

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Horseleap** Ref: **295**
County: **Offaly** Mark: **214**
Category: **A** Date(s): **16/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	26
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15
Litter Control	50	34
Waste Minimisation	20	5
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	21
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	24
General Impression	10	6
TOTAL MARK	400	214

Overall Development Approach:

Horseleap Tidy Village Committee is welcome to the 2008 competition. Many thanks for your completed application form and map, both of which were useful on the day. Have you put together a 3 or 5 year work programme? This document would be invaluable to yourselves in order to clearly set out your plans and concentrate your strategy. It need only be a few pages long, outlining your objectives and setting a time frame against their achievement. It would also be helpful to adjudicators in order that they can monitor your progress as the years go by. It was disappointing that you receive "no help" from the local school. Is this a problem that can be tackled? Many committees find that the involving the local children is a great help to them in their work. It was also disappointing to note that you have little voluntary help from the local community and the poor relationship with relevant agencies and bodies.

The Built Environment:

The school looked well and sported some fine fencing although more landscaping could be considered in this location. A similar situation is considered at the church in order to soften its very hard surfaces – have you considered tree planting? The old Post Office is quite charming and its retention is commendable although some weeds were evident at the gutter which should be removed. Paddy Ryan's was quite fresh. It was noted that the car sales showroom was for sale – some staining was evident to its side boundary wall on the Mullingar Road. We were pleased to hear of the painting of the wall around the church and car park, and look forward to further work in this area.

Landscaping:

There is scope for much more development in this area of the competition – some tree planting has been suggested at the church, and we note your comments regarding a plan which is under discussion relating to this area. We also noted that you have already planted some trees on the opposite side of the road. The

horse statue looked lively and well presented in its central location. The garden centre had colourful displays and looked well. The village pump painted in the national colours with displays of planters and containers either side of it was admired. We were pleased to hear that you have been working on planting at the green. The lack of funding is a disappointment. Have you considered approaching local businesses for sponsorship/contributions? Many committees find that this is a strategy works for them.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

You mention ongoing maintenance and conservation in your application. Have you considered writing a wildlife study of the habitats of your locality? You could get local schoolchildren and experts involved. This could also give rise to a wildlife management strategy.

Litter Control:

Litter control was generally good although some papers were evident on the Mullingar Road and the Clara road. We were pleased to read of the success of the litter patrols and the fact that you wish to increase them. We wish you the best in this regard. The village's location on the busy Galway / Dublin road must make your job a difficult one and vigilance is of the utmost importance.

Waste Minimisation:

You mention that you are working well with local businesses in this regard but give little detail of this in your application. What form does this take? How do you communicate your message to local residents? How do you deal with the waste that results from your own work? Do you segregate litter? Do you compost grass clippings etc?

Tidiness:

Dead weeds were apparent behind the boundary wall of the church and graveyard. Do discourage advertising hoardings as they can give approach roads a rather cluttered appearance. Don't forget to consider outbuildings when looking at overall presentation. There were some on the Athlone Road which were in need of attention, and behind old post office. An empty frame without a sign was spotted on the Dublin Road and this should be removed. The fact that you are making progress with local residents in regard to this category was read with pleasure.

Residential Areas:

These all looked well for the most part. The house with very colourful displays at the crossroads in the centre of the village was admired. An attractive garden to a house with timber fence on the Athlone Road was also admired. There was an old house on this road that looked in need of a fresh coat of paint. Although you mention in your application that there is not much development in the village yet, which the adjudicator was surprised to note, as so many villages and towns have a number of new estates! You do, however, have an existing stock of housing such as existing street houses and single houses along approach roads.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

These were generally inconsistent in appearance. The Dublin Road was generally good despite this being a busy road. The verges had been cut but dead grass had yet to be removed. The Athlone Road however was quite overgrown. The Mullingar Road was well presented. The car park area to the church appeared quite potholed. We were pleased to hear that you deal with a cross county border committee of councillors from Westmeath and Offaly and that they continue to help you with your work.

General Impression:

Horseleap is a village that suffers from the onslaught of very heavy traffic volumes and you evidently do your best to overcome these. There are a number of areas that need attention, in particular your landscaping where there is scope for much further development.