

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ferbane** Ref: **621**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **233**
Category: **C** Date(s): **15/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	36
The Built Environment	50	33
Landscaping	50	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	20
Litter Control	50	28
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	13
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	25
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	233

Overall Development Approach:

Many thanks to Ferbane Development Group – Environment and Tourism Sub-Group for your application, and a welcome back to the competition after a year's absence. You would appear to have a good relationship and high level of support from the local community and businesses alike. Visits to schools are always a good way of extending your message to future generations. Are the local schoolchildren actively involved in your work? Are you helping them in participating in the Green Flag Programme for schools? Work in relation to the town plan sounds like positive activity on your part. The colour scheme programme on Main Street sounds like a wonderful idea-good luck with same. The Percent Public Art Scheme sounds like another exciting idea. We were pleased to hear of the completion of the sewerage and water schemes.

The Built Environment:

The nursing home on the Birr Road looked well but the County Council offices in this vicinity should be painted before next year's competition. Buildings on the Main Street generally looked well - for example the Garda Station, Serenity Beauty Salon and the adjacent boutique. Gleeson's should be painted up before next year's competition. Flemings is a fine traditional shopfront, which should be retained and cherished. The Medical Hall has a modern front which works extremely well as it is attractive and simple. Do ensure that the render is not removed from traditional street buildings in order to reveal the stonework below. Most of these were originally intended to be rendered, so this practice is not only incorrect from a conservation point of view but can lead to water penetration problems. The Community School looked fine. The new Heritage Centre looked extremely well in stone, brick and timber and the adjacent school looked well, but its barriers should be repainted before next year's competition. Work in relation to the colour scheme on Main Street is a positive contribution to this category of the competition, as is the Interpretive display unit in conjunction with the students of Gallen Community School. Work with Offaly County Council in relation to derelict sites can only have a positive effect on the appearance of the town and we were pleased to hear of success in this regard

and wish you all the best in relation to improving other problem areas. We look forward to seeing your bi-lingual street signage in years to come.

Landscaping:

Some of the trees on both the Birr and Athlone Roads had appeared to have failed and will need replacing. You could consider work to the entrance area of the GAA pitch on the main road in order to develop it further, under this category of the competition. Work was underway to the fair green area beside the Heritage Centre on the day and fencing was still up in this location but it looks like its going to be a most interesting development. We note that your tourist information board is to be placed here. The church behind is a most interesting building. Do ensure that you consider year-round effect when planning your work in this category of the competition. Your tree planting on the Athlone Road sounds like an interesting and effective proposal, and we note that further tree planting is planned.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The wildlife audit sounds like an excellent idea and the promotion and preservations of these areas are a positive approach to this category of the competition. The Lough Boora and Noggus Bog projects sound like interesting and unusual ideas. We look forward to seeing the results of your work with the HSE and Irish Heart Foundation in relation to the development of walkways around the town, as well as the projects planned for the River Brosna and along the Grand Canal.

Litter Control:

A few papers were evident on the Birr Road, the Athlone Road and at the school by the Heritage Centre. The recycling area was quite neat but its bins looked as if they could do with a repaint, as they were quite patchy and scraped in places. The litter awareness campaign at the schools will pay dividends in years to come. The code of practice for local businesses regarding this category of the competition sounds like an excellent idea. The community clean ups and Foroige's Litter Buster campaign sound like successful endeavours.

Waste Minimisation:

Your continued development of the business code of practice for litter to include more emphasis on recycling is reassuring and we look forward to reading it. Have you considered organising composting workshops for local residents and businesses – some local groups have found these to be very useful.

Tidiness:

Some weeds were evident to kerbsides on the Birr and Athlone Roads and at the car park area at the centre of the town. Do discourage advertising hoardings as they give approach roads a cluttered appearance. We look forward to seeing the relocation of the recycling containers and hope that you will consider the surroundings of this facility in terms of its design and possibility screening or surrounding walling/fencing.

Residential Areas:

The established estates on the Birr Road were well presented for the most part – including Gallen Priory View. Quite a few new housing estates are evident – the Mill Race in stone and render was particularly admired. An attractive house by the bus stop with its flat arch and original sash windows was admired and its retention is commendable. Stone entrance and planting was noted to new houses on the Birr Road. Houses on the Athlone Road were generally well maintained. The boundary wall leading to Ard Glas appeared a little grubby at the moment and hopefully this situation will be resolved when construction work is complete. Work with Gallen Residents Association in relation to the implementation of their Environment Plan is commendable. Further development of communications with local residents association is to be applauded.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

You should repaint the bridge in the centre of the town in its yellow with red trim before next year's competition. It looks quite cheerful. The Athlone Road is an attractive entrance to the town with its stone walling and mature trees arching over the roadside. Some hedging had been clipped in this area – do consider wildlife and bird nesting times when undergoing this type of work. On the Birr Road, the verges were well maintained and new hedging was admired. However a number of trees had failed in both locations as mentioned elsewhere in this report. Weeds were evident to some kerbsides on the Birr Road. Ongoing maintenance of landscaped areas and approach roads are all worthwhile projects. The power-washing and re-painting of the columns at Brosna Bridge is laudable. Work at the entrance to the GAA grounds will pay dividends in years to come as these areas can make a very positive impact on the appearance of towns throughout the country. We look forward to seeing work at the Gallen United Soccer Club and the development of walking routes from the town to the canal and development of mooring facilities.

General Impression:

Located on the busy N62 between Birr and Athlone, Ferbane is very well maintained despite the obvious problems associated with its location. Well done to all concerned!