

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Trim** Ref: **663**
County: **Meath** Mark: **282**
Category: **E** Date(s): **30/06/2008**
24/07/2008

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	43
The Built Environment	50	41
Landscaping	50	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	32
Litter Control	50	32
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	18
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	282

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to Trim TidyTowns Group for participating in the TidyTowns Competition 2008. Thank you for the supporting literature which shows that you are an enthusiastic group of people, committed to the improvement of the appearance of Trim and to the enhancement of the quality of life in Trim. Thank you for the map and especially for highlighting the places that must be seen thus channelling the adjudicator in the appropriate directions. The photographs were also most helpful in giving a sense of the town before arrival and in helping one recognise items when I stumbled across them. The castle at night gives a sense of another season in Trim. When preparing your submission ensure that the material is of relevance to the adjudicator and to the competition. A quick overview of the town confirms what one expects from your submission. You are an effective group of focused people operating in an organised fashion. Yours is a big committee so do you assign different sections to certain personnel? You engage with a battery of agencies and businesses, a time consuming exercise but also proving worthwhile. One wonders if there is a website you could use to add to your communicating methods with the community, especially the younger folk. You certainly do engage with those young people through your school work. One notices that you did not include any comments on your experience of the competition. Is this an omission or a statement! Certainly this adjudicator enjoyed a prolonged visit to Trim and wishes you well in your endeavours.

The Built Environment:

Modern Trim is built to the backdrop of its ancient heritage. The town of long ago was built mainly because of the opportunities the river presented. The river and the castle buildings still influence the development of the town. The town centre is full of interest. No matter where the eye rests there is cause for new excitement. Ancient stone walls and buildings combine with modern buildings and modern design to maintain the heritage atmosphere of Trim. The network of narrow streets and the terraces of houses, some from the nineteenth century, contribute to this old glory. The dominance of your ecclesiastical past in an era later than the arrival

of the castle marks out another epoch in your building environment. The various religious traditions are nobly represented in their beautiful churches. The significance of education since the 1830's in town life is marked all over town. All the while the tradition of strong wall building is maintained and is continued in the present building era. And then the modern age is imposed on this infra structure to create an enchanting town life. The whole castle area is a stage for any play. From Castle Street to the roundabout by road and back again by the Slí na Sláinte should lift the heart of the most spiteful cynic. The Castle, the walls, the bog oak, the hotel, the Church rails, the Garda Station, Norbury Hall, the B/B and, as much as any of those, the green cottage combine to make this a wonderland. Then the roundabout is your touch to finish the fresco. The bridges are a treat. Among the many fine modern buildings is the OPW site, beautifully landscaped to give the building and the body that works there the dignity it deserves. The sign for Meath County Council offices also add gravitas to the role of that august body. The rest of the site lives up to the expectation that Meath County Council will give a lead to the rest of Trim. The library still looks well despite the disruption on High Street. Some of the signage on the shop fronts are an affront to their surroundings but many more add a modern and, sometimes, mischievous air as at the Bounty Bar/ Boyne Gifts combination and at 'an Tromán'. Further out the Malthouse adds to its surroundings. One note of disappointment, the area behind the rails on Castle Street which is used by a public body as a dump. A shame.

Landscaping:

There are times when a mowed field is sufficient adornment for the surrounding buildings. This is true of the area about the castle. The lawn enhances its surroundings. But there are so many examples of beautiful landscaping throughout the town. Among the best are around French's Lane and at the castle courtyard. The roundabout at the Highfield B/B is superb and incorporates the old parish pump in a dignified manner. Also in town there is fine work with the raised beds in the Mill Lane area. The area around St Joseph's Hospital is also most pleasing. Another area at the Dunderry approach road is superb. The landscaping is a worthy reward for your ongoing work. Generally the landscaping at the entrance to estates is colourful and maintained. Sometimes there is not sufficient consistency in the landscaping work to create the desired image as at the cul de sac by LIDL where there is fine work at the entrance but later on all is neglect and shabby. That lack of consistency is also evident at the superb playground. On another occasion landscaping is used effectively to screen off the industrial estate. Great work is apparent throughout the town with various types of floral displays, all contributing to the summer fest in the rain.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The list of your activities makes one tired just to read it and well done. The adjudicator took himself on the Slí na Sláinte Walk and was delighted to find so many like minded people enjoying themselves. It was a revelation to see so many young people enjoy the river and the sheep. Some got to the donkeys too. It is a great 'back to earth' experience. The sculptured seats are a revelation. At those sitting areas you might now install some of your wildlife boards and the most informative history of Trim board. Trim is moving in the correct direction in this section and with the amenity walks and the river as resources this dimension should add to the Trim experience. Your next step in this section will be to plan for the welfare of your wildlife population in the town.

