

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Clane** Ref: **368**  
County: **Kildare** Mark: **261**  
Category: **D** Date(s): **18/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	40
The Built Environment	50	31
Landscaping	50	40
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	27
Litter Control	50	33
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	30
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	30
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>261</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Clane continues to significantly improve from year to year. The level of participation in the tidytowns competition appears to be relatively good with 11 members on the committee. However, given the size of the town (which continues to grow), one gets the sense that additional members would be beneficial and a membership drive should be considered. Given the number of new estates, members could be drawn possibly from newly formed residents associations. It was observed that Clane has a significant number of sports clubs. Would it be possible to draw some additional support from these? It is also recommended that the Committee use the size of the town to their advantage and encourage local social groups (such as an early retirement club) to become involved. Remember, involvement can be for a single day (such as an annual spring clean or a plant-a-thon) or on an ongoing basis.

Full use also appears to be made of the County Council, local businesses and other agencies in getting projects done. Are the local Chamber of Commerce involved? Your work with the Schools is also acknowledged and their participation is clearly making a difference to your overall performance in the competition. Are the Scouts involved as well? The Committee should consider other initiatives (aside from the photo competition) to boost participation among the younger generations.

The adjudicator would like to thank the Committee for submitting the detailed plan and map with their entry form – this was very helpful during the site visit. However, the map could be improved by including labels on each of the approach roads into Clane.

### **The Built Environment:**

Clane accommodates an impressive mix of high quality buildings which provide great character for the town.

In terms of historical buildings, the Abbey in the centre of the town is among the most impressive, with its nicely maintained and landscaped grounds to the front of the structure making a very positive contribution to its setting. The Catholic Church and the Corner House Pub also complement the town centre. The more recent buildings on the opposite side of the road were observed, with businesses such as the Credit Union, Hughes Pharmacy, Quinns Meats at ground floor level.

The buildings on the central street in the town are a lovely mix of old and new and some attractive shopfronts were observed such as Tom Goughs, Clane Jewellers, the Clane Parish Centre and Maries. The Committee are also to be commended on their efforts in the town centre. The layout of the street, with its lack of wires, clearly delineated parking bays, attractive paving and lamp standards all combine to give a high quality main street.

The old cottages on the stretch of road between the town centre and the Naas Road roundabout are lovely and provide a reminder of how Clane used to look in the past. It was observed that the derelict cottage was up for sale and it is hoped that it will be sold and refurbished soon. The area beside and in front of the sub station appears to be in poor condition also, while the area adjacent to the Clane Health and Leisure Centre is also in poor condition and overgrown. Do you have a strategy for derelict or vacant sites? It is recommended that an action is included in your plan and that these matters are brought to the attention of the County Council.

### **Landscaping:**

The hard work of the Committee on landscaping and planting was clearly visible on the day of adjudication. The planting at the roundabout on the Naas Road is excellent. We observed planting in lovely natural stone flower beds in front of the Abbey in the centre of the town and in nice wooden beds on the triangle of open space on the opposite side of the road. The mature trees in the centre of town also contribute to its attractive setting. The tub planting along the central street also adds some lovely summer colour to the street scene and the planting outside the ESSO garage deserves a special mention.

It is nice to see commercial businesses contributing to the tidy towns efforts as flower baskets were observed outside the Corner House Pub and planting was noted at the entrance to the Aldi Supermarket. Planting was also observed at the surgery car park, but it was in need of maintenance. The planting at the entrance to Coneff Park was also observed.

A highlight for the adjudicator in this category was the grounds of the Schools. It seems that each of the Schools, Scoil Bride, Scoil Phadraig and Scoil Mhuire are engaged in a competition of their own, with each trying to outdo the next in terms of planting and appearance. Well done to you all, as the landscaping and maintenance was of the highest standard. The grounds of the hospital and the Irish Wheelchair Association (on the Ballingappa Road) also fit into this category.

One small point relates to the plant species being used. The Committee are encouraged to research and seek out native plant species (to include berry bearing plants and bushes) as they can provide for a more vibrant habitat for native bird and insect life. The committee are also encouraged to consider using the compost from your composting area in the Stream Park in favour of any other fertiliser. Finally, the proposal to provide an irrigation system for your planting beds is noted, but it is strongly recommended that the Committee should ensure that only rainwater (through rainwater barrels or tanks) is used in this project and not treated water from the mains system.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

Butterstream Park is a fantastic resource to have in the centre of the town. The maintenance observed (neatly trimmed grass, no litter), mature trees and the colourful landscaping beds make this a popular spot with local people. Its contribution to wildlife is also considered to be significant and the Committee are to be commended on their installation of bird boxes (referred to in your action plan). Your recognition of natural stone walls as an important habitat is also acknowledged.

The river side park is an interesting concept and it is considered that it has a lot of potential as the key wildlife area in the town. The actions of the Committee with respect to the park are acknowledged and commended, particularly the planting schedules of native berried bushes and information boards. The Committee are also encouraged to involve the schools as much as possible in this project as fostering an 'ownership' of the park among the younger generations will raise environmental awareness and help to provide for the long term maintenance of the park. The Committee is also encouraged to examine the whole issue of pedestrian access to the river side park from the surrounding areas and consider installing signage in order to ensure that the park will be used by local people.

