

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Straffan** Ref: **385**  
County: **Kildare** Mark: **295**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **14/06/2009**  
**26/07/2002**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	40
The Built Environment	50	35
Landscaping	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	35
Litter Control	50	35
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	23
Residential Areas	40	36
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	38
General Impression	10	9
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>295</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Thank you for your comprehensive application and welcome to the Tidy Towns Competition 2009. There is undoubtedly a vast amount of work gone into putting the information together, planning and getting the work done on the ground. The 10 adult members and 8 junior committee members are the core group, which can swell on work nights up to 20. There are strong links with the Green-Schools committee in the school. The work is well organised with 'Adopt an Area' projects, text alert system and individuals being assigned responsibility for their group volunteers and upkeep of that area. Funding will be an issue, as belts tighten all round this year, so people's contributions of time and effort will be valuable.

Success breeds success and the level of commitment here by volunteers is evident. Good luck!

### **The Built Environment:**

The two churches in the village are fine buildings, with the Catholic church a focal point because of its position on the curve of the junction. It is beautiful. The pub is brightly painted, clean and neat with its matching planters. There is good integration of new buildings with older styles. There are charming buildings throughout the village with lovely features, such as half-doors, and some beautiful gardens. Its great to be able to see the landmark Barberstown Castle from the road, and the K-club of course is an exceptional asset for the area.

### **Landscaping:**

There is a real sense of style to this village. The hard landscaping at the junction is delightful, with its

chessboard and sundial features, as well as stone seating. There is just the right amount of planters, not to take away from the structural features and buildings of the village itself. The groupings of planters in threes by the bus stop were admired for their form and for foliage which would provide year round interest. The roundabout at Maynooth end was admired for the artistic sculpture and ferns. There is lots of variety in planted beds with differences in heights, colour, and berry bearing shrubs. All the edges of grassed areas are incredibly neat, it must be handfinished. There are great splashes of colour here and there such as the red planters at coarsemoor. The holly tree at Lodge Park was admired.

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

There is a host of native trees and shrubs in the area, and no doubt would be bats, foxes and other wildlife in the locality. It would be interesting to see what would make its home in the old graveyard! It would be good to have a wildlife survey done to establish what species are present, and any non-native species that may need to be addressed. The information on grounds of K-club was noted, as was the interesting feature on snowdrop identification, and also the plans for setting up a nature treasure hunt with the school. As the Tidy Towns committee is consulted on any extension to the school, there will be opportunity to lobby for inclusion of biodiversity objectives, which will also be complimentary to the Green Schools' aims.

### **Litter Control:**

There was not a scrap of litter in sight on day of inspection and it's a credit to all involved. The only place with a small amount of litter was in the old graveyard. Otherwise, absolutely spotless.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

Well done on the survey about people's waste management practices, for getting the info but also for linking with the Green School to do so. Involving and informing the wider community is a requirement of the Green Schools programme and this project no doubt helped meet this. It is encouraging that people are making the effort to travel to recycling facilities in neighbouring towns. In addition to this info, perhaps in future surveys, some info could be gathered on people's behaviour for waste prevention. For example, questions relating to purchasing choices – loose fruit and veg rather than packed, bulk buys, long life goods over disposables, etc., and promotion of more sustainable lifestyles in so doing. It would also be good to see if those without home composters (over half of respondent households didn't have a compost bin) would be interested in starting one up. You have shown that gathering performance indicators like these need not be complicated and are a valuable tool in measuring progress.

### **Tidiness:**

There is a good bus shelter unfortunately, it is marred by graffiti. There was also some graffiti on gates. The lamp-posts are complimentary throughout the village and in residential areas. Bench at coarsemoor should be restored and given a facelift, and a better quality bin would more appropriately suit the area.

The sub-station building is missing a gate, and there is a pile of pallets and rubble at the entrance of the next-door building, perhaps a council depot. Some general tidying up and weeding would spruce up the grounds of the C. of I. Lovely old railings and gates throughout, and the plans for restoration of old graveyard gate were noted. All road markings were clear and freshly painted.

### **Residential Areas:**

Coarsemoor, Lodge Park and all older residential areas were all very well presented, with excellent front fences and gardens, and all neatly painted with communal areas well trimmed. The new estates were also well presented. The Beeches, with many houses sadly empty in Straffan Gate at present, were noted.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Approaches from all directions are wonderfully neat and clean. Bollards are well designed and well placed, with new planting on approaches, all very attractive. Sturdy timber fencing or solid stone walls, and good road surfaces meet the visitor on arrival. Mature trees and well painted lamp-posts from K-club direction. From Maynooth, the beautiful Barberstown castle and roundabout already mentioned. From Clane, the lovely school and mature trees, with neatly trimmed edges, lead you in to the junction, which also has good signage. The black and white signage throughout is attractive.

### **General Impression:**

This is a beautiful, charming, village which is well cared for and quirky, with a great sense of style.

### **Second Round Adjudication:**

The 2nd Round adjudicator was pleased to return to Straffan as the last visit was before the Irish Open some years ago. In the meantime spectacular progress has been made in terms of overall presentation. The approach roads with the combination of excellent Limestone walls, hedging and very good grass areas create a great first impression of the village. The many landscaped areas and flower and plant containers blend well with the grey Limestone. To the site of Mace a derelict building was noted with lush vegetation on the roof. It is suggested that the walls of this small building be painted with the retention of the roof growth. It is also suggested that field gates be painted to an agreed colour in cooperation with the landowners. Litter was noted on the main road to the side of the Church of Ireland and further litter was evident in the field along that road where the rusty gate and railings would be improved if painted for next year. The well designed black and white road name signs were greatly admired and among the best that this adjudicator has seen for some years. Of course it is the excellent stone buildings that catch the eye in Straffan and your landscaping works well to enhance the built environment. Very good private landscaping was also admired. At The Straffan Inn the black and white containers need to be repainted. The unusual approach to the well kept Graveyard was noted and the approach tree lined avenue is a fine village feature. Good luck with your projects for 2010.