

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Ardmore** Ref: **647**
County: **Waterford** Mark: **272**
Category: **B** Date(s): **28/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	36
Landscaping	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	29
Litter Control	50	36
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	37
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	272

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the very comprehensive application accompanied by map, which if a little unwieldy to carry about, was very helpful in identifying relevant places in the village and its surrounds. Additional material on your waste minimisation programme and other publicity material were examined in the context of the overall application.

It's been a few years since this adjudicator visited Ardmore and on this occasion was very impressed with the infrastructural changes that have occurred; they have certainly enhanced the village.

Ardmore was also familiar to me in my youth as I was a pupil in a boarding school nearby, sadly now no longer used as an educational establishment.

You have a very proactive committee of 17 with an additional 20 personnel that you can call on.

As with most TidyTowns committees you strive earnestly to improve and the results of your interaction with the local authority, other agencies and most importantly the local community are there to be seen.

The Ardmore Development Plan launched last year is both practical and achievable in its objective and TidyTowns has a lead role to play in its implementation in the years ahead.

There are issues that will always be outside the scope of a voluntary committee, but all you can do is to encourage all the people to sing from the same hymn sheet for the betterment of your village.

It is good to note that you have a strong relationship with the local school as children, when encouraged, will react very positively.

For instance encouraging the school to register for Green Flag status is a very practical measure.

It was also noted that the school is being rebuilt which suggests that the child population in the village and its surrounds has increased.

The Built Environment:

Last year reference was made to the two Ardmore's I would be more of the opinion that Ardmore has coped well with expansion and that its identity as I knew is still intact. The core of the village looked very well and it was good to note that establishments such as Kever's Pub and Ardmore Pottery are still there to the good. The additional developments, which are a direct result of the Celtic Tiger period gone by, are for the most part of reasonable standard but one has to acknowledge that like similar sized seaside resorts the concern is the imbalance between holiday homes and the existing residential developments. This is an issue that for the most part is outside the remit of a Tidy Towns committee and very much within the remit of Waterford County Council all you can do is observe and voice your concerns at an early stage. Dereliction or unoccupied premises is a problem that all villages and towns have to contend with and Ardmore is no different. There are a few obvious properties that need to be addressed and all the committee can do is encourage owners to make good these properties as best they can and if that does not occur ask Waterford Council to apply a dereliction order as per the relevant act, whether the Council can apply a compulsory purchase order is another matter, such an undertaking could be a legal minefield so tread carefully. I presume that the premises for this action in your submission is the obvious one in the centre of the village? All the public buildings, especially the new Fire Station were very presentable. The school is in the throes of expansion and the building that houses the public toilets and other commercial businesses was admired for its maritime theme design. In actual fact that whole area has completely been revamped as part of the village renewal programme, the cobbled effect with nice new seating is very much in keeping with the existing streetscape so well done to both the designer and the contractor in question. Powers Caravan Park, which one notes is up for sale, was well kept and free from clutter although the fencing at beach side could be painted.

Landscaping:

This is a category that the Village has achieved a high standard over the years and the committee has focussed on not alone maintaining this level but improving by putting new landscaping initiatives. As one who has a fondness for gardening I was impressed with the colourful planting arrangements that one sees around the village and at the outskirts. The rose bed at the as one enters the village was magnificent in that the roses were so healthy and in full bloom, maybe the base wall could be given a basic cement wash to enhance the bed even more. Some other excellent flower arrangements in tubs and planters were noted on Cliff Road up to the Cliff House Hotel. And the excellently maintained Bring Bank has been further enhanced by the prudent planting that surrounds it. You have resisted the urge to over beautify the village and have made sure that trees, which are a most important element of any village/town planting scheme, play an important part in the landscaping programme employed. Ongoing work on a new raised bed on the GAA Road was observed during the course of the adjudication. Well done on maintaining a high standard in this particular category.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Committee has been very proactive in helping to increase awareness among the community for the need to embrace the concept of wildlife appreciation and nature conservation. It has fully embraced and expanded upon the suggested guidelines in the Tidy Towns handbook resulting in a number of initiatives that are practical and will have long term benefits to the area. The submission does not include any reference to involvement with the school, this is the ideal category to get the children involved and it may be worthwhile to consult with the County Wildlife Ranger to come and talk to the school principle about the idea. The myriad of natural habitats around Ardmore will attract wildlife enthusiasts from afar and the publication of pamphlets on the fauna and flora of the area will be of immense benefit to these visitors. Maybe you should revisit the possibility of upgrading existing notice board and possibly the provision of additional ones at a few selected locations around the outskirts on the cliff walk. Congratulations to the partners that were involved in producing the Scenic Walks brochures. Overall the work undertaken in this category was exemplary and merits increase on marking from last year.

