

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Raphoe** Ref: **708**
County: **Donegal** Mark: **283**
Category: **C** Date(s): **21/06/2009**

| | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded 2009 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Overall Development Approach | 50 | 45 |
| The Built Environment | 50 | 35 |
| Landscaping | 50 | 34 |
| Wildlife and Natural Amenities | 50 | 33 |
| Litter Control | 50 | 35 |
| Waste Minimisation | 20 | 11 |
| Tidiness | 30 | 20 |
| Residential Areas | 40 | 27 |
| Roads, Streets and Back Areas | 50 | 35 |
| General Impression | 10 | 8 |
| TOTAL MARK | 400 | 283 |

Overall Development Approach:

Thank you for your entry into this year's TidyTowns Competition. Especial thanks though for the absolutely excellent entry pack that you put together. This is perhaps the best quality entry that this adjudicator has yet seen. It was full of useful and pertinent information which was presented in a handy and logical way. This was backed up by a lovely collection of relevant photographs and also the many drawings by the children of St. Eunan's national school. This entry could be used by others as a model of how it's done: Mile buiochas! It is clear that your group is well-organised and focussed. Your proposed CE work plan and task lists are well put together. I would suggest that you break down the tasks into a month-by-month format; this will make it easier to organise. Your beautiful map was most useful but so full of features I found it hard to get around to them all (I didn't figure out how clever the key was until I was nearly finished...). Next year, choose carefully which parts of Raphoe are a 'must-see' and mark those for special attention!

The Built Environment:

The (RC) Church and grounds are lovely and there is some excellent planting here. The graveyard is very neat. What are the plans for the old national school? The Presbyterian church is spotless. Deelee College looked freshly painted but the wall here could with a little paint. The Volt House looked super and what a venue for your HQ! Well done on the lovely signs. The Central Hotel does not look so good and has seen better days, it seems. The Masonic Hall looks good but a little paint is required on the railings. Well done on the redecoration of the derelict houses. The castle was in use by some younger people so it wasn't investigated close up but it certainly looms large over the town and features in so many of your drawings. The Church of Ireland Cathedral is a fantastic building and what a great history. Thanks to your kindly included heritage booklet (Raphoe: Heritage Town), I was able to learn a little about what makes it so special. The Scottish Church looks well. Is it ever used? It matches the Masonic Hall very well. The filling station on the

Diamond looks neat and well kept. As do both the Ulster bank and the AIB branch here. The old Guinness sign on Tigh Tir Chonaill is great but the gable wall mural should be redone. The Royal and Prior Comprehensive School looks well. No Green Flag yet?

Landscaping:

As mentioned, the grounds of the RC church are a real delight. There is lovely planting at the old castle gate. The Diamond is so well-presented and the year-round planting is appreciated. The 2000 Monument, waterspout and the associated planters are very nice. The frontage of Raphoe Hardware looked good but could have some more native tree species. Raphoe Congregational Church looks a little drab by comparison with many other buildings. The Fáilte go... hand painted sign on the Lifford Road is really great.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Some more details of your wildlife work would have been useful. This may have been an omission as your entry reform refers the adjudicator to 'further details' which were not found. The wildlife walking routes are great (I walked out on the 'Race Course' route. The hand-painted wildlife signs are really excellent. You might consider touching up the older ones and moving them to new locations rather than 'doubling up'. Your 'adoption' of many, albeit small, sites for wildlife is a very good strategy and this is endorsed by wildlife experts. Have you got many bird nesting boxes or bat roosting boxes? These are great fun to put up and to monitor. Why not ask some expert groups like Birdwatch Ireland or the Irish Wildlife Trust for advice on this? The area is already valuable for native birds and many were heard on day of visit. Have you any inventories or surveys of wild species in the area? A female buzzard was seen low over the Comp. school on day of visit.

Litter Control:

Well done on all of your anti-litter activities. They must have paid off because hardly any litter was seen on day of visit. Your involvement with the schools is very important.

Waste Minimisation:

Well done on the use of 'boot sales' this is indeed a way of reducing waste, through reuse. Have you thought about a community composting area? What about raising awareness of composting as a means of waste reduction, reuse and recycling all in one? The recycling area was free of rubbish but the bottle bins could do with a wash.

Tidiness:

Your thoughtful non-use of weedkillers is appreciated. There were some graffiti on the school sign opposite the surgery. One of the public houses could do with a clean. The name stones (e.g. at the corner of Guesthouse Rd and Castle Rd.) are very cute. Could the wall beside the old castle gate be improved? It's just white-washed at the moment and may be prone to graffiti. The black fingerpost signs look very well and the repainted green and white posts look good too. The benches on the Diamond are in good condition. Congratulations are due to the businesses for keeping appropriate signage on their premises.

Residential Areas:

There are some really splendid gardens in Raphoe. A generally high standard of private residences was seen. Blackwood Avenue is one of the newer areas but looks very well. The hanging baskets here are lovely colours.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The planting and signs on the Lifford Rd are lovely. The EMO/Mace looks well. St. Eunan's Terrace looks great. However, Castle Road was by far the favourite. The combination of stone wall, trees and quiet really makes this back road memorable. The playgroup here is lovely, especially the play area. The nature walk out on Racecourse Rd was very peaceful and I'm sure there are many other pleasant walks to be had around the town.

General Impression:

A high degree of care along with a real sense of history is the main impression on leaving Raphoe. I was even persuaded to visit the Bealtaine stone circle! Some more information on your wildlife projects would be a valuable addition. Work with all sectors of the community to try to reduce waste. Most importantly, keep up the good work. Your group is making a genuinely positive contribution to your community and the wider environment.

