

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Calverstown** Ref: **360**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **272**
Category: **B** Date(s): **17/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	37
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	21
Litter Control	50	36
Waste Minimisation	20	7
Tidiness	30	20
Residential Areas	40	33
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	272

Overall Development Approach:

The overall development approach employed by Calverstown in the tidytowns competition is clearly working well as it has undergone a consistent and steady improvement in recent years. Thank you for your comprehensive entry form this year as the detail provided helps the adjudicator to assess the approach you are taking and to identify the areas that you are focussing on. It is observed from your entry form that you have a solid core membership of 10 on the Committee and that you have a good working relationship with both the County Council and elected Councillors. It is recommended that links are formed with other agencies such as the local LEADER group and any sports or social clubs that are based locally. It was also observed that there is no local School. However, it is recommended that the Committee should consider engaging with Ballyshannon National School on the N78 as it is likely that a good proportion of the pupils are from Calverstown and the importance of involving local schools cannot be underestimated. It will help to raise awareness of the environment and the efforts of the TidyTowns Group at a local level, as well as providing assistance in a range of areas such as litter control, landscaping, wildlife and heritage and waste minimisation.

The Calverstown Report and Development Projects document submitted with the application form was also considered by the adjudicator and it is without doubt, an excellent piece of work with a very high standard of presentation. The map included is also a great help to the adjudicator. Notwithstanding these points, it is considered that one or two small improvements are possible. Firstly, it is strongly recommended that a 3 – 5 year time frame is considered. This will allow the committee to set priorities and work towards targets with clear phases being agreed for major or costly projects (such as undergrounding of cables). It is also recommended that the individual actions are grouped under specific headings (preferably the TidyTowns headings of Built Environment, Wildlife and Natural Amenities, etc) as this will help the Committee to make progress in each category every year. A well thought out and practical plan will also help you to gain further marks under this – the 'overall development approach' category.

The efforts made by the Committee to inform people of their work are excellent, and you are to be commended on your use of several media (i.e. newsletters, posters, newspapers and emails). By effective communication, you will be able to maintain and build on local interest and enthusiasm. Well done.

The Built Environment:

Some very attractive and historical buildings were observed in Calverstown on adjudication day. It is noted from your entry form that these buildings date from the Victorian era and it is heartening to see that they have been retained and remain in active use. The building (Grove Villa) immediately opposite Hickeys in the centre of the village is particularly impressive with its historical architecture, cut stone walls and mature trees in the grounds. The Forge building on the opposite side of the road is equally impressive.

The natural stone walls on the Narraghmore Road provide very attractive and consistent boundary treatment and give a great impression of orderliness and tidiness. The natural stone walls also compliment the Victorian Buildings in the centre of the village and the new footpaths and lamp stands make a positive contribution.

It is noted that extensive development has taken place in Calverstown in the last 10 years and this can be clearly seen by the noticeable number of new housing areas, which provide a mix of architectural styles and layouts. There is no question that this development has been carefully managed as none of the housing areas appear to be excessive in scale for a village of this size and features of the existing village (such as natural stone walls) seem to have been incorporated into the new housing areas. It is to your credit that the original buildings (The Forge, Grove Villa and Hickeys) have been retained as they provide so much of the distinctive character of the village.

A building site was observed immediately adjacent to Cluain Aoibhinn on the approach road from Ballyshannon and it is hoped that this can be finished soon. The new footpaths in this part of the village were also observed. It was also noted that the fenced off site included a removal of part of the natural stone wall and one hopes that this feature will be retained in the development of the site.

Landscaping:

The Committee have clearly been working hard on their landscaping projects for 2009. Some of the planted beds and landscaping projects observed were of the highest standard. These include the planted beds at the Calverstown Name Stone on the Narraghmore Road (travelling from Kilcullen) while the approach from Narraghmore also reaches high standards of landscaping and planting. The landscaping on view in the village green is, in the view of the adjudicator, among the best in Calverstown.

The flower boxes and baskets outside Hickeys were very attractive and added a nice splash of summer colour to the streetscape, while the planting at the name stone in the centre of the village is excellent. The planting at the sculpture deserves a special mention, and the landscaping observed in the residential areas (and indeed in individual gardens) all made a positive contribution to this category.