Litter Control:

The major push on litter control that is evident from your submission is surely paying dividends but the drive against litter is a constant and unrelenting one. It was horrible to observe some teenagers leave their discarded material on a bench by the Tourist Office with a litter bin staring hungrily at them. All of the projects improve litter awareness, assist the clean up, reduce litter and provide appropriate bins for the various types of litter. Your efforts are not to no avail. There is litter. It is a problem but it is not out of control. I like your overall aim for the future: 'to eradicate litter completely from the landscape'. Good luck here also.

Waste Minimisation:

The fine big Bring Bank suggests that people are conscious of recycling whatever about reusing and reducing. This is a major step in waste minimisation. Regrettably some people use the Bring Bank as a dump and make the area look tatty. It could benefit your committee to study the booklet 'Race Against Waste'. Such a study would stimulate new waste elimination projects for you.

Tidiness:

Construction work and street digging are a sign of progress, the untidiness transitory. Unnecessary advertising is another matter. You have some of that. While there is very little advertising hoarding evident one advert on the beautiful brick wall of the Bank of Ireland, offering car loans, diminished its surroundings. In so many areas of the town there are no cables. An ambition and a project for the future here, no doubt. Where road verges are neglected they give an impression of neglect. Car parking areas in the town seem ample.

Residential Areas:

One of the unique features of housing in Trim is that there is evidence of building in every decade for years past. This means that despite town renewal programmes many terraces of housing have survived the bulldozer bucket. And these houses now contribute handsomely to the character of Trim.

Then there are the modern and more modern estates with their fine estate entrances well landscaped and cared for giving an attractive feel to the estate ever before one invades the privacy of the residents. Tree planting in the estates has been a priority, the landscaping is continued in a themed manner throughout the estates but the overall picture is sometimes spoilt by either sporadic maintenance or by weeds growing by kerbs. Open spaces give a sense of space and freedom to breathe country air in the town and in almost all cases are well mown and maintained. In some of the older estates, for instance Pine Brook, the grass islands are now past their time as the priority now is parking space so the grass verges are ploughed and wispy.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach roads to Trim incorporate all that is good and not so good in this section. Many of the grass verges looked untidy because they are not being mowed regularly. The areas in front of private residences are often beautifully maintained by the owners of the house but where there is no house the verge is suddenly wild and uncared for. Unfortunately the adjudicator arrived from the Ballivor direction and was met with buachalál buis growing around the proud 'baile oidhreachta' name sign and felt that this neglect augured badly for the rest of the visit. In fact it did take time and convincing that the standard first encountered was not the norm. First impressions had a major impact.

The road surface is a problem in many areas. Some pathways also need attention. On the other hand the paving in some areas is modern, functional and attractive.

General Impression:

Trim is a beautiful town and more importantly, an experience one wants to repeat and share with others. The present generation of inhabitants was provided with an ancient landscape and townscape in which to dwell. The ancient could have fallen into ruin. It is to the credit of all who value your past that so much of the heritage of Trim survives. It is a further credit to the people of Trim that the modern town has been woven so seamlessly into the ancient patchwork of castle, wall and ruin. The fruit of your enthusiasm and of your imagination can be seen on this ancient landscape.

Second Round Adjudication:

Trim looked exceptionally well on the 2nd day of adjudication and the strong heritage of the town is apparent even if one was just driving through. The many housing estates, too numerous to mention, all looked immaculate. The approach road from Dublin is well surfaced although it is clear that there has been large scale removal of hedgerows, only to be replaced with bare wooden or concrete fences. Hedgerows are valuable landscape features as well as important wildlife corridors, and replanting would be a worthwhile and rewarding project.

The area around the castle looked great with well maintained recreation areas and zones set aside for wildlife. The River Boyne is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is therefore of international importance for nature conservation. Awareness of this should be raised through an interpretive panel, or by holding events during Heritage or Biodiversity weeks.

The river walk is beautiful and is a fantastic amenity. The town centre is beautifully presented with well kept shop fronts and colourful flowers. Landscaping may be dull in winter months and so greater use of trees and shrubs should be considered for year round impact. The town was practically litter free and a general lack of clutter lends a very tidy appearance. The bi-lingual street signs are a particularly nice touch. Unfortunately many of the heritage signs are graffitied and this should be addressed.

Overall the town is a pleasure to spend time in with a particular highlight being the outstanding built heritage.