

Tidy Towns Competition 2008

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Askamore** Ref: **144**
County: **Wexford** Mark: **228**
Category: **A** Date(s): **14/06/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	33
The Built Environment	50	30
Landscaping	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	37
Waste Minimisation	20	6
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	28
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	228

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for the completed application form and sketch map of the village and surroundings which was much appreciated.

This was my first time in the tranquil village of Askamore and to have some idea of the geography of the area was very helpful.

Mind you finding the village in the first instance proved a little bit of a challenge.

The Committee of 10, which falls under the auspices of Askamore Community Rural Development, is very proactive in mobilising the community to play its part in the Tidy Towns' movement.

Also your interaction with bodies such as Wexford County Council, FAS, Wexford Partnership and An Taisce just to name a few has proved to be beneficial to the wider community.

Askamore is a tranquil village and there is always a debate whether the attraction of new housing developments to such sized places will affect their equilibrium.

One could argue that new houses bring new people who in turn will involve themselves in the community. A small exclusive development such as the one under construction should fit in nicely with the village structure.

Adjudicators do realise that Committee's are very much voluntary by nature and that quite a lot of issues are well outside their control.

Usually an adjudicator will advise Committees to lobby local public representatives to get local issues to the forefront and I feel that comments are meant to be helpful rather than critical but then again it depends on the way they are phrased.

The Built Environment:

The public buildings Church and Graveyard in the village proper and the National School in Ballyellis were

maintained to a very high standard. In actual fact there was work being done on the Graveyard grounds on the day of adjudication, so congratulations to those that are entrusted with the upkeep of these premises and grounds.

The Grotto is in the throes of refurbishment and the herringbone stone design is very prevalent in this part of the County. We wish you well in your efforts to obtain major sponsorship for the project.

Doran's Shop, which obviously has decades of association with Askamore, could be improved a little by simply applying a brighter exterior paint. It has a significant position in the Village and should exploit that to the full. It is good to note that it has retained the old Oific and Phoist sign as a link with the past.

Congratulations on receiving the county heritage award for the restoration of the Old School, an information board would be welcome as it would give visitors an insight into the history of the school.

The Child Care Centre is a well constructed building that has put in place facilities to cater for people with disabilities.

Landscaping:

The planting schemes all around the village and its surrounds have been carefully planned.

Examples abound and the arrangements at various junctions are particularly appealing with a good combination of plants such as cineraria enhanced with colourful annuals.

The arrangement at the Welcome to Askamore, forgive me entrance road name alludes me Carnew Ferns ?, was most imaginative with the raised stone bed enhanced by half barrels painted black and filled with dianthus amongst others.

When the Grotto is finished I would recommend that the adjoining flower bed be populated with colour to complement the existing shrubs.

Individual homestead owners have done their bit by way off well presented gardens and other forms of planters that are to be seen in the area.

A lot of effort has gone into getting the right balance of planting arrangements to suit the surroundings and you have succeeded admirably in this respect.

The Graveyard was mentioned in last years report for the manner of presentation and it certainly looks resplendent this year as well, so congratulations to those that keep it in such good condition.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The main objective in this category is the conservation of natural amenities and wildlife areas such as wooded areas, watercourses and hedgerows.

The Committee have set an example that other centres might follow in actually updating the seasonal information on the board at the Graveyard.

Good to note ,that on foot of a suggestion in last year's report, you are exploring the possibility of setting up a walking route.

The fact that you have such natural habitats and a traditional association with hill walking is the key to bringing more visitors to the area,

Being featured in say the Walking Ireland brochure would be a big boost if you can swing it, as the publication is promoted at all the major overseas tourism workshops pre each new tourist season.

One looks forward to some leisure walking in the Askamore area in years ahead.

There are some good initiatives planned for the future and the community will reap the benefits of working with the An Taisce Wildlife Ranger.

Litter Control:

Excellent work being done in this category and it is good to note that you have plans to involve the schoolchildren in a number of additional projects in the year ahead.

It is important that children appreciate the importance of litter control and its contribution to a cleaner environment.

Despite the involvement of the TidyTowns movement in trying to spread the gospel of litter free villages and towns we as a nation are still not very litter conscious.

The Village of Askamore is certainly doing its bit to promote the concept of good litter control and you have gained an additional two marks for your efforts.

Waste Minimisation:

The committee has embraced the ethos of the Race Against Waste concept in a very short space of time if the quality of initiatives is anything to go by.

The involvement of Ballyellis NS is very welcome as it wil, as you state in your submission, encourage the kids to appreciate and take care of the environment in what is a very unspoilt area.

Recycling /composting work and the proposed meetings with Wexford County Council shows that the concept

of waste minimisation has been promoted to the local community with gusto. Keep abreast of new ideas and possible project initiatives by consulting the Race against Waste publication and website. Well done and one looks forward to seeing more projects in place for next years competition.

Tidiness:

As was the case in the last category there is a major effort being undertaken by the wider community to present the Village as a tidy place to the visitor. The Village is small and it has the advantage of being easily patrolled. The area that houses the Community Centre and Childcare Building was very clean, tidy and orderly. The recycling area was compact with no bags lying at the base of the receptacles. While I commented on the blandness of Doran's Shop exterior in a previous section I must complement the owners on the condition of the outbuildings such as the haybarn. This is a focal area of the village and these buildings have a very prominent position.

Residential Areas:

Askamore has extensive rural charm that one associates with inner Ireland. Rural dwellings are one of the main components of this charm and in the Village and its surrounds all residences were very well presented in a simple but delightful fashion. Both farmhouses and private residences had their immediate surrounds and boundary walls clean and tidy and of course these were complemented by the natural stone walls that feature prominently around Askamore. The Wicklow flag flew proudly in a few locations. The advent of the new housing development was commented on in a previous section and suffices to say that it is hoped that it will blend in with the existing village layout.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The road network into the village proper was very well maintained and reasonably well signposted once one found how to get to the outskirts. The Village of Askamore is off the beaten track and can be difficult to locate - well slightly difficult – for any visitor. Mind you if one does get lost in the myriad of small roads it can be hard to get back on track. The verges and hedgrows have been treated in accordance with recommendations to accommodate the nesting season. Both the entrances from Ballyellis/Gorey link and Ferns/ Carnew are very inviting and road surfaces were very acceptable. It is hoped that the committee get a positive response to the requests that were submitted as part of the 5 year plan for the village, it is important that you lobby your local public representatives to help accelerate the process.

General Impression:

Judging Askamore was a hugely enjoyable experience in that it shows that the concept of Tidy Towns can be embraced by what in effect is a rural community in the true sense of the phrase. Excellent work is being done by a very proactive committee to make sure that Askamore is to the forefront in the competition. Let's hope that Doran's Shop will re open in the near future and become a focal point for the core area of the Village. The Committee has been realistic in realising that change has to be accommodated but not at the cost of Askamore losing its rural appeal. You are wished well for the future and continued progress in the competition.