The Committee are encouraged to provide the adjudicator with information on the contribution that the landscaping and planting projects can be expected to make on native bird and insect life in Calverstown in next years competition as an awareness of biodiversity is an important consideration.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

It is noted from the tidytowns report completed in 2008 that Calverstown could improve significantly on their performance in this category. The bird and bat boxes observed in the grounds of Grove Villa are a step in the right direction. The village green would appear to provide a high quality natural amenity, particularly with its mature vegetation and diverse planting.

The proposal by the Committee to involve children in identifying bird and animal species is considered to be an excellent one as a survey such as this, will not only raise environmental awareness among the younger generation, but it could also provide a valuable source of information for either an ecological study or information boards. The Committee is also encouraged to advise the adjudicator on the contribution that their planting scheme make to native biodiversity as well as the types of weed killer and fertiliser used in their planting schemes. Remember, the use of locally produced compost would be considered to be the most sustainable approach.

Litter Control:

The continuing efforts of the Committee with respect to litter are very successful. The adjudicator observed virtually no litter on the day of adjudication. Well done. The adjudicator is of the view that this strong performance is the result of concentrated and organised efforts by your committee and by careful and considered positioning of litter bins. Keep up the good work! The Committee are also encouraged to continue to work with the younger generations in keeping litter to a minimum.

Waste Minimisation:

The category of waste minimisation is increasing in importance each year and looking at the marks achieved in the past, it appears to be a major opportunity for Calverstown to improve their performance in future years. It is noted that the section on waste minimisation in your entry form and action plan is shorter than the other sections. While, the initiatives mentioned are good, further improvements are possible. Actions such as identifying potential sites for a bottle bank, organising a talk or seminar on reducing, reusing and recycling at a local level and researching the use of mulch mowers are encouraged. Investigating the provision of composters to individual houses in the village should also be considered and the Committee is encouraged to find a location for a composting area so that the resulting compost can then be used in their ongoing landscaping projects. Including actions such as these would significantly improve your performance in this category.

Tidiness:

The Committee are to be commended on their hard work in this category as it illustrated a very close attention to detail. The village was in excellent condition on the day of adjudication with perhaps the highest standards being achieved in the village centre and around the village. Small improvements were possible in one or two isolated areas, such as the verge outside Calverstown Forge which was overgrown for some reason while the area (comprising a driveway leading up to metal gates) beside the village shop was quite untidy looking due to weeds being evident. Despite these minor points, the standards observed in this category were high.

Residential Areas:

Calverstown deserves a lot of praise for the appearance of its many residential areas, which were generally in excellent condition on the day of adjudication. Priory Village is particularly nice, with a high standard of maintenance and landscaping observed – the individual owners should be proud of themselves! Calverstown Place is also reasonably good, with perhaps some opportunities here for additional landscaping.

The Burroughs and Burrough Manor are well maintained and attractive planting was observed at the entrances. However, slight improvements are possible here by removing the small number of weeds that were appearing between the kerb and the road and by cutting back on grass that was appearing within the planting beds. Rosewood and Calverstown Lawns are also to be commended, with Rosewood achieving a very high standard.

Small improvements are possible, notably in the Demense, which was a little untidy and weedy as one travelled further in past the entrance, while some weeds were noticeable in Cluain Aobhinn (on the approach road from Athy) despite the clear efforts to maintain it. Some weeds were also observed between the kerbs and the road in Carrig Glen, while the boundary fence on the entrance road was slightly weedy and overgrown. These areas did not however, detract from the overall picture as the residential areas were very well turned out and the residents and the TidyTowns Committee should be very proud of their efforts.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The approach to Calverstown travelling on the Narraghmore Road from Kilcullen (past Calverstown Place and the Priory) is particularly impressive, with a lovely welcome / name sign and a stone bed with fresh and colourful planting. The verges are also well maintained with all the hedges nicely trimmed and the grass appearing neat and tidy. This gives visitors an excellent first impression of the village! The impression travelling into Calverstown from Narraghmore is also good, with a colourful cut stone flower bed and well maintained name signage on this approach.

The Kilgowan Road is also in very good condition, with hedges, verges and grass all showing signs of careful maintenance. The welcome sign was also observed – is there an opportunity for some landscaping here? The approach from the N78 (Athy Road) did not quite meet with the high standards achieved elsewhere in the village and it was observed that the maintenance of verges did not begin until well past the 50 kph signs on this road. In general however, the performance of Calverstown in this category is considered to be good.

General Impression:

The general impression of Calverstown is very good and with continued good work and priorities being set in key areas of waste minimisation and wildlife and natural amenity areas, there is no doubt that the Committee will continue to make progress.