### **Litter Control:**

A very high standard of litter control was observed on the day of adjudication. The Committee are congratulated on their efforts in this regard and it cannot be easy to maintain a town that is the size of Clane to the standard that was observed. The town centre deserves special mention. It was very clean and tidy during the inspection, with no litter evident.

It is recommended that the Committee should target the very small number of litter black spots that were observed. These include the area surrounding the Aldi Car Park and the stream and the area in front of Campbells tyres. But these are small points and should not take away from the fact that the vast majority of Clane has been kept litter free.

The Committee are to be commended on their positioning of litter bins – one was observed by the wall in front of the Abbey, which also seems to be popular as a meeting place for teenagers. It seems to be working as no litter was noticeable!

### **Waste Minimisation:**

This category is likely to grow in importance in future years and it represents an excellent opportunity for a town like Clane to improve their performance in the Tidy Towns competition. The adjudicator was delighted to see your well maintained bottle banks as a contribution to the towns efforts on waste minimisation. It is heartening to see that the Schools are making a contribution to this category, as a green flag was observed outside Scoil Phadraig.

The proposals by the Committee are also noted, particularly those with regard to community composters and recycling facilities in new residential areas. Other actions to consider are organising a talk or seminar (through Kildare County Council) on reducing, reusing and recycling for local businesses and residents associations. Researching the use of mulch mowers is also encouraged. The inclusion of actions that minimise waste and raise awareness of this issues will significantly improve your performance in this category.

### **Tidiness:**

The adjudicator considered the town to be generally tidy on the day of assessment. It is clear that the Committee have worked really hard on weeding, sweeping, cleaning signs and trimming hedges and grass throughout the town. Your efforts are clearly visible and apart from a small number of areas, the appearance of the town was very good.

Improvements are possible in one or two areas in the town. The area surrounding the Aldi Store (particularly the verge between the car park fence and the stream) was quite poor, as it was overgrown with weeds and litter was noticeable. Is this area under the ownership of the Supermarket? Whilst it is acknowledged that this could be a difficult area to maintain (as the verge is on a slope), it is recommended that this project should be included in your action plan as it occupies a central location and its current condition detracts from the approach to Clane town centre somewhat. The very useful information sign outside the Abbey was observed, but it appeared to be dirty and quite hard to read, while the car park adjacent to the Abbey (in front of Campbells Tyres) seemed to be in poor condition and weeds were evident. The entrance to the Clane AFC was also overgrown and untidy looking.

Whilst it is acknowledged that it is difficult to get everywhere clean and tidy, as Clane continue to quickly progress in this competition, these areas become more important.

### **Residential Areas:**

Clane has clearly undergone exceptionally high levels of growth in the recent past, with numerous residential estates observed. In general, these estates had a high standard of maintenance and planting on the day of adjudication. Areas such as Liffey Lawns on the Proposperous Road, and Mainham Wood were in particularly good condition on the day of adjudication with trimmed grass and hedges, attractive planting and exceptionally well maintained gardens. Both the Tidy Towns Committee and the individual householders should be very proud of their efforts! The ongoing problems with graffiti (as well as your determined efforts to clean it up!) were observed in Oatfield Park. Once again, the Committee are to be congratulated for their work in this area.

Other residential areas noted during the adjudication included Park View (close to Butterstream Park), Hillview Heights, Loughbollard and Oatfield Park (on the Ballinagappa road) which were in reasonably good condition. Improvements are possible in An Crocan, (close to the roundabout on the Naas Road) which is in need of maintenance as significant numbers of weeds between the road and the kerb gave it an untidy appearance, while the verge to the road outside Otoma and Meadow Lands was very overgrown. Outside Hillview, the entrance was also very overgrown with exceptionally long grass noted.

**Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The standard of the roads and pavements in Clane is generally good, particularly in the most recent area of the town alongside the Inner Relief Road.

It was disappointing to note that a number of the approach roads into Clane were below the high standards achieved elsewhere in the town. The approach road from Naas into Clane is an example of this. Although the Clane sign was observed, it was obscured by growth on the day of adjudication and the verges were also overgrown and somewhat untidy looking. The approach road (leading to Butterstream Park) was also in need of maintenance, with the Clane sign (immediately opposite Clane Providers) being overgrown and with some graffiti noticeable. The treatment of verges on this road appears inconsistent, with some being trimmed and others not. The approach from the Ballinagappa was of a similar standard. The Prosperous Road was a noticeable exception to this, with a high standard being achieved, due in no small part of the efforts of the schools and hospitals to the TidyTowns effort. While it is noted that this area is challenging for the Committee, it is recommended that the Committee target this area of approach roads for next years competition and advise the adjudicator of the outcome of your discussions with the Council on this matter.

In general, however, the standard observed was good and if a more consistent approach could be taken to trimming the verges of the approach roads (particularly around the entrance signs), significant improvements could be made under this category.

**General Impression:**

This is an improved performance for Clane. The adjudicator is confident that your high quality action plan and hard work of the Committee (which can hopefully attract some new members), will help Clane to continue to progress in this competition in 2010.