

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Celbridge** Ref: **338**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **254**
Category: **G** Date(s): **08/07/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	31
The Built Environment	50	32
Landscaping	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	32
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	16
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	32
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	254

Overall Development Approach:

Welcome to the 2009 competition. Thank you for your considered submission and map which made it easy to locate projects and tasks around the town which have received your attention. Your analysis of the previous "cigire's" recommendations and listing of your actions on foot of them was very informative. It is also indicative of your determination for progress. I am very impressed with your organisation's efficiency, energy, range of contacts, fundraising skills and indeed its list of achievements. The involvement of local schools is an encouraging sign of better understanding and adoption of environmental standards to come. I enjoy the idea that "Arthur" was born in what is now a pub. Well done on using this fact to again develop a sense of pride of place. Your book by Lucy Monaghann is informative and nicely presented. I think it will be a well used reference work about the town for some time to come.

The Built Environment:

Your build environment is a great asset. Celbridge is one of Ireland's few "planned towns" even if it was only planned to make the progress to the great Castletown House even more impressive. The towns surviving Georgian town houses and vernacular shops are an impressive site and well worth exerting great pressure to have conserved and shown to their best. I do not think the town needs excessive planting or trees to improve its vista. just a little judicious tidying up. I will not repeat the detailed recommendations about the townscape included in last years adjudication. I am delighted that you have established a Planning & Development/ Heritage group. I hope that with the mixture of gentle persuasion and enforcement of the Planning Acts you can quickly tidy up the visual clutter about the town. I observed at the time of my inspection that few people choose to cross the river by the foot bridge, preferring to risk the trip along the old bridge, which was also enjoyed by a group of young people fishing. The problem with the foot bridge is that it starts or ends in an uninviting alley. A well designed bridge which allows space and time to enjoy the river would transform the

town. It would require some demolition, but all that is old is not precious. Similarly it could be argued that the old sections of the Mill complex directly onto English Row are not a visual asset to the town. You have made progress to ensure that the spaces behind the Church were tidied up. I am also pleased that you are making progress with excessive signage at the bridge. I enjoyed its seating and planting. I was very impressed with the Famine Graveyard and its tasteful memorial.

Landscaping:

I applaud your plans for conservation of the ruins of the church at Donaghcumper Graveyard. It will of necessity be a long term project. The graveyard is well kept with pleasant seating and useful rubbish bins. The section of the graveyard nearest to the church ruins however could do with attention. Some trimming back of vegetation and protection to ensure conservation of the older headstones would be appropriate. I was impressed with the number of landscape projects that you have undertaken, and your continued maintenance and renewal projects. I was impressed with the landscaping in several locations including the car park on Clane Road, the stunning roundabout with the mill wheel, and in front of the Church on Main Street, The Grotto, and inside of the gates of Castetown House. Some areas of the town do not need any more planting for example are the planters directly outside of the same gates necessary? The embankment of grass works wonders in front of the garage near Abbey Farm. Works well to hide the image of the garage. Well done on caring for the grass margins on the approach roads to the town and conservation of stone wall, an often overlooked part of any towns landscape.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

I very much enjoyed walking through the meadow and the river side walk in the grounds of Castletown. The grounds are such a rare amenity which you are protecting and helping to develop to full potential. Well done on installing the bat boxes and on achieving such wild life activity on the ponds. The idea that fees from car parking are to be earmarked for funding a river board walk is appealing. Hopefully this will be another avenue for further contact with and enjoyment of the rivers. Learn from the mistakes made with the board walks in Dublin, which are now often uninviting spaces. Well done on securing funding for the wildlife study. Its distribution to school will be crucial. Appreciation of nature is widespread in the town, whether its bats, birds or our furry friends. I think this is in no small part due to your efforts. Well done.

Litter Control:

I was impressed by the lack of litter evident around the town village area. Small areas of litter were seen under the town sign on the Dublin Road, just after the cemetery. This small lay-by could do with some attention. Also the car park behind the XtraVision shop, around the clothes bin, where litter was evident and is lodging in the hedge. I admire your efficient delegation of areas to individuals to oversee cleaning of particular roads and the staunch determination of the Sunday morning crews. I spoke to your street cleaner whose dedication to his job is evident.

Waste Minimisation:

Congratulations on the high number of your schools that have been granted a green flags or which are in the process of applying for one. It is an important opportunity for students in your area not only to learn about environmental issues such as litter, energy, travel and water, but also allows the students take ownership of these issues themselves, and to make plans on how to improve these areas within the school and the wider community. I am impressed with your success in collecting so much waste electrical equipment and the effort you must have put into the project. Well done on your Annual Spring Clean day and the new dog waste bins.

Tidiness:

The village generally looks neat and tidy with the exception of several areas which are littered with too many signs. Outside of the golf range on the Dublin Road and outside of the Mill buildings. Other errant signage has already been noted in last years report but the banner at the Remax office deserves some attention. I appreciate that these errant signs are not of course your direct responsibility. You can however by objecting be a formidable deterrent to the practice. Another sign has found its way into the river at the bridge. Please do not give up on the power of enforcement notices. They can be very effective. This of course is only in cases where your "sensitive approach" fails. Well done on the reduction of signage at Casteltown gates.

Residential Areas:

Your work with residents associations and organising of the "Best Kept Estate" competitions has paid dividends. It is also an excellent idea to have Kildare County Council associated with it. I saw little to complain of in the housing estates, with the exception of a few hard to read name sign or stones because of excessive vegetation. Well done on taking action on foot of the remarks in last years adjudication.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

I note the good and level quality of the pavements in the town, and your continuing work on maintaining the grass margins on the approach road to the town. Welcome signs were attractive but abundant on the Dublin Road. Your banner is I think effective. I confess that I was briefly tempted to graffiti "Bye now" on it, but I think that might have been against the spirit of the competition.

The back streets are largely developed as car parks and so are generally well maintained. Well done on again reacting positively to the remarks in last year's adjudication.

General Impression:

The village is looking well. I enjoyed my visit. You are doing a great job with a good team, keep up the good work.