural backdrop. Your adornment of main street is wonderful though some of the business could give greater support. The Ledwidge Country inscription on seats helps create a brand for the village.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The potential is great. The adjudicator spent ages trying to find evidence of the on-going work in Lynch's Field but to no avail. It was difficult to access the area without fearing one was trespassing. This section holds great potential for your group as all of the raw materials are present.

Litter Control:

There is litter but there is very little litter. Well done on your involvement in the Anti Litter League. Do the estates have Residents Associations? If they do how do you engage with them? I see that you involve them in litter clean ups. Your 3/5 year plan does not set out your targets in this section and is not specific as to how you intend to eradicate litter.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done on the clean Bring Bank. Congratulations to the National School in achieving Green Flag Status again. Thank you for including the activities of the pupils in the school in this project. A perusal of those activities inspires hope for the future of the planet. Well done to the teachers. It could benefit your committee to study the booklet 'Race Against Waste'. Such a study would stimulate new waste elimination projects for you. The emphasis in this section is not on litter control but on minimising waste in your community. The ash trays would be more appropriate in the Litter Section.

Tidiness:

Traffic calming measures on the Ardee Road reduce the frenzy of the impatient through traffic. The lights at the Castle bring some order to the rush. The signs to drivers to use their gears on the steep slopes are welcome. It is wonderful to come on a village with a cable free skyline. Some of the signs around the village need a wash. Every attempt is being made to present a tidy image of Slane. Your aspiration to have all railings built in accordance with a special unique style will help brand your village identity.

Residential Areas:

Slane is fortunate in that its housing estates are well maintained, that the open spaces are mowed regularly and so there is no evidence of hay laying about, there is very little evidence of weeds, there has been an active policy of tree planting over the years. The newer estates take full advantage of the steep inclines through the estate to create sweeping, winding avenues and a rolling hill effect in the estate adding interest to the views. The two landscaped roundabouts in Castle Garden may have a traffic calming effect but, as importantly, they break the possibility of a boring straight line avenue. The estates are declared on a clear, clean stone. One notes that the use of Gaeilge is regrettably rare. In the estate opposite the Church of Ireland there is imaginative use made of screening to hide the giant block walls and in time this will produce a swathe of year round colour. Town terraces are also most attractive.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads into Slane depict a village intensely proud of itself. The grass margins are well maintained, the old walls are cared for, entrances to estates are proudly marked, house residents embellish the colour scheme with their own planting, and every opportunity to enhance the present landscaping is

grasped. Some of the business interests, especially one garage, could take their responsibilities to their surroundings more seriously. The stone walls on the Drogheda approach need urgent attention as they are already unravelling on one side. Road surfaces are good and so are the footpaths. Of course the approach by the Slane Castle is the jewel in the crown, yet again adorned by the landscaping and by the amenity areas.

General Impression:

Slane is blessed in its sylvan location, in its place in the history of Christianity in Ireland, in its rich built heritage and in the careful redevelopment of the village over the decades. It is also blessed in the enthusiasm of the present generation of dwellers who have a pride in that heritage and who wish to pass on a legacy worthy of their time in the village. Slane faces obvious challenges but one can feel confident that the present bearers of the flag for their village will be adequately resourceful to fend off any forays that will come their way.