

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Gowran** Ref: **392**
County: **Kilkenny** Mark: **278**
Category: **B** Date(s): **25/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	37
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	32
Litter Control	50	27
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	17
Residential Areas	40	31
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	278

Overall Development Approach:

Your adjudicator would like to welcome Gowran to the 2009 Tidy Towns Competition. Thank you for your completed entry form and the enclosed map. Unfortunately, this map did not assist the adjudicator to any extent. The scale was too small to allow detail to be shown and your various projects were not identified. Some hand written notations on the map could not be deciphered. Therefore, some of your projects may have been missed. The preparation of the new Plan for Gowran is by now hopefully, making good progress and we look forward to seeing this next summer, when we return. Your committee of 25 people is extremely large by national standards, but that is most positive for Gowran. Your meetings schedule appears to be a very busy one. The opening of all these meetings to the general public is a great idea. It was most encouraging to see the support that you are receiving from FAS, and that you are closely involved also with the School and Kilkenny County Council.

The Built Environment:

Your concerns about the future of the Castle and the Lodge are shared by the adjudicator. The issue of restoration is one financial problem, but finding an ongoing use that will be viable in the long term might be even more problematical. Hopefully, work will start on the restoration of the burnt out house on the Main Street and that work will be completed by this time next year. This adjudicator, like previous adjudicators, was drawn to the excellent Loughlin retail frontage that demonstrates such real craftsmanship. The Grotto, at the road junction, was nearly missed, as it is set back from the Bennetsbridge road and the fine grass area to the front was admired. The presentation of the Graveyard and Catholic Church demonstrated clearly the major ongoing maintenance task that is being carried out to such a high standard. The grass areas were more like lawns and were excellently cut. The gate and railings here would be improved if repainted. Nearby, the interesting front lawn displays at the Parochial House caught the eye, as did the beautiful trees. The Garage, opposite the Fair Green, continues as a problem area and some screening on the Church side might provide a partial solution.

Hording Fireplaces was admired for the very simple and effective modern retail frontage lettering.

Landscaping:

The adjudicator was really interested to read of the history of trees in Gowran as did not appreciate their importance in that context before. The replacement trees on Chapel Road and in Gardin Na Nog were appreciated. The expansion of the Fruit Garden at the Homes for the Elderly is such a worthwhile project at a number of levels. The inner grounds of St Mary's Church were visited and were excellently presented, and the grass areas looked very neat and tidy. The High Garden and the beautifully landscaped area along here is such a credit to all involved, and it is really quite a large area to maintain. The adjudicator was most interested in the various heritage panels and other items of literary interest. The landscaped area at the Carlow / Enniscorthy road junction was visited. The white bollards and chain sets this area off quite well. A little kerb side weed was noted here. Another attractive raised area was admired at the Waterford / Kilkenny junction. The Tree Project Nomination was noted and it covers a total of eight areas in Gowran.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Your work with the School and Gardin Na Nog continues to progress and it is so important to give young people an appreciation of the importance of wildlife and the environment in general. The wild meadow is an interesting and important ecological area as is the marshland. In the village centre, the adjudicator was not conscious of any information panels or other information relating to wildlife, and this might be considered.

Litter Control:

Litter control, in the experience of this adjudicator, is relatively serious issue for Gowran and the situation as noted marks a decline on the situation recorded last year. The CCTV at the Parish Hall is a positive initiative, but it has not stopped the dumping. Dumping was evident on the day of the visit and litter, and broken glass was noted behind the units. Much litter was present to the rear and Bring Centre side of the Hall. The three sign poles here would be improved if painted. Litter was also noted on the low wall opposite the Church. Along the road, on the Church side from the corner as well as on the village side to the Graveyard, litter was evident. In Bradog Way litter was present and some quantity of litter was noted around the Fair Green area.

Waste Minimisation:

You are segregating litter at clean ups and this is positive. What steps are you taking to reduce the amount of waste generated in Gowran, as that is a fundamental aspect of this adjudication category? Have you considered a waste minimisation Workshop for the community, where you would invite speakers in to discuss various aspects of the issue?

Tidiness:

The work on the Dome area is commended. It is suggested that you consider painting your gates on the approach roads to an agreed colour scheme, in cooperation with local landowners. In Green View, one outbreak of graffiti was noted. Apart from these issues, Gowran was quite well presented overall.

Residential Areas:

It is great that there are some new Estate Committees, as they can play an important role in your work. At Bradog Way, extremely high weed and grass growth was noted in the car parking area off the road and this looked extremely untidy. The raised manhole covers here can be quite dangerous. The Granite faced cottages stand out in Gowran and give real character to the village. At the Ogenty estate, (the spelling seems unusual, but this is what was on the developer's signage) the young trees here added a little landscaping, but the area seemed a little bland. At the entrance to St John's Place, the road boundary wall on the left at the entrance needed to be painted. This is quite an attractive area of older properties. Good colour use on houses stood out at Parkmore, while the excellent lawns at Green View were greatly admired.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

A little additional work on verges and banks was required on the Carlow approach road, while Mill Road was greatly enjoyed. Some good grass areas were noted near the old Mill and the fine stone walls – even with problems – guide the eye into the centre of Gowran. The Waterford approach created good first impressions as you drive over the river bridge, as did the Kilkenny road.

General Impression:

Good luck with your new village Plan and we look forward to returning to you again next summer.