Litter Control:

Like most centres that want to progress in the competition you have addressed area of litter control in an admirable fashion. Given the fact that the village has a seasonal influx of people your efforts to make these and locals very much aware that Ardmore has a strong anti litter policy are very worthwhile and are paying off,

Little pockets of litter were observed at a few locations in the village and on the outskirts but overall the standard was quite good.
Keep promoting the message of anti litter in Ardmore and it might be worthwhile to consider some additional visible reminders around the village especially directed at the day tripper – something along the lines of “Take Your Litter Home”.

Waste Minimisation:

The recycle bins are placed in a central position in the village and as stated in the previous section extremely well managed and tidy.

Your list of project outlined in your submission indicates that you have embraced the Race Against Waste concept and have made an extra effort under this heading this year

For this you gain an additional 2 marks

School projects are extremely important as they involve children at an early age and give them the proper foundation in waste management that they will take into their adolescence and adulthood, so let's hope that the School will be successful in achieving the Green Flag Status

The Race Against Waste website will give you further information on suitable community projects that may be relevant to Ardmore.

Keep up the ongoing promotion amongst all sections of the Community and do act on ideas that you may get from the aforementioned website.

Tidiness:

The new developments that have taken place under the village renewal programme have certainly helped to make the core area tidier and less cluttered.

It is easy for an adjudicator to sit in judgement but some of the problems that you encounter such as untidy side and back areas are in reality often outside your control and you have to be sensitive to this.

Derelict properties may be a result of long term inoccupation or absent landlords but untidy back areas are a different matter.

There are a few very untidy back areas one in particular in a central part of the village that contains an old truck and what looks like old fairground equipment.

How one deals with this is difficult to say.

Other areas under this category and indeed your recycling centre are extremely well managed.

Except for that eyesore in the middle of the main street and one other premises fly posting was virtually non existent.

Unfortunately that particular eyesore building is an utter disgrace and it beggars belief how people are allowed to put billboard material on it.

I am sure it is being dealt with via the proper channels.

Residential Areas:

The standard of presentation of both established and newer private residences was very good.

Quite a number of houses were complemented by some excellent and colourful gardens where flowers seem to bloom in abundance – it must be the sandy soil.

The newer houses will blend into the Village in time and it seems on first glance that most are being built in line with what is traditional to the village, yes there might be a concern that too much holiday home development has taken place but one has to live with this- it may come to a halt for a while now.

The new street signs are very helpful in identifying established areas such as College Road and An Garrain which incidentally were well maintained and up to an acceptable standard of presentation.

The residents must have taken heed of last year's report as boundary walls were clean.

Full marks to the Committee for engaging with developers to put appropriate signage on these newer developments.

Overall the standard achieved over the last few years was maintained.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The internal section of the village has been improved upon in remarkable fashion as a result of the village renewal programme.

Footpaths were in good condition and extend further out and the road surface was much improved from some years back.

It was noted that under the Development Plan for the village infrastructural improvements are planned.

The roads entering into the village were all presented to an acceptable standard with the Youghal entrance from the Whiting Bay junction inwards being particularly well maintained with a nice expansive green side area and tree lined all the way in.

The attractive wooden sign just needs a coat of preservative and the name re highlighted.

General Impression:

The Village of Ardmore, which achieved the ultimate prize in the competition in 1992, is re-establishing its position as a high achiever

It has made very good progress in the competition in latter years and the community is obviously proud of this and also its history as a seaside resort of note.

Large volumes of traffic pass through as well as stop during peak holiday season but the village still manages to look well and people tend to adhere to the basics of tidiness and good litter control.

You have tackled contentious in a sensitive but firm manner so let's hope that you are successful in getting a positive outcome to one or two of the main problems.

In a different context it would be nice to relax and take in another few cliff walks but that's for another day.

Keep up the excellent work.