

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Rathbarry** Ref: **689**
County: **Cork(West)** Mark: **298**
Category: **A** Date(s): **24/06/2009**
22/07/2009

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	46
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	31
Litter Control	50	40
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	21
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	37
General Impression	10	9
TOTAL MARK	400	298

Overall Development Approach:

Congratulations to Rathbarry Tidy Towns Group for participating in the Tidy Towns Competition 2009. Thank you for the supporting literature which shows that you are an enthusiastic group of people, committed to the improvement of the quality of life in Rathbarry and an ambitious group with designs on even further glory. The content of your submission remains focussed and targeted throughout and also suggests a group experienced in dealing with the relevant agencies. Your engagement with the schools is evident from the smiling faces of the little elves. Thank you for the map and especially for highlighting areas of importance to you. These highlights steered the adjudicator in appropriate directions to areas that would have not been found otherwise. The photographs were also most helpful in giving a village sense before arrival. These photos show that your support transcends the generation gap and therefore augurs well for the future of Rathbarry.

The Built Environment:

The Tidy Towns Committee submission of 2000 stated that Rathbarry did not have a wealth of heritage buildings. What about the estate walls and their building style, so unique to this area. The development of Rathbarry has, it seems from a one day visit, been very much influenced by the Carberys. The castle may be beyond the Pale but the pillars at the entrance to the estate and the Gate Lodge are fascinating in design and maintenance. Lady Carbery's Well is another fine relic of former times, a built construction and honoured by your description at its site. So a cottage may not rate highly in an architect's esteem. What you have achieved at the Sprigging Cottage is worthy of everybody's esteem. What a pity it was not open. A peek through the windows fired the imagination. One cannot leave this section without mention of the Church and its environs. Walking on the grass reminded one of the fairways of Augusta (on TV). The landscaping at the back, especially from the car park, was another treat. The area about the Post Office is a wonderland.

Landscaping:

Landscaping throughout enhances the village appearance. It is apparent that the development of the landscaping has been ongoing and that to-day's appearance is the result of many years of planning, creation and maintenance. There is no need to patronise your committee on the work done. But the adjudicator is struck on arrival by the beech hedge, the barrels of red, the stained upkeep of those barrels, the design of the roundabout, to give it an urban term. The work for this year is even more ambitious and adds further to your achievement. This adjudicator feels uneasy about the water feature in your picnic park. Rathbarry is a village with a beautiful stream flowing within meters of this creation. The village does not require gimmickry of any nature to enhance it. Nature has seen to that. The stream at that point does not create the swish of flowing water but could be made to do so as it does further upstream at the Sprigging Cottage. Is there a need for the sound of flowing water? Listen to the rustle of nature all about. And what of your outdoor museum. The adjudicator learned two new words to-day, sprigging and winnowing. The shade provided by the planting of previous years now acts as a roof over these precious items. This is not just a visual treat. An educational tour began here.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The adjudicator enjoyed rushing about on all of the nature trails your submission describes. What a joy. At first the adjudicator thought the sound was that of a pheasant. This enhanced the wildlife experience. On one of the walks the inserts into the posts were spotted. The nature walk now became an educational tour. What a wonder. That sound again amid the many other sounds of nature but now closer. A peacock. What a bend on the road this village is turning out to be. You are so right about access to sites and access to information.

Litter Control:

The design of the litter bins at the Post Office invites one to use them. Your photos illustrate the emphasis you place on involving the youngsters. These photos also illustrate the need for vigilance. The junior litter patrols are another worthy initiative. Collection is important. Reduction is now the key concept.

Waste Minimisation:

Difficult to judge. Your submission states that you are reacting to the suggestion in last year's report regarding compost. Good. Your engagement with the school is also encouraging. What about the local farming population. Waste minimisation must be an issue in agricultural circles.

Tidiness:

Your submission details the work done. The visit shows that this work has been carried out. The signs are immaculate. There is a private picnic table that would improve its appearance with a rub of a brush. And in a prominent spot too. The road linings at the junction need attention, especially as right of way is difficult to assess for the visitor.

Residential Areas:

Dwellings throughout the village sit comfortably in their surroundings and hence enhance those surroundings. Most of the dwellings are surrounded by trees and the presence of the natural. Residents refine that wilderness about their houses and all looks so well. But a special 'well done' to Dún Mhuirle out the road where the trees are not so dominant. The flowers here raise the spirit.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Where in Ireland would one find the style of walls that guide one into a village? Or where would one pass through a former estate and enter a village through the estate entrance? We are in a village steeped in existing history. Tobairín has a historical significance, hence Tobairín Road has a further significance and deserving of its inscription in stone. All roads in the environs of Rathbarry are treated with the respect they deserve. Weeds are plants in Rathbarry because they grow freely in their proper environment. One is sure that cables have been discussed with the relevant agencies. The village signs are a work of genius. Is that a 'rath' on the larger sign? If so does it still exist in any condition?

General Impression:

Having visited Rathbarry one must compliment all involved in Tidy Towns for their vision. Rathbarry could be yet another undistinguished rural junction. That is not the case because of that vision and the determination of a number of people. The museum, an informal stroll through activities in Rathbarry, was most pleasant. The item that most interested the adjudicator was the Tidy Towns Committee submission of 2000. You have come along way since.

Second Round Adjudication:

There are a number of roads leading to Rathbarry, but none have quite the impact of arriving past the gate lodge, having come through the estate and viewed the Castle on the height. The timber fencing that faces you is full of rustic charm, so unlike a regimented concrete or wire barrier. The Lake walk is most inviting. The stone wall on the left is breached by the growing tree, which will need attention over time. The white washed kerbs put the finishing touches to the central 'island' display. Behind the charming post office, with its manicured foreground, the Miltown River is attractive, but its undoubted appeal is marred somewhat by the five items of litter left by some mindless visitor. The tiny museum was full of interest, as was the pleasantly presented Sprigging School. Full marks for the number of stone explanatory notes around the village and, especially, for the fitting monument to local champion walker, Dan O'Leary. The display of former farm machinery and, especially, the most informative notices with each of them were of great interest and we admired the impressive display of former awards.

We admired also the fine new houses with their stone frontage and the manner in which so many of the premises were displayed. Your landscaping and presentation of many wood lined walks and picnic areas are a credit to all involved, not just now, but clearly those who have laboured over many years, while this special and enchanting village was slowly taking shape.