

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Stradbally** Ref: **235**
County: **Waterford** Mark: **296**
Category: **B** Date(s): **28/06/2008**
22/07/2008

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	47
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	29
Litter Control	50	38
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	19
Residential Areas	40	29
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	39
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	296

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the excellent application form and supplementary material in the form of map of the village which was very useful to this adjudicator as I had only been fleetingly to Stradbally on one other occasion over 20 years ago.

Your success in Entente Florale and the achievement of being awarded a Silver Medal in last years Tidy Towns competition is just reward for your efforts over the last 26 years of involvement.

The committee of 15 has certainly succeeded in getting the best out of the Community.

The Village was resplendent on what was a nice June afternoon that extended into a very late evening when one was able to appreciate the tranquillity of this the most picturesque of coastal villages.

It is noted that you engaged a consultant to help you achieve your objectives in your 3 year plan and you are wished well with this exercise.

The application submission is very comprehensive but do not feel aggrieved if every issue included is not covered in detail as it is not possible to do so in what is at max a 3 page report covering 10 categories.

That is not say that your submission was not studied in detail it certainly was.

Your relationship with Waterford County Council and other agencies would be the envy of most villages and towns in the country and no doubt this would not have happened if not for the effort the local community played in projecting positive image of the village to the public nationwide and indeed to the overseas visitor.

Stradbally is synonymous with Tidy Towns and it's good to note that you have a good rapport with the schools to keep this association fresh in the minds of the younger generation.

The Built Environment:

When one enters the village one is struck by how symmetric and in harmony the buildings are.

The mix of old period premises, which I must say are so well maintained, and more modern ones do not

conflict with each other.

The colour schemes are attractive without being garish and the signs on commercial properties such as shops and pubs are in keeping with a village of such standing.

The sundial, designed by Turlough Cowman, is now synonymous with the village and is a focal point and complements the information panel on the well maintained village green.

The public buildings such as Garda Station, Credit Union, both Churches and the three schools including the picturesque St James near the St James Church are in top class condition.

Just on a point of observation neither the last mentioned school or church seem to be depicted on your map which is a bit of an oversight as they have strong history with the parish and a good relationship with the Tidy Towns committee.

The simple but lovely street name signs should be cited as an example to other much larger towns of how to make a town or village more interesting not to mind a little easier to explore.

The public toilets, commented upon unfavourably in last year's report, were painted and were in good condition.

Road surfaces, kerbing and footpaths in the core area of the village were in very good condition.

Both the GAA Grounds and the newer FA Grounds are a testament to the strong sporting tradition that one associates with the parish of Stradbally.

Just a final comment one hopes that the village can cope with the level of development that is planned as per the planning noticed observed one of the telegraph poles on the extremity.

Overall a very good standard was achieved in this category.

Landscaping:

Landscaping and colourful planting was a feature of the village and its outskirts.

You have resisted the urge to over beautify the village with an overabundance of colour by positioning simple planters in appropriate places to augment some feature or other aka the nice cut stone container featuring a mix of impatiens and alyssum at the pump on the village green.

The rose bed on the village green was in pretty healthy state and that is no mean achievement as roses can be difficult to maintain as they need ongoing care.

The village green has once again been nominated for a landscape award.

Lest one thinks that the concentration of planting was at the green it was nice to see colour at a number of stone name signs at entrances in the village, church lane at the entrances to housing estates such as Rockville.

The ball alley has been enhanced by the border bed that is populated by colourful annuals.

Old Trees, the legacy from a landlord estate period no doubt, surround the village and give in that secluded feeling.

These are complemented by the addition of new saplings such as those planted in the newer housing development, its name eludes me, on the Bunmahon end of the village.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Good to see that the committee has engaged with all the schools to become involved in wildlife project of note.

Children will take to such projects with great enthusiasm and with proper supervision will produce excellent work that will prove so beneficial for future generations to come.

The village has such a myriad of wildlife habitats to work on between on land and at the beautiful coves that are nearby- you are spoiled for choice.

The existing notice boards at Ballyvooney and Stradbally Coves give a great insight to the fauna and flora of the immediate area surrounding the village.

Keep up the excellent work that you have been doing in this particular category.

Litter Control:

During my stay in the village I encountered just 2 plastic bottles hidden away in a corner of the ball alley probably left there by some future Waterford hurlers who were in there practising skills - wouldn't Davy Fitz be impressed if this was the case !! Whether he will be around when this report comes out is another matter.

You have taken on board the findings of last year's 2nd adjudication and acted upon them

Your efforts to get all the community to aim for a litter free status for Stradbally is paying off and there are also reminders around the village for the visitor as well.

