

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Johnstown** Ref: **370**
County: **Kildare** Mark: **264**
Category: **B** Date(s): **06/07/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	32
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	38
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	25
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	20
Residential Areas	40	32
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	264

Overall Development Approach:

Johnstown is welcome to the 2009 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your submission including supporting documents and your annotated map which was very helpful on adjudication day. Johnstown has an active Community Association within which the Tidy Towns group operates. It is great to see that you have a representative from each of the housing estates in the village involved with your group. Thank you for the inclusion of your email newsletter with the submission. This is a great way to circulate your news. Congratulations on the continued support you receive from local businesses both financially and in practical help. The ongoing interaction with your Parish school at Kill, which has resulted in the green schools programmes being advanced, is applauded.

No Town Plan was included with the submission. It is noted from last years adjudicators report that you had started to compile strategies for the 2008-2010 period. How is this progressing? We feel it would be a real help to your group if you could prepare a three to five year plan with both short term and long term tasks identified. This need not be professionally prepared but should set out your clear aims and goals for your area. It will be a very useful tool to help focus your group's efforts and allow you to reach achievable goals in realistic time frames but will also gain you extra marks in this category. You had a lot of work done last year for the preparation of your pre draft submission for the Local Area Plan. This could be used as the basis for your TidyTown Plan but expanded to include tasks and projects planned for each category of the competition. This can be accompanied by a simple plan, highlighting key areas where works are proposed.

The Built Environment:

You have a lovely village which has managed to retain its character through the boom years. The exteriors of the Johnstown Inn was painted a nice strong colour but lacked any signage. In fact the adjudicator was not

sure if the Inn was still open. Perhaps the signage was to be replaced once the works to the exterior were completed. If so hopefully it will be tastefully done. The cottages in the village are beautifully maintained with well tended front garden areas. The new apartment complex manages to retain the historic facade while having a surprising number of units behind the road frontage.

It is a pity that some satellite dishes are evident on the building frontages in the village on such a pretty streetscape. Try to ensure dishes are located on or near a structure so that they are not visible from the street, especially in the core historic village area.

The parking configurations in the village work well with the detail of the cobble drainage channel being nicely done. A section of paving at the entrance to the restaurant needs to be repaired. The newly painted traffic bollards, seats and pumps all contributed to the sense of a well looked after village.

Your works to clear the graveyard have been successful while still retaining the atmospheric ruined ambience of the area. The brightly painted yarn shop and deli were admired as was the frontage of the Johnstown Business centre. Although this was let down by the treatment to its rear yard and parking area.

The demolition of the old garden centre has done much to improve the appearance of the village and we wish you luck with your plans for this. We note you hope to erect new street names and heritage plaques. Ensure these are sensitively located so as not to detract from the items they are highlighting.

Landscaping:

Well done in your efforts to secure funding for and plant your red robin hedge. It is so frustrating when all your efforts are undermined by mindless vandalism. But they have done so much to improve the approaches to your village and will be such an important habitat corridor once established. The car park was nicely planted and we note you plan to plant additional trees here. The open space beside the lovely stone wall could easily take some large native trees such as sessile or pedunculate oak, which in turn will create a landscape structure for your village in the future. In addition to your wildlife area, at the entrance to the village, this space has the scope to become an important habitat reserve. Try to ensure all planting here is native or seed or berry bearing for maximum benefit.

Your plans for the two roundabouts are interesting and good luck with advancing these. In the meantime you should get the paved boarder to the roundabout sprayed to remove weed growth.

Your village stone signs were nicely done. Although the sign at the entrance to the village, from the Naas direction, was marred by a temporary broadband sign right beside it. As part of future works you might consider adding a cobble surround to the signs to make mowing the surrounding grass easier.

The stream ruing through your village is a great resource to have. Any proposals for the old garden centre site should enhance this feature both in its site design and planting strategy.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

We noted your wildlife area on the Kill road. Although this is a good start, remember that each plant or small area in itself will not attract birds/butterflies etc but collectively the village should become a mosaic of plants and habitats that will combine to increase biodiversity. With this in mind the establishment of the red robin hedge is an important step forward. As is the opportunity to plant up areas such as the car park with native plants. You have knowledge of the wildlife in your village, as listed in your submission. Have you thought about undertaking a simple habitat survey of your village as has been suggested in previous reports? This can be done by simply indicating habitat types present in and around the village on your OS map. Hedgerows, gardens, riverside, trees, mown/ummown grass etc can all be mapped. This can then be used as a basis for developing schemes and planting appropriate species in order to enhance and develop these areas, thus increasing the biodiversity of your village. This in turn can inform your notice boards.

Litter Control:

Very little litter was noted on adjudication day so well done to you on this. The problem area under the bridge, as noted in last years report, seems to have been solved with the infill planting. The only small areas of litter seen were in the corner of the car park by the stone wall but this looked as if it had just been blown in so no doubt would be picked up on your next litter patrol. Good luck with your waste management seminar in October. This is a very proactive approach to take so please include any literature on this in your next year's submission as we will be very interested in how it turned out.

Waste Minimisation:

It is good to see that you circulate your newsletter via email as this in itself is a means of reducing paper waste and can be included in this category. Good luck with the preparation of your pamphlet and please enclose a copy with next year's submission. As you are aware this category is about more than just litter collection, it aims to reduce the accumulation of waste in the first place. Do you know if the Business Centre or other local businesses recycle ink cartridges or use recycled paper? Are any local businesses in the Repak scheme? Can you encourage local restaurants / take aways to use biodegradable food service ware? Are there any car pooling initiatives you could encourage through your community web site or through www.dublintraffic.ie? You have already developed cycling habits through your involvement with the 'Ride to School Week'. These are all ways to advance this issue and gain you additional points.

Tidiness:

The village was very tidy and well presented. The painted street furniture looked well. The bin at the entrance to Johnstown gardens was very poor but we note this is one of your planned projects to replace it. There is a dead tree in the corner of the Living premises, facing the street, which should be removed. One issue we noted, were a number of temporary signs at the entrance to the old garden centre and, as mention before, at the village sign. These look untidy and should be addressed. Another issue you might look at is bike parking. As there is none in the village, bikes were chained to boundaries and the post box. Perhaps you could consider getting sponsorship to install some dedicated bike parking stands near the centra. The clearance of the Garden Centre Site has greatly improved the appearance of the village.

Residential Areas:

As ever all the residential areas in the village were well presented on adjudication day so well done on your continued high standards in this area. In fact on adjudication day the maintenance team were at work in Johnstown Manor and the standard in this estate was very high. The mature trees to the open space at Johnstown Gardens were lovely. Furness Manor was well presented while the verges here were disturbed with the installation of the lighting. You might consider supplementing the roadside hedge opposite the entrance here with additional planting, to improve its appearance.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The tree and hedge planting to the main approaches to the village will only improve the village setting as they mature and fill out. Although you have plans for the roundabouts try to ensure their margins at least are kept weed free in the interim. Some of the larger trees recently planted opposite the wildlife areas have died and should be removed. Verges were well kept and were being mown on adjudication day.

General Impression:

You have a lovely village and a strong community spirit which shows in the evident pride in your surroundings. The proactive approach you are taking to issues that impact on village life is to be commended. Good luck with all the items you hope to address in the coming year.