

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Belmont** Ref: **522**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **239**
Category: **B** Date(s): **15/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	32
Landscaping	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	21
Litter Control	50	33
Waste Minimisation	20	12
Tidiness	30	11
Residential Areas	40	25
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	239

Overall Development Approach:

Many thanks for your Belmont High Street Moystown Community Development Group and TidyTowns Committee's submission for TidyTowns 2008, which was read with great interest, in particular the Environmental Action Plan and Environmental Education Programme. You would appear to have a good working relationship with the local groups Belmont Women's Group, High Street Drama Group and High Street Hall Committee, as well as statutory organizations such as Leader, Waterways Ireland, West Offaly Partnership etc. The participation in the Offaly Cherished Places Competition is also of importance. Congratulations on awards received here to date!

The Built Environment:

The mill area is a fine piece of industrial archaeological heritage. G.R. Robinsons is an attractive series of old buildings on this side of the village – there are fine industrial buildings behind – can they be restored? The old buildings in stone and brick by the canal are most interesting and obviously associated with the mill area. There would appear to be an old station building with signal box – could these be restored? There is an interesting old garage with a curved roof in bad condition in this vicinity as well. The crossroads area with Kelly's and Cahill's was well maintained and the area by the church, hall and school looked very well, with the school grounds being particularly admired with bird tables etc. The restoration of buildings at the Mill is a marvellous initiative and the provision of artist studios and art classes in this locality is an interesting project.

Landscaping:

The canal bank areas are well maintained with wild roses growing. There is an attractive open space on the Cloghan side of the village near the canal – perhaps the old stile in this location could be restored? The bog oak Good Samaritan sculpture was admired, as was the historical information board in this location. The pump by the church crossroads was painted but the post box behind could do with repainting before next

year's competition. The maintenance of existing open spaces and the creation of the Mini-Park at Beechgrove Estate are commendable initiatives in this category of the competition. The old miniature village was quite fascinating and this adjudicator was delighted to see it still there after seeing it originally many years ago! The clean up of the canal bank picnic area in conjunction with Waterways Ireland is a good idea. The identifying of suitable areas for Tree Planting Programme is an excellent idea. Plans for the development of a landscaped area along the Moystown Road are looked forward to with eager anticipation.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Work with Birdwatch Ireland regarding the Birdwatching Education Programme at the National School is impressive. The provision of a habitat area in this locality and another along the Grand Canal banks are both interesting initiatives. Plans for the circular walkways and tourist information boards are looked forward to.

Litter Control:

There were quite a few papers in the vicinity of the church etc. The signage to the recycling area was quite grubby and a single bottle was noted at the canal bridge. Even one or two papers are all the more apparent in a village of Belmont's size. Group organised Community Clean Ups are a good initiative and the Environmental Education Programme is an interesting campaign.

Waste Minimisation:

The provision of composting containers for the local households and National School is a marvellous initiative and we wish you luck with the Training Programme in his regard. The recycling of waste in the group clean ups is another good idea.

Tidiness:

Do ensure that messy yard areas are screened from public view. Weeds were apparent to the kerbsides near the school. Outbuildings should also be considered under this category of the competition and should be painted up. There were a number near the Grand Canal end of the village and in the vicinity of the school. The Community Awareness campaign in regard to this category of the competition is an impressive one.

Residential Areas:

The stone and brick houses near the canal were greatly admired. The whitewashed cottages with rose gardens along the canal bank looked extremely well, as did the creeper clad house with box hedging and original windows on the Cloghan side of the village. Bungalows were noted opposite the railway station and were well maintained and the nice pebble-dashed white house in this vicinity was also admired. New houses at the crossroads appeared to be completed but landscaping had not taken place in this location yet. There were some attractive houses opposite the recycling area and Beechwood Estate was admired with its stone "bee-hive" sculpture.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The Belmont sign on the Cloghan side of the village appeared very grubby and that on the Shannonbridge end was also grubby and obscured by hedging which could be clipped back to reveal the sign - provided its not going to cause any danger to wildlife. Fuchsia was admired in hedgerows. The warning yellow and black stripes on the bridge should be repainted. There were very well maintained verges at the High Street end of the village. There is a lot of space to keep in this locality. However, dead grass had not been removed after cutting. The area at the Grand Canal end of the village appeared a little more overgrown. Good luck with your work with local county councillors regarding road improvements.

General Impression:

Belmont is a fascinating village steeped in history, particularly that of the mill which is most interesting. Historical trails and walks would be a great way to make people more aware of its heritage. Congratulations to all concerned.