

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Borris-in-Ossory** Ref: **408**  
County: **Laois** Mark: **265**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **23/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	42
The Built Environment	50	31
Landscaping	50	39
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	17
Litter Control	50	41
Waste Minimisation	20	13
Tidiness	30	15
Residential Areas	40	26
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	34
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>265</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Thank you for the letter and photographs highlighting the damage caused by motorway construction vehicles. In spite of this the village was looking comparatively good at the time of adjudication – several other villages are suffering the same problem – but this does not lessen the vexation caused to residents. It is hoped that restitution of some kind will be made once the road-building is completed. Borris received a ‘good average’ mark last year; one would like to see it moving into ‘above average’ and perhaps that will happen when the disturbance is over; certainly the potential is very obvious judging both from your documentation and from local observation. Thank you for your excellent map, done with great care and marking some sites which we might otherwise have missed, and thank you for updating the 2004-9 Plan.

### **The Built Environment:**

The Roman Catholic church – it looked as if it had recently been painted - in its well kept precinct impressed. St Mark’s Church of Ireland church (as you are no doubt tired hearing) is a wonderful example of neo-Celtic and was looking most quaint in the central situation which road improvements gave it several years ago. This section, going from the RC Church, with the Court House, the cluster of busy shops, the new town houses which fit in so well and the very well presented housing at St Canice’s Court and Royal Court, is much the best in the village. Having said that, the Court House certainly needs ‘refreshment’ as last year’s adjudicator remarked and it is good to know that plans are on the way; and the other end of the village does have its good points, one of the best being the rehabilitated Old School, a charming building. The large hotel retains a somewhat gloomy look.

Over-abundant signage spoils such handsome commercial properties as Rosy O’Grady’s. The filling station is very well presented indeed but it is an intrusion in the dignified streetscape and should originally have been placed a bit further out of town.

**Landscaping:**

The very lengthy main road verges were, in spite of scouring by trucks here and there, trim and imaginatively planted. The intersection at the Health Centre, for example, looked exceptionally well with its flourishing roses. (Do you plant bulbs for early flowering? They really look after themselves and give a splash of colour in dull months.) The landscaping next to Mountain View was admired, and it is understood that the Area Development Association keeps the public lawns of housing estates mown. Tubs, containers and hanging baskets abound. It was good to see the yews and hollies at St Mark's well cared for. Private gardens contribute significantly. It looked as if the landscaping of the motorway intersection on the Limerick side will be expertly and attractively completed in due course and may even become a first-rate introduction to the village.

**Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

It is good to read that children look after bird boxes; it would be interesting to know how many families were reared and of what species. Do include information on school nature study projects in your next submission. Is advice sought from the Wild Life officer? A considerable number of young trees were seen, some in new estates, and that is very encouraging.

**Litter Control:**

It was noted that volunteers do a litter-pick every day. This is truly admirable and certainly there was very little disposable litter on the date of the visit. Has anyone identified the source of the litter that needs so much attention? – is it passing traffic? Well publicised fines can be a deterrent. It seems a shame that so much time and energy has to be given to this activity when there are more creative jobs to be done.

**Waste Minimisation:**

The marking here is well above average – very largely due to the achievement of the Convent of Mercy school on being awarded a green flag; congratulations to the pupils and also to staff and parents. The recycling point was seen behind the hotel where it is accessible but not too visually prominent.

**Tidiness:**

The boundary wall at the rear of the hotel needed attention on the date of the visit. Otherwise, in spite of the current constraints, the village was quite tidy. The GAA, for example, was well maintained.

**Residential Areas:**

As mentioned above, new town houses blend very well in height and dimension with the existing street houses. Work appeared to be in abeyance on some building projects but nonetheless some planting had already been done. Mountain View is a smart suburban area. Slieve Bloom View is also well kept, with attractive public and private planting and nice stone boundary walls. Kyle Manor is attractively laid out but the hoarding makes one anxious for its immediate future. Ossory Court is a pleasing concept – it was good to see the original hedgerow retained and on the date of the visit the central lawn was a mass of clover – it is hoped that this is part of the concept; variations in colour in a new development are imaginative and welcome. Royal Court is well presented – the wall at the end could do with planting. St Canice's Terrace is a supreme example of a mature and busy precinct where each house is maintained with a sense of individuality; to the visitor there seemed to be a real sense of neighbourliness here – what one would like to find in a housing estate.

**Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

Surfaces and paving are generally good and roads in new areas well laid out. The only minor disappointment was part of the car park at the hotel which was potholed, probably due to traffic coming to the Recycling Point. It was good to see so many well preserved old stone walls, and new ones being created. It will be very interesting to learn about the opening of the motorway and if the effect on the village is beneficial. It is to be hoped that some kind of restitution will be made by the proper authorities for the period of disturbance: the most useful environmentally would be the removal of overhead cables and ugly poles and their replacement by attractive lamp standards, as had been done, for example, in Abbeyleix to superb effect.

**General Impression:**

Borris-in-Ossory has always experienced the difficulties of a main route village, exacerbated at present by construction traffic. When the latter abates it is certain that the energy and imagination exemplified by the

Area Development Association will result in an increased sense of resident-friendliness. Every good wish for your worthy endeavours an behalf of your community,.