

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Errill** Ref: **414**
County: **Laois** Mark: **274**
Category: **B** Date(s): **24/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	45
The Built Environment	50	34
Landscaping	50	41
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	17
Litter Control	50	40
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	19
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	31
General Impression	10	8
TOTAL MARK	400	274

Overall Development Approach:

It is extremely disappointing to read your comments regarding the difficulty of attracting new members. Such a high standard of excellence has been achieved in Errill over the years that the loss of this Committee and its work in the community would be irreparable. In many centres new members are recruited through the colleges or from among school leavers, in some cases organised by the schools themselves. Often these are young people who have a tradition of voluntary help in planting, litter-picking etc. It is reasonable to suppose that you have explored this avenue. Other committees make a point of canvassing and co-opting new residents. A public meeting attended by leaders of society at which the committee would offer to resign provided a new committee would take up the responsibility might be one solution but should only be contemplated if there were a fair chance of it succeeding. Sometimes young people do not like joining committees if they think long-standing members will never relinquish power. From your notes it seemed that this year you were simply engaged in a holding operation, but on arriving in Errill the village looked as bright and attractive as ever and there were new initiatives to be admired. The difficulties occasioned by the motorway building, irritating though they must be, naturally did not impinge on the visitor in the way they must do on residents.

The Built Environment:

The church was beautifully maintained as were its surroundings. The school with its vivid murals and pleasant grounds also impressed greatly. The 17th century monument and its grassy plinth was featured in a becoming way; equally, the remains of the early-Christian church were presented in a dignified manner. All business premises looked well but perhaps Dowling's took pride of place. No shops or pubs were over adorned with mass-produced or plastic signs as is the case in too many other centres.

Landscaping:

If it should come under this heading, the ancient cemetery was truly well tended. Roses, notoriously difficult to grow successfully, were flourishing at the church and opposite. At Village View, the planting and seating, and especially the trim grassed space, showed every evidence of constant attention and hard work. Plenty of tubs and hanging baskets on public and private property added spots of colour throughout the village. One of the pleasantest sights is the stone wall of the house on the corner of the road to the cemetery where all manner of garden flowers festoon themselves over the roadside.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Trees are properly considered under this heading. The number of young trees planted over the years must be in dozens. Errill benefits enormously from whoever had the foresight to plant the hardwoods in the centre of the village; they are well maintained. You are right not to consider extending the Slí na Sláinte because of the amount of construction traffic.

Litter Control:

It was good to read that you are taking part in the Litter Challenge Project and that you do a litter collection three days a week. It will be interesting to know if, after the road works have been completed, the incidence of littering declines. There was very little disposable litter at the date of adjudication, congratulations to all the helpers.

Waste Minimisation:

This adjudicator had not been aware that the National School had been awarded a green flag. Congratulations to the pupils and also to the staff and parents. The recycling point is mercifully inconspicuous yet eminently accessible.

Tidiness:

It was useful to be informed that an unoccupied house has been purchased and done up. It was very favourably noted that the verge of the road from the village to the historical/educational precinct was trimmed along its entire length, making a real visual connection between the two neighbourhoods. Two very minor points – in Clohane, grass clippings should be removed immediately after mowing; and in Village View the post-and-wire fence in the cul-de-sac needs renewing.

Residential Areas:

An unnamed close of new bungalows near Tierney Park looked very neat indeed; it was lovely to see (and smell) an expanse of clover. It will take some time for this estate to 'blend' – more tree planting would help. Tierney Park does look 'blended in' due to planting and to the natural course of occupation. The houses in Cloghan are well presented but the shrubberies needed weeding and it is a pity about the design feature of the slab fencing: these could be softened by planting climbers such as clematis, old man's beard and wisteria. Village View, as mentioned also under Landscaping, is very neat and trim; usually this adjudicator takes every opportunity of suggesting more tree-planting, but here the broad treeless lawn is a visual delight. A lot of work-in-progress on fine properties on the Boris road with stone walls and stout wooden fencing already in place looked promising; presumably the grass margins will be reinstated. It was noted that there is a site for 40 new houses: is this practical?

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Surfaces were not altogether satisfactory, probably due to the heavy construction traffic. Certainly the community should look for reparation for physical damage especially to roads.

General Impression:

This committee, as well as the residents and business people of Errill, have done Herculean work over the years in conserving and improving their natural and their man-made environment. It would be most unfortunate if the community at large did not make a concerted effort to step in and keep this fine enterprise going.

