

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Castlecomer** Ref: **389**
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **271**
Category: **C** Date(s): **01/07/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	41
Landscaping	50	33
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	42
Litter Control	50	24
Waste Minimisation	20	9
Tidiness	30	12
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	35
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	271

Overall Development Approach:

The adjudicator would like to welcome Castlecomer to the 2009 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your comprehensive entry file that was made up of approximately 80 pages. The photographs and brochures were most helpful on the day. The adjudicator was of the view that an entry of about 80 pages was unnecessary and considerable time must have been spent on its preparation. From time to time, the adjudicator had difficulty identifying projects that were carried out in the period of Summer 2008 to Summer 2009, in contrast to a statement of works completed over the past few years. For future years, the adjudicator would recommend a crisp to the point statement, under each adjudication heading, of projects carried out in the past year under that heading. Back up documentation could be included as an Appendix if necessary. The maps supplied did not really assist the adjudicator, as streets and approach roads were not named. Some of the superimposed hand lettering was not included in the photo copy supplied. The map did not appear to identify your specific projects for this year. The points made above are not intended in any way as criticism. They are intended to offer you possible assistance in the preparation of the entry documentation for next year.

In respect of the next revision of your Tidy Towns Plan, it is suggested that projects are detailed under each adjudication category by year, with an indication of possible project partners. Where a cost estimate could be included that would be helpful to your Committee. Your entry demonstrated really good attention to detail in respect of your work for Tidy Towns. The list of supporting organisations and agencies is impressive. In summary, you are extremely well organised in how you go about your work for Castlecomer. Your vision for the future is wide and ambitious, but achievable.

The Tidy Schools Competition is an excellent idea and your links with the Schools are among the best that this adjudicator has seen.

The Built Environment:

The adjudicator was enormously impressed with Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal. The overall visual impact here is very high, with the excellent colour scheme, new Statue, landscaping and excellently presented railings. Congratulations on their 3rd Green Flag and do move on quickly to the 4th. Major renovation work was noted at the Catholic Church. The two Playgrounds were examined and are being well used. The expansion of the List of Preserved Buildings has been handled by Castlecomer in a most unusual way, but a highly effective one. The adjudicator liked the proactive approach. It is great to see that the Courthouse Clock has been brought back to life once again. The Wanesforde National School was greatly admired and the warm stone here has produced a building of appeal. The Discovery Park Visitor Centre was visited, as was the 'Footprints in Coal' Exhibition. This adjudicator has some considerable Visitor Centre Exhibition design experience and this Exhibition is one of the best seen for some long time. A complex scientific subject was presented in a most understandable way. The nearby Estate Yard Courtyard area has been superbly restored and what a great use for old buildings. This is conservation really at work! The Church of Ireland church, with its steeple partially concealing by tall trees on the approach from some angles, is gem. The Pharmacy, opposite The Lime Tree, was admired for the simple and effective lettering on the front façade. The red door of the well presented Community Hall caught the eye, as did the well painted Library and Area Office, a short distance away. The Community School was cleverly designed to be set back far from the main road. This has allowed imaginative landscaping to the front. At the Fire Station, the road boundary wall to the two roads needed to be repainted.

Landscaping:

The new landscaping that you have done this year is extremely impressive and colourful. On the road in from the Discovery Park, the car parking areas have been most successfully broken up by well presented grass areas, complimented fully by colourful landscaping. The adjudicator totally agrees with your views on the importance of year round colour and texture. The new trees are commended, as is the careful pruning of the Lime Trees that has been carried out. On the Clogh Road, the new bed was examined and greatly admired. The landscaping at the 1798 Memorial is really colourful and sets off this Memorial perfectly. The many hanging baskets and window boxes, and other smaller displays add a great sense of colour practically everywhere that one turns in Castlecomer and the maintenance commitment is enormous.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

The Discovery Park grounds or The Demesne were visited and one could spend days here, and not see everything that there is to be seen. The combination of river, lake and mature trees provides superb opportunities for you to expand the wildlife aspect of your annual programme. You have had significant consultation with experts in respect of wildlife and this is the correct way forward. and your care of the Dublin Bridge Bats is admired! The Demesne has not been over managed (or urbanized) in maintenance terms and the correct balance has been found.

Litter Control:

The move of the Recycling Bins to the Council Yard is a good move and will remove the earlier problems. The adjudicator was impressed this year with the overall level of litter control in Castlecomer. Generally, it was quite good and this follows on from a similar situation last year. The Litter Area Competition is a great concept, where friendly or even serious rivalry can help to keep litter at bay. The Schools Litter Awareness Campaign is another welcome initiative.

Waste Minimisation:

The adjudicator was delighted to hear that the composting area is being built and hopefully, will be active shortly. The segregation at your clean ups makes an important contribution to waste minimisation.

Tidiness:

The regular clean ups are keeping the much of the tidiness issue under good control. The derelict building at the top of the street is a serious problem. This is a most prominent building that closes the view on the approach to Castlecomer, past the Discovery Park. It could be a building of immense visual impact using a good colour scheme. Your communications with the business sector are ongoing and appear to be quite effective.

Residential Areas:

In terms of residential areas, one word comes to this adjudicator's mind and this is 'pride'. Quite a number of the estates in Castlecomer were visited and so many really good examples of house, and garden presentation were noted. Many houses in the town seem to have been freshly painted in the last year or so. You are extremely well organised in how you are handling the estates and the fact that you are now carrying out the grass cutting for most estates in Castlecomer is a good example of it.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

The main approach roads to Castlecomer are most impressive and create a really good first impression of the town. The approach, past the Discovery Park and up the broad street, is for this adjudicator the most impressive approach of them all. New footpaths on the Kilkenny road are welcomed, as is the resurfacing on the Dublin road. On the Ballyragget approach, a little verge cutting was necessary on the left hand side of the road.

General Impression:

It was a pleasure to visit Castlecomer for the first time and spend quite a lot of time in the town. You continue to make good progress and good luck with your work for next year.