

Tidy Towns Competition 2009

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Pike of Rushall** Ref: **737**
County: **Laois** Mark: **208**
Category: **A** Date(s): **23/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	28
The Built Environment	50	27
Landscaping	50	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	19
Litter Control	50	30
Waste Minimisation	20	10
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	23
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	400	208

Overall Development Approach:

It is good to read that you have very good local support in your work and particularly, that every household is involved, including the school as well. It was noted that you do not provide a work programme – this can be quite simple, with a list of tasks to be started/continued/completed at different times over, say, three years; this can clarify priorities, and there is nothing like setting deadlines to get people enthused. Perhaps, once the motorway is open and there is less traffic passing there will be more incentive to consider new projects – but certainly what you are doing already is most impressive.

The Built Environment:

The painting of the church is a major project. On the date of the visit, a number of people were seen to be engaged in this challenging work and the result was already splendid. The walls of the car park had also been painted in the same colour. The school looked bright and prosperous. The important houses at the cross roads looked well – painting was almost completed on one; these are what most passers-by see of Pike of Rushall and are therefore, important – it is a pity the majority do not see the church and school.

Landscaping:

The trellises looked well and will be even better when the climbing plants take over. The floral baskets on the car park wall looked charming; they obviously take a lot of upkeep particularly in sunny weather; you might consider if a less laborious display might be more effective – tall-growing shrubs, for instance – but if there are always people available to look after the brackets, they are the answer. The shrub boxes looked very well. Have you thought of bulbs for early spring flowering? They are very easily planted, and once established, look after themselves; narcissi/daffodils of different varieties and colours for example in the greens at the cross roads. Some of the roadside verges adjoining the cross roads looked a bit unkempt, not as if they were part of

a Tidy Towns effort.

Wildlife and Natural Amenities:

Trees are normally considered under this heading. Thank you for drawing our attention to your tree-planting programme. The more of this the better. The village benefits considerably from the fine old timber growing all around. It is good to know that bird tables were renewed in the school yard; we would be interested to hear how many families were reared and what species?

Litter Control:

Your litter picking programme is successful in spite of you having to reduce the number of days due to the traffic problem. Hopefully, this will be less serious after the opening of the motorway. Very little disposable litter was seen on the date of the visit - congratulations.

Waste Minimisation:

The Waste Collection point was seen – it is quite decently concealed yet eminently accessible. The green flag is a huge achievement: you do not mention this on your entry form but please do in future, in case the flag escapes the eye of the adjudicator.

Tidiness:

No posters or graffiti were seen – which is not unnatural, because you say that you removed them – well done! Verges in most places were tidy, except at the place mentioned above, and also along parts of the road between the cross and the Pike sign in the Castletown direction. This is quite a long stretch of roadside to keep tidy and perhaps, householders could take responsibility for sections near their homes. Not all grass cuttings had been removed in some places. Some corrugated iron roofs were seen that need attention.

Residential Areas:

Almost all houses and boundary walls were nicely painted and one was in process of being painted. A beautifully kept yard and garden was seen on the corner of the Loran road. One house with wonderful roadside roses was admired on the Castletown road. Handsome wooden fencing was favourably noted at one property on the church road – fencing of this kind gives consistency to a roadside and could be introduced to good effect elsewhere. Advise residents, who are contemplating changes to their frontages, to avoid post-and-wire fencing because it is short-lived and is difficult to keep weed-free, and to avoid cement block walls unless they are plastered and painted. The most effective boundary walls are stone, hedge and timber fencing.

Roads, Streets and Back Areas:

Road surfaces are medium to good. Surely, speed limit signs are needed and a controlled electric crossing. We will be very interested to hear of the effect of the opening of the motorway.

General Impression:

It was very interesting and instructive to have the opportunity of spending some time at Pike of Rushall, instead of rushing by as most motorists do. A very community-conscious village was observed. It is clear that you are on the way to making improvements all the time. Every good wish for your highly worthwhile endeavours,