The aim to have a zero tolerance on litter is commendable and one sincerely hopes that you will succeed

Waste Minimisation:

Your work on waste minimisation got you a high mark in a category that confused quite a lot of applicants over

the last few years.

Stradbally has embraced the concept of waste minimisation and has put attainable projects in place that produce the desired results.

The school children, as part of the Green Flag process, are no doubt involved in the programme and it's important that the committee keep involved with the school on this one.

The Race Against Waste website has an ongoing idea generation section that is very useful when considering new projects under this category.

Tidiness:

There are still a few problematic areas in the village and these would not be noticeable in other places but stand out like a sore thumb in place of quality like Stradbally.

One particular back area in the core area had pile of rubble and earth with grass growing on it at this stage. Suffice to say that the Committee is probably working hard to convince people with responsibilities for these properties and sites to try and make them good.

The Bring Bank at the Church grounds was basic but well kept which is all it needs to be.

Residential Areas:

All the housing areas, both old and new, were visited and it was noticeable that the standard in an overall context was very high.

The older established estates such as Marian Terrace in the village and Rockville on the outskirts were extremely well presented with the majority of boundary walls painted or dashed.

The communal green area at Rockville was enhanced by prudent planting arrangements coupled with a very nice name stone.

Viewmount Drive could do with a name stone and the green area could be populated with some saplings and planters.

The newer estates such as Comeraghs and Cill Aodha are maturing nicely.

St James Wood does not appeal to me personally it looks like an imitation copy of English West Country village and does not seem in keeping with the structure of Stradbally, but I am sure that it has many admirers.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

It's coincidental that I stopped at Woodhouse Estate on the way to try and discern who the original landlord of area was and noticed that the gates and immediate entrance had been recently improved.

There is a nice open sweep as one enters the village from the said Woodhouse Estate enhanced by lush trees and boundary walls on both sides of the road.

This entrance sets a high standard which is matched by the other entrances foam Bummahon, Kilmacthomas and in from the GAA Grounds.

All signs, as would be expected, were practical, clean and visible which are the main criteria for signage

All internal road surfaces were in good condition and the road up to St James Church and School, commented upon unfavourably in last years report, was more than acceptable this time round.

The footpaths in the village are well maintained and safe to traverse which I did in spades.

General Impression:

My visit to Stradbally was the first for over twenty years and it was a pleasure to experience the tranquillity of the place on what was a quite afternoon and an even quieter late evening.

Unfortunately I was driving so I was not able to sample the pub hospitality in either O Faolain, how good to see an appreciation for the Irish language, or the very inviting Cove

We will come back later in the summer to take in the villages and coves of the Geopark and Copper Coast in a more relaxed mood.

You as a committee have been instrumental in keeping Stradbally to the forefront of the competition.

Tackling issues such as dereliction can be a delicate process in a small village and you have the right approach, I have stated in other reports that not everyone is in to Tidy Towns and indeed are not obligated to be so.

Leave such issues in the hands of the authorities and do what you have been doing for the last 20 years encouraging the community as whole to do its bit for the village.

I am often fearful for small villages that become engulfed by big developments and that planning notice I observed set me aback somewhat. Maybe things might be put on hold for a few years now that we are supposed to be in recession.

I know that you constantly strive to improve so you are wished well for the future.

Second Round Adjudication:

Stradbally enjoys an appropriate designation as a European Geo Park on the Copper Coast. The village has been a pleasure to adjudicate for as long as this adjudicator can remember and this year is no exception.

Stradbally was litter-free throughout including Stradbally Cove. Weed control was good also however one residential development "The Commeraghs" featured weeds along the kerb of footpaths.

Flower displays were colourful and profuse and are a charming feature of Stradbally in summer. Residential developments are well presented and this includes Viewmount Drive, Rockville estate, Monavaud and St James's Wood; the thatched cottage and stone dwellings are most unusual and a handsome addition to Stradbally's built environment. This adjudicator concurs with the comments of the first adjudicator with the exception of the two plastic bottles noted, these were gone by the day of second adjudication! Something consideration might be given to trimming the inside grassed area of the footpath located between the Church and the village.

The 'limestone theme' of the village and approach roads is creative; well done on tree-planting and the replacement of old plants with new, you are of course aware of the desirability of choosing native species to support wildlife. A special word of thanks and appreciation must go to the students of the national school for their project Signs of Spring which involved identification of flora and fauna as well as the daily recording of temperatures; commendations are also made to the girls of Our Lady of Mercy school for their involvement in National Tree Week.

We wish you every success in the implementation of your plans and look forward to many repeat visits to your lovely village.